

# Sands CISD

## Child Abuse Prevention Policy

### **Addressing child abuse, trafficking, and maltreatment of children:**

As a society, we have a collective responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect. Common forms of child maltreatment include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Knowing the signs, contributing stressors, and resources for help are vital to the prevention of child abuse. There are many important protective factors that can help reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.

1. Supportive family and social networks
2. Parental employment and adequate housing
3. Access to health care and social services
4. Parental resilience
5. Knowledge of child development and positive parenting strategies at each stage
6. Increasing staff, student, and parent awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect.
7. Utilizing anti-victimization programs for students.
8. Educating students on actions to take to obtain assistance and intervention.
9. Providing access to counseling options.
10. Creating a positive and encouraging school culture where students feel safe and can participate and stay engaged.

Child Abuse Prevention an Overview:

<https://tea.texas.gov/texasschools/health-safety-discipline/child-abuse-prevention/child-abuseprevention-an-overview>

## **Duty to report**

Any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as required by law. *Family Code 261.101(a)*

To ensure this crucial step is taken, Sands CISD staff member will be trained in all aspects of Child abuse through the "Darkness to Light" program. Child abuse reporting posters will be visibly hung up in teacher workrooms to assist in locating important contact information along with online resources provided on the Sands CISD website. All staff members will be trained in person at the beginning of each school year on reporting procedures as well.

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS). Reports may be made by contacting one of the following:

- Texas Abuse Hotline, 1-800-252-5400, <http://www.txabusehotline.org>
- Call 911 for emergency situations

## **Education & Awareness**

Sands CISD will educate all students in child abuse awareness, prevention, and response. Within the first six weeks of the school year, each grade level will have child abuse specific instruction provided by the Sands CISD school counselor. This education will emphasize actions that a child should take to obtain assistance and intervention.

All staff members will be required to complete Child Abuse training through the Darkness to Light program. The emphasis will be on recognizing the signs of abuse and proper procedures to follow once abuse has been suspected.

SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE: 1. Unexplained injuries 2. Changes in behavior 3. Returning to behaviors from an earlier age 4. Fear of certain places or people 5. Changes in eating 6. Changes in sleeping 7. Changes in school performance and attendance 8. Lack of personal care or hygiene 9. Risk-taking behaviors 10. Inappropriate sexual behaviors.

For more information on recognizing the signs of abuse, please visit here.

- [https://www.dfps.texas.gov/child\\_protection/Child\\_Safety/recognize\\_abuse.asp](https://www.dfps.texas.gov/child_protection/Child_Safety/recognize_abuse.asp)

### **COUNSELING OPTIONS**

Sands CISD will ensure students associated with child abuse are provided with proper counseling services. This can occur with on campus counseling with the Sands CISD counselor or counseling services through agencies outside of Sands CISD.

Please contact Sands CISD Counselor Tana Howard or Sands CISD Principal Lenny Morrow for counseling options. (432-353-4888)

Additional resources for child abuse awareness and prevention are listed below.

- Center for Disease Control:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/features/healthychildren/index.html>
- Prevent Child Abuse America: [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)
- Prevent Child Abuse Texas: [www.preventchildabusetexas.org](http://www.preventchildabusetexas.org)
- Texas Association Against Sexual Assault: [www.taasa.org](http://www.taasa.org)
- Child Welfare Information Gateway: [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services:  
[www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), 1-800-787-3224 (TDD for hearing impaired)