

Child Abuse and Protection

Number:	4.1.1
Responsible Executive:	Principal
Approval Authority:	School Authority
Effective Date:	April 23, 2025
Next Review Date:	April 22, 2030
Revised Date:	
Category:	High School

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the guidelines for Coquitlam College – Brookmere Secondary (the College) to establish and implement child abuse prevention and protection protocols. It also ensures that school personnel are informed and regularly updated on these protocols for reporting suspected or known cases of child abuse.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school personnel, students, volunteers and contractors at the College.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The College is committed to the prevention of child abuse, neglect or violence and enhancing the well-being and safety of all students entrusted to its care. The College recognizes this commitment is made first and foremost as an ethical and legal responsibility and also as a response to government and social expectations for ensuring the well-being, safety and protection of children.
2. The College acknowledges its responsibility to be aware and alert to signs of child abuse or neglect and to be familiar with how to respond when concerns about abuse and neglect arise.
3. Any person with reason to believe that a child needs protection has a duty to report promptly.
4. School personnel will support students who have experienced child abuse, neglect or violence.
5. The College has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of child abuse, neglect, or violence.

Guiding Principles (as outlined in *The B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect, June 2017*)

6. The safety and well-being of children are paramount considerations;
7. Children are entitled to be protected from abuse, neglect, harm or threat of harm;
8. A family is the preferred environment for the care and upbringing of children and the responsibility for the protection of children rests primarily with the parents;
9. If, with available support services, a family can provide a safe and nurturing environment for a child, support services should be provided;
10. The child's views should be taken into account when decisions relating to a child are made;
11. Kinship ties and a child's attachment to the extended family should be preserved if possible;
12. The cultural identity of Aboriginal children should be preserved; and
13. Decisions relating to children should be made and implemented in a timely matter.

PROCEDURES

Responsibilities

14. In accordance with *Supporting Our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse*, the Principal, Chris Rands, is the designated Appointed School Official (ASO) and the Chief Academic Officer, Mike Williams is the designated Alternate Appointed School Official (AASO).
15. The ASO and AASO are responsible for working with childcare workers to determine whether a child has been harmed by someone who works or volunteers at the school or works on contract for the school.
16. The ASO/AASO may be required to:
 - a. Investigate where appropriate on behalf of the school authority;
 - 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 Commission for Teacher Regulation, Teacher Regulation Branch, Ministry of Education, when the School Authority dismisses, suspends or otherwise disciplines a certified teacher or school principal (Independent School Act, section 7 and 7.2); and
 - g. refer student(s) for counselling according to the school's policies.
17. The College will maintain and make available a list of community resources for students requiring counselling and support services (refer to Appendix A).
18. The Principal will ensure that school personnel receive training and resources relating to the College's responsibility and commitment regarding child abuse and neglect.

Reporting

19. Individuals are required to immediately report suspected child abuse, neglect or violence to a child welfare worker and/or the police (should the situation warrant this action).
20. Individuals who have reason to believe a child may be at risk and the child's parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child have a legal duty to report to a child welfare worker.
21. Individuals who suspect or have information that a child is being abused or at risk of being abused, or is otherwise in need of protection, must promptly contact the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and the ASO/AASO. The ASO/AASO will ensure appropriate measures are put in place to provide support and assistance as needed.
22. If the ASO is the alleged abuser, the AASO, after reporting to the previously mentioned agencies, will report to the owners of the school. If the AASO is the alleged abuser, the ASO will conduct the investigation on behalf of the school authority.
23. Individuals who are unsure about their responsibility to reporting an 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*.

Investigations

24. Where a report is made, school personnel will assist with the resulting investigation where appropriate.
25. The ASO/AASO will ensure the school environment is safe during any investigation.
26. The College will protect personal information regarding an investigation including the reporting individuals' identity, against improper or unauthorized disclosure or use. Confidentiality is of the utmost concern for all cases of abuse. Information will only be shared with relevant professional, authorized personnel, agencies or law enforcement to the extent permitted by law.

DEFINITIONS

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 neglect.

RELATED RESOURCES

- Appendix A: Contacts and Resources
- [Child, Family and Community Service Act](#), RSBC 1996, c 46
- [Criminal Code](#), RSC 1985, c C-46
- [Independent School Act](#), RSBC 1996, c 216
- [Personal Information Protection Act](#), SBC 2003, c 63
- Ministry of Education and Child Care, [Supporting Our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse](#)
- [The BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect](#), March 2017
- [Responding to Child Welfare and Concerns](#), June 2017

APPENDIX A: CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

➤ **CONTACT A CHILD WELFARE WORKER**

In any community in B.C., phone 1 800 663-9122 at any time of the day or night.

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD), toll-free 1 866 660-0505, province-wide and 24 hours a day

➤ **If the child or youth is in immediate danger**, call 9-1-1

➤ **Helpline for Children**, phone 310-1234 or 1-877-631-8282

➤ **Children's Hospital**, phone 604 875-2345 and ask for the Child Protection Service Unit

➤ **Representative for Children and Youth**, phone: 1 800 476-3933 (Confidential, for all of B.C.)
www.rcybc.ca

➤ **VictimLink BC**, toll free 1 800 563-0808 or 604 875-0885 24 hour a day, multilingual and TTY accessible. To call collect, dial the Telus Relay Service at 711.

➤ **Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS)**

Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) delegated Aboriginal agency that supports the well-being of Aboriginal children, youth, and families, especially those who are vulnerable, through child protection, child welfare, and family support services.

Also offers heritage and wellness programs for indigenous children, youth, adults, and elders, as well as non-indigenous foster caregivers. Serves Greater Vancouver. Office hours are 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday.

Phone: 604-872-6723 or 1-877-982-2377

Email: info@vacfss.com

Address: Head Office, 745 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC V5L 3J3