CPS INVESTIGATIONS AT SCHOOL

A school official may not refuse to permit a Child Protective Services (CPS) investigator to interview at school a student who is alleged to be a victim of abuse or neglect under Family Code 261. A school official may not require the CPS investigator to permit District personnel to be present at a student interview conducted at school. *Family Code 261.302(b), .303(a); Atty. Gen. Op. DM-476 (1998)*

A person that has confidential locating or identifying information regarding a family that is the subject of a CPS investigation shall release that information to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) on request. The release of information to DFPS as required by this subsection by a person is not subject to Government Code 552.352 or any other law providing liability for the release of confidential information. *Family Code 261.303(e)*

CPS INVESTIGATIONS OF SCHOOLS

On receipt of a report of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect in a public school, DFPS shall perform an investigation as provided by Family Code 261. Investigations of school personnel or volunteers for child abuse or neglect shall be conducted by CPS in accordance with the procedures adopted in DFPS rule. *Family Code 261.406; 40 TAC 700.401–.412*

NOTICE TO PRINCIPAL

Prior to conducting an investigation of school personnel or volunteers, CPS shall notify the school principal (or the principal's supervisor if the school principal is an alleged perpetrator) of the fact that a report has been assigned for investigation, the nature of the allegations contained in the report, and the date and time when the investigator plans to visit the school campus to begin the investigation.

The CPS investigator must request that the school principal (or the principal's supervisor) not alert the alleged perpetrator or others regarding the report until the investigator has first had an opportunity to interview the alleged perpetrator.

40 TAC 700.407

INTERVIEWS

School officials or other persons related to the school setting may not interfere with an investigation of a report of child abuse or neglect conducted by DFPS. Interviews and examinations in a school investigation may take place on or off the school premises, as deemed appropriate by the CPS investigator, provided the investigator notifies the school principal (or that individual's supervisor in the event that the principal is the alleged perpetrator) prior to conducting an interview or examination on school premises.

PARTICIPANTS

CPS may request that school personnel or volunteers not be present during the interview or examination of an alleged victim, an

alleged perpetrator, an adult or child witness, or any other person who may have information relevant to the investigation if the investigator determines that:

1. The presence of school personnel or volunteers would compromise the integrity of the investigation; or

2. A better interview or examination of the child would result without school personnel or volunteers being present.

Family Code 261.303; 40 TAC 700.409(a)

REPORT OF FINDINGS

After DFPS has closed the school investigation, CPS shall provide a report of the investigation to TEA, SBEC, the Board President, and the school principal, unless the principal is the alleged perpetrator.

CPS need not provide a report of the investigation if a report of abuse or neglect is closed administratively prior to notification to any school official that a report was received by DFPS.

40 TAC 700.411(a), (d)

STUDENTS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY

A child may be taken into custody under Family Code Title 3 (Juvenile Justice Code):

1. Pursuant to an order of the juvenile court.

2. Pursuant to the laws of arrest.

3. By a law enforcement officer, including a District peace officer, if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in a criminal violation, delinquent conduct, conduct indicating a need for supervision, or conduct that violates a condition of probation.

4. By a probation officer, if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation or a condition of release.

5. Pursuant to a directive to apprehend issued by a juvenile court.

6. By a law enforcement officer, to take the child's fingerprints or photograph, as set forth at Family Code 58.021.

Family Code 52.01(a), 58.021

In addition, a child may be taken into custody without a court order:

1. By an authorized representative of the DFPS, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer under the

conditions set out in Family Code 262.104, relating to the student's physical health or safety; or

2. As otherwise provided by Family Code Chapter 262 (Suit by Governmental Entity to Protect Health and Safety of Child).

Family Code Chapter 262

STUDENTS IN CUSTODY

A person taking a child into custody may, if school is in session and the child is a student, bring the child to the campus to which the child is assigned if the principal, the principal's designee, or a peace officer assigned to the campus agrees to assume responsibility for the child for the remainder of the school day. *Family Code 52.02(a)(7)*