

PERSONNEL SERVICES

Policy 4875
(Regulation 4875)

Staff Welfare

Animal Abuse and Neglect Reporting

The Board expects each school professional who is required to report under § 273.410, RSMo, to comply with the statutory animal abuse and neglect reporting requirements.

When the statutory reporting standard is met, a covered school professional must report suspected animal abuse or neglect to the hotline established and operated by the Missouri Animal Control Association (MACA), or a successor entity, within one day. The duty applies when the school professional has reasonable cause to suspect that an animal has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observe an animal under conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.

This reporting obligation is independent of any duty to report child abuse or neglect or other conduct under applicable law. Making a report under one reporting law does not satisfy a separate reporting obligation when more than one reporting law applies.

The statutory duty to report under § 273.410 is not in effect while the MACA hotline or a successor hotline has not begun or has ceased operation and resumes when the hotline is operational.

A person required to report under § 273.410 is immune from civil and criminal liability in connection with a required report made in good faith.

Regulation 4875 governs implementation of this Policy.

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This Regulation establishes the procedures necessary to implement Policy 4875 and § 273.410, RSMo. It does not replace any other reporting obligation imposed by law.

Definitions

1. “*Animal*” means a dog, cat, rabbit, or domesticated bird.
2. “*Reasonable Cause*” means that abuse or neglect is more likely than not to have occurred.
3. “*School Professional*” means a psychologist, mental health professional, social worker, school counselor, teacher, or other school professional who is required to report under § 273.410, RSMo.

Reporting Procedure

A School Professional who has Reasonable Cause to suspect that an Animal has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect, or who observes an Animal under conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, must report directly to the hotline established and operated by MACA, or a successor entity, within one day.

The School Professional must not delay the report to notify a District administrator, obtain approval, conduct an investigation, or obtain information that is not known to the reporter. The reporter should provide information requested by the hotline that is known to the reporter. The District may provide current hotline reporting information administratively.

The statutory reporting duty and associated penalties are not in effect during any period in which the MACA hotline, or a successor hotline, has not begun or has ceased operation. The statutory duty resumes when the hotline is operational.

Other Reporting Duties and Confidentiality

A report under this Regulation does not satisfy a separate reporting obligation imposed by law. If circumstances also require a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, the School Professional must separately comply with Policy and Regulation 2710 and applicable law.

Information identifying a person who reports suspected animal abuse or neglect under § 273.410 is confidential, is not a public record, and is not subject to § 109.180, RSMo, or Chapter 610, RSMo. District personnel will not create or maintain records identifying a reporter unless necessary to administer applicable law or District policy.

District Response to Failure to Report

If the District determines that an employee who is a mandated reporter under § 273.410 failed to make a required report, the Superintendent or designee will issue the employee written notice that includes:

1. Findings of fact supporting the determination that the employee failed to make the required report; and
2. An explanation of the reporting requirement.

The District will not retain the notice in the employee's permanent employment file. The District will retain the notice in a separate file or database, and the notice will be a closed record under Chapter 610, RSMo. *See* Policy 4860.

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