

Role of the School Nurse and Child Maltreatment

MICHIGAN SCHOOL NURSE GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

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MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL NURSES ROLE OF THE SCHOOL NURSE AND CHILD MALTREATMENT

Disclaimer: *This guideline, "Role of the School Nurse and Child Maltreatment", contains recommendations for current best practices for the health service topic addressed. It has been reviewed by the Michigan School Nurse Advisory Council, a function of the Michigan Association of School Nurses Board of Directors as a means to provide consistent and safe care to the students. Specific laws and regulations that direct school nursing practice or other health services are identified in the guideline. There is no guarantee that the use of guidance in this document will lead to any particular result or outcome. The information in this document was researched in May, 2020.*

INTRODUCTION

School nurses play an important role in the recognition and reporting of child maltreatment. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) (n.d.), child maltreatment is a serious public health problem with extensive short and long-term health consequences. In addition to the immediate effects of maltreatment, children who have experienced maltreatment are at increased risk of adverse health outcomes and risky health behaviors later in life. Child maltreatment has been linked to higher rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, smoking, multiple sexual partners, suicide, and chronic disease. Changes in the brain from chronic child maltreatment can increase the risk of problems related to attention, memory and learning. (CDC, n.d.)

Michigan Laws/Regulations:

§722.623	Requires that certain mandated reporters must report child maltreatment signs or suspicions to Child Protective Services. Mandatory reporters include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physicians, physician assistants, dentists, dental hygienists, medical examiners, nurses, and persons licensed to provide emergency medical care, or audiologists • School administrators, counselors, or teachers • Regulated child care providers • Psychologists, marriage and family therapists, licensed professional counselors, and social workers • Persons employed in a professional capacity in any office of the friend of the court • Law enforcement officers • Members of the clergy • Department employees, including eligibility specialists, family independence managers, family independence specialists, social services specialists, social work specialists, social work specialist managers, or welfare services specialists
§722.624	Any other person, including a child, who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, may report.
§722.625	The identity of a reporting person is confidential and subject to disclosure only with the consent of that person or by judicial process. The identity of the reporter is protected in any release of information to the subject of the report.
§722.633	A person who is required by this act to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect and who knowingly fails to do so is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 93 days or a fine of not more than \$500.00, or both.

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL NURSE

School nurses interact with children on a daily basis, therefore must be familiar with Michigan’s child maltreatment reporting laws. The role of the school nurse is to report suspicion of abuse and allow Child Protective Services (CPS) to investigate. It is a legal requirement to report child

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maltreatment, as well as taking appropriate action regarding instances of behavior that could endanger the best interests of children. According to the American Nurses Association & National Association of School Nurses (2017), school nurses are professionally and ethically accountable to do the following within the scope and standard of practice:

- “Know local laws, regulations, policies, and procedures for reporting child maltreatment
- Know the signs and potential indicators of child maltreatment including sexual exploitation
- Provide clear nursing documentation that includes questions asked and answers given and use a body diagram when appropriate for suspected child maltreatment and sexual exploitation
- Provide students with personal body safety education and advocate for school health education policies that include personal body safety
- Educate and support staff regarding the signs and symptoms of child maltreatment
- Identify students with frequent somatic complaints which may be indicators of maltreatment
- Provide support to victims of child maltreatment
- Facilitate the linkage of victims and families to community resources, including a medical home (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016)
- Collaborate with community organizations to raise awareness and reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect”

REFERENCES

American Nurses Association, National Association of School Nurses (2017). *School nursing: Scope and standards of school nursing* (3rd ed). Silver Spring MA.

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2016). *Role of the school nurse in providing school health services* (Position Statement). <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/05/19/peds.2016-0852>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Child maltreatment prevention*. <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/index.html>

National Association of School Nurses. (2018). *Prevention and intervention of child maltreatment —The role of the school nurse* (Position Statement). Silver Spring, MD: Author.

RESOURCES

[CDC Preventing Child Abuse](#)

[REVIEW COMMENT SECTION:](#)