



Body Safety Education Toolkit

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West Virginia Board of Education
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Foreword

On March 5, 2018, the West Virginia Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 4402 which requires children in grades K-12 receive developmentally appropriate body safety education at least once per academic school year, with a preference of up to four times per year.

In accordance with W. Va. Code §18-2-41, the West Virginia Department of Education partnered with West Virginia school counselors and administrators, elementary, health, and special educators and sexual violence prevention experts to develop an educational resource that empowers West Virginia students to keep their bodies safe.

This Body Safety Education Toolkit and sample parent letters were designed for use by West Virginia Schools. School districts are encouraged to review the hyperlinked West Virginia support organizations to assist school districts in meeting the requirements of HB 4402. Prior to utilizing any Body Safety resources, counties must develop a plan to vet the materials they choose to ensure the lessons are developmentally appropriate. Sample parent notification letters have been included for counties to revise and use as needed.

Prevention Education

Prevention education is most effective when it begins early in a student's educational experience and should include: skills for self-protection with opportunities to practice, instruction in the definitions of abuse and neglect and the promotion of positive and appropriate interactions between children and adults. Another important component of prevention education is the disclosure and appropriate reporting of incidents. Consideration must be given to adapting child abuse and neglect prevention instruction for students with special needs. The toolkit contains information regarding reporting mandates and available resources. This toolkit has been developed as a tool which counties can use in the prevention of childhood sexual abuse.

Rationale

Abused and neglected children may be found in almost every school in the country. Recent research data indicates one in 10 children in West Virginia will be a victim of sexual abuse by age 18*. School-aged children make up more than half of the children who are abused and neglected. Educators serve as facilitators of the growth of children and are aware of the interrelationship among academic, emotional and physical development of children. Therefore, educators must take a proactive role in providing and supporting child abuse and neglect prevention programs.

*Townsend, C., & Rheingold, A.A., (2013). *Estimating a child sexual abuse prevalence rate for practitioners: studies*. Charleston, S.C., Darkness to Light. Retrieved from www.D2L.org.

Impact of Abuse on School Performance

Sexual abuse is associated with the following:

- Diminished cognitive ability
- High absentee rates
- Increased retention of students
- Increased need for special education
- Dropping out of school

Educators are on the Front Lines

School personnel identify 52% of all identified cases of child abuse – more than any other profession or organization*.

**Sedlak, A.J., Mettenburg, J., Basena, M., Petta, I., McPherson, K., Greene, A., and Li, S. (2010). Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4): Report to Congress, Executive Summary. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.*

Disclosures

When body safety education is delivered, the increased likelihood of disclosures of possible abuse is a reality. Educators and administrators should be prepared for potential disclosures and be able to respond appropriately.

If a Child Discloses:

DO:

- Remain calm.
- Believe the child.
- Allow the child to talk.
- Show interest and concern.
- Reassure and support the child.
- Take immediate action. It could save a child's life.

DON'T:

- Panic or overreact.
- Press the child to talk.
- Promise anything you can't control.
- Confront the offender.
- Blame or minimize the child's feelings.
- Overwhelm the child with questions.

5 Steps to Protecting Children

STEP 1

Learn the Facts

More than 90% of sexually abused children are abused by someone known by the child or family and one in 10 children will be sexually abused before the age of 18.

STEP 2

Minimize Opportunity

More than 80% of child sexual abuse incidents occur when children are in isolated, one-on-one situations with adults or other youth.

STEP 3

Talk About It

Open conversations with children about body safety, sex and boundaries are some of the best defenses against child sexual abuse.

STEP 4

Recognize the Signs

The most common symptoms of child sexual abuse are emotional or behavioral changes.

STEP 5

React Responsibly

Intervening when boundaries are crossed or reporting abuse when suspected is critical to protecting all children from sexual abuse.

from Darkness to Light • <https://www.d2l.org/>

Mandated Reporting

If a child discloses potential abuse, school personnel are required to report the disclosure to Child Protective Services (CPS) as stated in the Mandated Reporting Law. See W.Va. Code §49-2-801 through §49-2-812 for more information.

A mandated reporter is any medical, dental or mental health professional; Christian Science practitioner; religious healer; school teacher or other school personnel; social service worker; child care or foster care worker; emergency medical services personnel; peace officer or law-enforcement official; humane officer; member of the clergy; circuit court judge; family court judge; employee of the Division of Juvenile Services; magistrate; youth camp administrator or counselor; employee, coach or volunteer of an entity that provides organized activities for children; or commercial film or photographic print processor who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is neglected or abused, including sexual abuse or sexual assault, or observes the child being subjected to conditions that are likely to result in abuse or neglect shall immediately report.

