



Policy and Procedure on Reporting Abuse, Neglect, Bullying, Self-Harm, Etc.

Policy:

It is the policy of Hope for Tomorrow to follow all applicable laws and school policies for reporting of suspected abuse and possible harm to self or others.

The relationship between a mentor and a mentee is built on trust and confidentiality. Although a Hope for Tomorrow mentor agrees to keep the information that a mentee shares confidential, there are exceptions to this agreement. A mentor is obligated under Minnesota laws to report concerns about a mentee's health and welfare.

Minnesota's Maltreatment of Minors Act requires that a person who knows or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, or has been physically or sexually abused within the past three years, must report the suspicion to the appropriate authorities for investigation. A person who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. Detailed definitions of what constitutes child maltreatment are contained in Minnesota Statute 626.556.

Minnesota's Safe and Supportive Schools Act became law in 2014 and requires school staff to follow specific procedures when bullying incidents are reported. The school must investigate reports of bullying within 3 days of the report.

In conversations with mentees, concerns may surface regarding issues of a mentee's intent to harm themselves (suicide, self-injury, eating disorders, addictions, etc.) or harm others. Most schools have school crisis plans in place to intervene with students who may harm themselves or others.

To insure the safety and wellbeing of our mentees and to comply with all mandated rules for reporting, the following procedures are adopted.

Procedure:

If a mentor suspects that a mentee is being or has been maltreated, neglected, or bullied, is engaging in or threatening to engage in self-injury, reveals suicidal thoughts or actions, reveals harm or injury or threats of harm or injury to another person, or reveals bullying of another student, the mentor must immediately report that concern to the Hope for Tomorrow chapter lead and school liaison. If no school liaison is available, the school principal will be notified of the concern. Each school will have its own procedures for investigating the suspicion of maltreatment, self-harm, bullying, or violent behavior. The mentor and chapter lead will be expected to cooperate with the school and other agency personnel, as required or necessary.