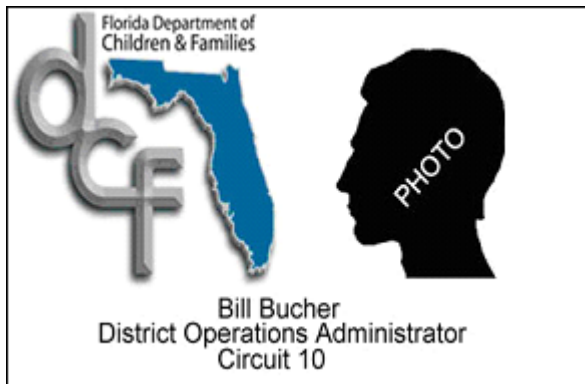
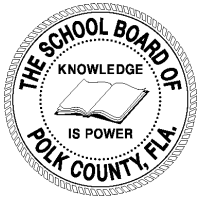


There has been some confusion recently regarding the practice of photocopying the badges of DCF Child Protective Investigators who come to the schools to investigate allegations of child abuse. DCF Child Protective Investigators photo id badges (see below) **can no longer be photocopied.**



All other community agency personnel ID badges may be photocopied. The district's child abuse procedural memo has been updated to reflect this change. Please follow the district's child abuse reporting procedures as outlined in the attached memo. This procedural memorandum can also be located in Outlook Public Folders – Student Services – Child Abuse Information – 03 Procedural Memo 11-16-09.



SCHOOL BOARD OF POLK COUNTY

P.O. BOX 391
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November 16, 2009

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General Counsel

Administration

GAIL F. MCKINZIE, PH.D.
Superintendent of Schools

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Staff

FROM: Gail McKinzie, Superintendent, Polk County Schools

SUBJECT: Child Abuse Reporting

Florida Statute 1006.061(1) states:

...all employees or agents of the district school board have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect; have immunity from liability if they report such cases in good faith; and have a duty to comply with child protective investigations and all other provisions of law relating to child abuse, abandonment, and neglect...

As a reminder, changes to child abuse laws in 2006 require that "known or suspected abuse by employees of a public school must also be reported."

Additionally, the Ethics in Education Act requires mandatory reporting of child abuse. Failure to report child abuse is a breach of ethics and could result in job termination, as well as revocation of your teaching certificate.

To comply with the provisions of Florida Statutes, Chapter 39 regarding the reporting and investigation of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect, the following procedures are to be followed:

Every School Employee's Responsibility:

1. Evaluate the situation for reasonable cause to suspect child abuse. **Do not attempt to investigate**—that remains the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) job.
2. Immediately call the statewide toll-free hotline at 1-800-962-2873 if abuse, abandonment, or neglect is suspected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare, **including a public school employee**. Your child abuse reports may also be faxed (1-800-914-0004) or e-mailed www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report. **Be sure to document your report.**
3. Complete the "Notice of Report for Child Abuse Hotline" form located in the Outlook Public Folders – Student Services – Forms – Child Abuse. Submit the form to your administrator.
4. Cooperate with the DCF.

(Additional information may be reviewed in the Outlook Public Folders/ Student Services/Child Abuse Information. Fax forms for reporting abuse may be printed.)

When DCF Investigates:

If a properly identified Child Protective Investigator for the Department of Children & Families (DCF) or a law enforcement officer comes to your school to investigate allegations of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect, you should:

1. Properly identify the person requesting information. DCF Child Protective Investigators will have a photo ID badge with the State of Florida – Department of Children and Families logo and may **NOT** be photocopied. **The silver, metal badges (similar to law enforcement) are no longer issued to Child Protective Investigators.** For further verification contact the numbers listed below:

Lake Wales	863-678-4771 or 863-678-4770
Winter Haven	863-298-4400
Lakeland	863-619-4201 or 863-619-4100

2. Complete the “Release of Students to Law Enforcement and Other Officials” form.
3. Ask the DCF Child Protective Investigator to determine if the parent/guardian should be called and notified of the investigation (per Code of Student Conduct, parents and guardians may NOT be called if they are being investigated).
4. Allow the investigator to interview the student.
5. Only participate in the interview if requested to do so by the investigator and the student.
6. Release copies of student records if requested to do so.
7. Allow the investigator to remove the student from campus.

Ongoing DCF Investigations, Foster Care, and/or Adoptive Services:

The following community agencies may be visiting your school to provide case management services to children known to the Department of Children and Families as contracted through Heartland for Children:

- Gulf Coast Community Care
- Devereux
- Kids Hope United
- Children’s Home Society

When personnel from any of the agencies listed above request access to students or student records, please follow the procedures outlined below:

1. Properly identify the person requesting information by checking photo ID badges. Each of the agency badges listed above will have the Heartland for Children logo and may be photocopied.
2. Complete the “Release of Students to Law Enforcement & Other Officials” form.
3. Allow access to the student or student records.
4. In some instances case managers may need to remove the child from the school.
5. If a classroom observation is requested, a PCSB school psychologist, counselor, or social worker must be scheduled and present during the observation.



Florida Department of
Children & Families



Bill Bucher
District Operations Administrator
Circuit 10

The logo for Heartland for Children features a green house icon with a heart above it, set against a blue background with a white heart shape. The text 'Heartland for Children' is in a stylized font, with 'Heartland' in blue and 'for Children' in green.

Case Manager

Jane Doe
Devereux Florida

The Florida Department of Children & Families logo.

Community Based Care: Hardee, Highlands & Polk Counties

The logo for Heartland for Children features a green house icon with a heart above it, set against a blue background with a white heart shape. The text 'Heartland for Children' is in a stylized font, with 'Heartland' in blue and 'for Children' in green.

Case Manager

Jane Doe
Gulf Coast Community Care

The Florida Department of Children & Families logo.

Community Based Care: Hardee, Highlands & Polk Counties

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Transporter

Jane Doe
Kids Hope United

The Florida Department of Children & Families logo.

Community Based Care: Hardee, Highlands & Polk Counties

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Transporter

Jane Doe
Children's Home Society

The Florida Department of Children & Families logo.

Community Based Care: Hardee, Highlands & Polk Counties