

Individuals who wish to speak with management personnel other than their supervisor or the personnel representative may request a meeting with the Affirmative Action officer, who will make his/her own independent inquiry into any allegations. All allegations or harassment will be immediately investigated. It is important for employees who feel that they have been harassed to report incidents to management.

Anyone found to have engaged in any type of harassment shall be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

## HEAD START CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Northwest Community Action, Inc. Head Start follows Federal laws, Minnesota Statutes, and Head Start rules governing the reporting of maltreatment of minors. This includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect as defined under Minnesota Statute 626.556. NWCA also directs strong efforts toward the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Head Start is not or is not to become a primary instrument for the treatment of child abuse and neglect.

NWCA staff must report all suspected or alleged incidents of child abuse and neglect. This is accomplished in the following manner:

1. The individual staff member who suspects child abuse and/or neglect has the responsibility for reporting the case immediately. This includes all staff employed by preschool programs.
2. An oral report of the suspected child abuse/neglect will be made to the local Social Service office or police department. A follow-up written report will be requested by that agency.
3. An oral report must be made within twenty-four (24) hours to the designated person at the Head Start Central Office. The oral report must be followed by a written report which will be kept in a confidential file at the Head Start Office.
4. A staff member designated by the Director will be responsible for maintaining the file and discussing the suspected child abuse/neglect case with the reporter whenever necessary.
5. The report must include the following:
  - a. Child's name,
  - b. Child's address,
  - c. Child's birth date,
  - d. Child's sex,
  - e. Parent/Guardian's name, address, and telephone number,
  - f. The nature and extent of injuries and/or evidence of neglect or molestation,
  - g. Name(s) and address(es) of person(s) suspected of child abuse/neglect,
  - h. Indication as to whether the parent/guardian was notified that a report was being made,

- i. Name, address, and telephone number of the Head Start program and staff member reporting, and
- j. The time, date, and person to whom the report was made. It is imperative to use clear, concise, and objective reporting techniques.

Failure to report suspected child abuse/neglect is a misdemeanor under Minnesota Statute 626.556, Subdivision 6. Minnesota Statute 626.556, Subdivision 4 also provides that, "Any person ...participating in good faith and exercising due care in the making of a report...shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that otherwise might result by reason of his action." Individual reporting suspected child abuse/neglect shall be disclosed only by the local welfare agency upon court order if the report is substantiated.

Head Start may inform the parent/guardian that a report has been made. This may be discussed with the Director and/or staff member responsible for the NWCA Head Start Child Abuse and Neglect Policy.

A Head Start staff member who is suspected of child abuse/neglect must be reported. Appropriate actions will be initiated by the Director utilizing the Agency's Personnel Policies and Procedures and M.S.A. 626.556.

NWCA shall not retaliate against an employee for reporting abuse or neglect in good faith. Any person who knowingly or recklessly makes a false report shall be liable in a civil suit for any actual damages suffered by the person or persons so reported and for any punitive damages set by the court or jury.

Anyone with questions concerning the implementation and legality of abuse/neglect reporting should contact the Head Start Director as soon as possible as to the necessity and/or legality of having to make a report.

NWCA will concentrate efforts to prevent child abuse/neglect. This in part, is accomplished by:

1. Regular staff training concerning their responsibilities for reporting and other aspects of child abuse and neglect.
2. Families will have training made available on child abuse and neglect. Parents will be informed of NWCA Head Start Child Abuse and Neglect Policy at the beginning of the program year.
3. Teachers and Coordinators will provide information regarding child abuse and neglect to children enrolled in Head Start.
4. NWCA Head Start will work with local agencies to educate and coordinate efforts toward the prevention of child abuse and neglect. NWCA recognizes that it, in itself, is not an investigator or a treatment provider for child abuse and neglect victims, but is available for those children who may be a risk due to special conditions.

The NWCA Head Start Child Abuse and Neglect Policy will be implemented and revised yearly with the approval of the Head Start Policy Council and the Health Advisory Committee. It will also be revised using consultation with local social service departments, policy departments, and other professional working with NWCA Head Start.

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**NORTHWEST COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.  
PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
*REVISED AND UPDATED Effective August 21, 2009*

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Signature)

have received the Northwest Community Action, Inc. Personnel Policies and Procedures, Revised and Updated Effective August 21, 2009 as of

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Please sign this statement certifying that you have received the policies and return it to the office in Badger within five (5) days.

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**Declaration Form for Prospective Employees in Head Start Programs**