

PATAULA CHARTER ACADEMY
Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Policy

Any school employee or volunteer who suspects child abuse or maltreatment is mandated to report and is authorized to report to DFCS and/or Law Enforcement as required by law pursuant to Code Section 19-7-5 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A).

As mandated by Georgia law O.C.G.A 19-7-5, any employee of Pataula Charter Academy having cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen (18):

- has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon the child other than by accidental means by a parent, caregiver or any person who attends to any child as an employee or volunteer of the school;
- has been neglected or exploited by a parent, caregiver or any person who attends to any child as an employee or volunteer of the school; or
- has been sexually assaulted, shall report their belief to the Principal and/or Superintendent.

The Principal, Superintendent, or designee shall make a report of child abuse and neglect to the appropriate Department of Family and Children Services ("DFCS") as soon as reasonably possible, but within the twenty-four (24) hour from the time there is reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred.

The Superintendent and/or Principal will provide training annually for professional staff in the identification of children suspected of being neglected or abused. The training will include procedures for reporting such cases. Training may be provided through Pro Solutions Training online service.

REQUIREMENTS

1. If any employee has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse, sexual abuse, molestation, neglect or exploitation has occurred, the employee must report it or face criminal penalties and employment penalties, including but not limited to termination. When in doubt, the employee shall report the suspicion to protect the interest of the child and to fulfill their legal duty to report.
2. If any employee is aware of an allegation of child abuse of a student by a parent or caregiver (including an employee), the allegation shall be reported in accordance with this policy and as soon as possible within the twenty-four hour required reporting time.
3. If any employee reports to the Superintendent or Principal that the employee has reasonable cause to suspect the student is subject to child abuse, sexual abuse, molestation, neglect or exploitation, or that the employee has received an allegation of child abuse by a parent or caregiver (including employees), the Superintendent, Principal, or their designee shall submit a complete and written report through the Mandated Reporter web-based portal at <https://techapps01.dhr.state.ga.us/CPS/> as soon as possible, but no later than the 24 hour requirement.

4. If any employee is alleged to have committed child abuse or neglect, in addition to submitting a report to DFCS as required under Paragraph (3) above, the Superintendent and/or Principal shall conduct a prompt investigation to determine whether any inappropriate or unprofessional conduct was taken by the employee. The Superintendent or Principal should:
 - solicit the assistance of involved school employees to assist in their investigation; and,
 - contact DFCS and request all documents pertaining to the employees' case, as allowed by law, and should interview the employee, if possible. If an employee refuses to cooperate in the school system's investigation, the employee may be charged with insubordination.

5. At a minimum, the findings of the investigation shall be submitted to the Board of Directors and should include:
 - the steps taken to investigate the allegation;
 - the findings as to whether the employee engaged in unprofessional or inappropriate conduct;
 - the recommendation of what action should be taken, if any, as a result of the investigation; and,
 - the rationale for recommended action, if any, or rationale for lack of action, if any.

6. The legal requirement to report suspected child abuse or neglect is applicable to any adult school volunteer. Therefore, mandated reporter training will be required of all school volunteers. School volunteers will be notified of such reporting requirement and required training through the parent handbook and on the school website.

**Adopted on January 11, 2016

EMPLOYEE/VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Section A

Procedures for employees/volunteers that suspect child abuse/neglect:

****If you believe a child is in immediate danger, call 911.****

1. Employee/volunteer will report to Principal or Superintendent immediately.
 - If school representative isn't available, call DFCS at **1-855-GA- CHILD (1-855-422-4453)**.
 - Or call **911** to report immediate danger.
2. Principal, Superintendent, or their designee will:
 - Gather supportive information.

Complete the DHA Mandated Reporter Form at <https://techapps01.dhr.state.ga.us/CPS/> .

****All reports are confidential and must be maintained in a secure location if a copy of the web-based report is printed.***

Section B

Procedures for employees/volunteers that suspect a Pataula Charter Academy employee has committed child abuse or neglect.

1. Report to Superintendent or Principal.
2. Superintendent or Principal makes report to DFCS.
3. Superintendent or Principal is not available, immediately report to appropriate authorities (follow instructions in Section A).
4. Superintendent and/or Principal investigate the allegation.
5. Superintendent reports to Board of Education.