

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY NAME: Child Abuse and Protection	POLICY NUMBER: 1.1.4	CATEGORY: Administration and Operations
RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE: Principal	APPROVAL AUTHORITY: Executive Council	EFFECTIVE DATE: March 1, 2021
NEXT FULL REVIEW DATE: February 28, 2026 or amendments by the Ministry of Education	REVISED: August 30, 2022	REPLACES:

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide specific guidance to the staff at Coquitlam College - Brookmere Secondary (the College) in fulfilling the commitment to assist in child abuse prevention and in providing reporting protocols if child abuse is suspected or known to have occurred.

### Scope

This policy applies to all staff members at the College associated with the Senior Secondary and English Studies programs.

### Policy Statements

1. The College is committed to the prevention of child abuse and the enhancement of the well-being and the safety of the students entrusted to its care. The College recognizes this commitment is made first and foremost as an ethical and legal responsibility but is also recognized as a response to government and social expectations for the well-being safety of students.
2. The Colleges acknowledges the responsibility to be aware and alert to signs of child abuse or neglect, and to be familiar as to how to respond when concerns about abuse and neglect arise.
3. The College prohibits any form of child abuse, neglect or violence.

### Guiding Principles

4. The safety and well-being of children are the most important factor.
5. Children are entitled to be protected from abuse, neglect, harm or threat of harm.
6. A family or guardian is preferred for the care and upbringing of children and the responsibility for the protection of children rests primarily with the parents or guardian.
7. The child's point of view should be taken into account when decisions relating to a child are made.
8. Decisions relating to children should be made and implemented in a timely matter.

### Policy Guidelines

9. The Principal and/or Vice-President are designated as the *"Appointed School Official"* in accordance with *Supporting Our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse*, and as such may be required to:
  - a. investigate on behalf of the school authority

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- b. ensure a safe school environment during investigations
  - c. consult with the child welfare worker and/or police
  - d. ensure that no school employee interferes with any investigations
  - e. communicate with parents with respect to actions taken by the school authority
  - f. report to the British Columbia College of Teachers and/or the Inspector of Independent Schools when the School Authority dismisses, suspends or otherwise disciplines a certified teacher
10. Principal and/or Vice-President will inform all staff annually through the general staff meeting and as part of in-house professional development regarding information and procedures as outlined in the following:
- a. *BC Handbook for Actions on Child Abuse and Neglect*
  - b. *Responding to Child Welfare Concerns*
  - c. *Supporting our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse*

### Procedure Guidelines

- 11. School personnel will immediately report suspected child abuse, neglect or violence. School personnel who are unsure about their responsibility to reporting the incidence, need to consult with a child welfare worker who can discuss the options and course of action. Contact information can be found in The BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect.
- 12. School personnel who have reason to believe a child may be at risk and the child's parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child has a legal duty to report to a child welfare worker.
- 13. School personnel is required by *The Child, Family and Community Service Act* to inform a child welfare worker, the police should the situation warrants this action and the Principal and/or Vice-President.
- 14. School personnel will assist with the resulting investigation.
- 15. The Principal and/or Vice-President will ensure the school environment is safe during any investigation.
- 16. School personnel will support students who have experience child abuse, neglect or violence.
- 17. The College will protect personal information regarding the investigation, including the reporter's identity, against improper or unauthorized disclosure or use. Confidentiality is of the utmost concern for all cases of abuse.
- 18. Disclosure is strictly prohibited without clearance from the Principal, Vice Principal or in their absence, other designated personnel.

### Definitions

**Appointed School Official:** The person assigned by the school to take responsibility for child abuse and/or neglect cases on behalf of the school.

**Child:** Anyone under the age of 19

**Child Welfare Worker:** A person delegated under the Child, Family and Community Service Act to provide child welfare services, including responses to suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

### **Related Documents**

[Child, Family and Community Service Act \(Part 3\)](#)

[FISABC: Child Abuse and Neglect Policy](#)

[Ministry Guide: Supporting Our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse](#)

Appendix A: The BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect

Appendix B: Responding to Child Welfare and Concerns