Mandated Reporting Law

- Mandated reports must report directly to CPS and law enforcement ASAP, but no later than 24 hours.
- The individual receiving the information must make the report directly to CPS and law enforcement, not the principal or other school authorities.
- Follow your school's reporting guidance internally in addition to your mandated report.
- Call CPS Centralized Intake (24/7 hotline): 800-352-6513
- Sexual abuse, severe physical abuse and potential criminal activity as it relates to child abuse must be reported to the West Virginia State Police.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Body Safety Awareness

Grades Kindergarten through Two

Rationale

Abused and neglected children may be found in almost every school in the country. Recent research data indicates one in 10 children in West Virginia will be a victim of sexual abuse by age 18*. School-aged children make up more than half of the children who are abused and neglected. Educators serve as facilitators of the growth of children and are aware of the interrelationship among academic, emotional and physical development of children. Therefore, educators must take a proactive role in providing and supporting child abuse and neglect prevention programs.

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Developmentally appropriate practices for body safety awareness for grades K-2:

- Young students ages 2-7 are generally considered preoperational thinkers. Children in this stage think symbolically.
- Young students benefit when education is supported through the collaborative effort of the classroom teacher and the school counselor.
- Young students learn best when these standards are modeled in authentic situations.
- Young students benefit from lessons and activities that allow for socialization and interaction.
- Young students benefit from experiences that foster positive feelings about themselves.

Ask Yourself...

Students need to identify a trusted adult in the school they can seek out for help. Ask yourself: *Do my students have opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with a trusted adult in the school? Do my students have opportunities to interact with the counselor?*

Students who are experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) may display difficulty regulating emotions. Ask yourself: *Am I meeting the social and emotional needs of all my students? What steps have I taken to support my trauma sensitive classroom environment?*

Students may disclose information during body safety lessons as part of the integrated approach to wellness education. Ask yourself: *Do I know how to support students who disclose such information to me?*

Grades Kindergarten through Two Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Body Safety Awareness

Teacher Reflection

How did students demonstrate understanding of strategies needed to keep their body safe?

How did students demonstrate understanding of their right to tell people not to touch their body?

How did students demonstrate understanding of what to do if they are touched in an uncomfortable manner?

How did students demonstrate understanding that it is okay to tell trusted adults when feeling uncomfortable about being touched?

Selected Resource

<https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/K-2-Lesson.docx>

Above is a sample of a body safety education resource to assist in addressing HB 4402. Counties may choose to use other resources not listed. Counties must develop a plan to vet resources they choose to ensure the lessons are developmentally appropriate and meet the county needs and requirements of HB 4402

Applicable Content Standards

K-2 Wellness Education Standards

- WE.K.12 Explain that all people, including children, have the right to tell others not to touch their bodies.
- WE.K.13 Identify adults to notify when uncomfortable with certain touches.
- WE.1.1.5 Understand it is acceptable to tell parents and/or other trusted adults when feeling uncomfortable about being touched.
- WE.2.16 Demonstrate how to respond appropriately when being touched in an uncomfortable manner.

K-2 Dispositions and Standards for Student Success

- DSS.K-2.5 Protect Emotional and Physical Safety
 - Exhibit respect for physical boundaries, rights and personal privacy in relation to personal safety.
 - Express needs, wants and feelings appropriately.
 - Demonstrate appropriate use of 911 and knowledge of parents'/guardians' names, phone numbers and addresses.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Body Safety Awareness

Grades Three through Five

Rationale

Abused and neglected children may be found in almost every school in the country. Recent research data indicates one in 10 children in West Virginia will be a victim of sexual abuse by age 18*. School-aged children make up more than half of the children who are abused and neglected. Educators serve as facilitators of the growth of children and are aware of the interrelationship among academic, emotional, and physical development of children. Therefore, educators must take a proactive role in providing and supporting child abuse and neglect prevention programs.

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Developmentally appropriate practices for body safety awareness for grades 3-5:

- Young students ages 7-11 are generally considered to be in the concrete operational stage and are developing logical thought processes.
- Young students benefit from lessons that are respectful of cultural and individual differences and learning styles.
- Young students will learn best from experiences that are relevant to their own life experiences.
- Young students will benefit from lessons that encourage active learning through participation.

Ask Yourself...

Students need to identify a trusted adult in the school they can seek out for help. Ask yourself: *Do my students have opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with a trusted adult in the school? Do my students have opportunities to interact with the counselor?*

Students who are experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) may display difficulty regulating emotions. Ask yourself: *Am I meeting the social and emotional needs of all my students? What steps have I taken to support my trauma sensitive classroom environment?*

Students may disclose information during body safety lessons as part of the integrated approach to wellness education. Ask yourself: *Do I know how to support students who disclose such information to me?*

Grades Three through Five Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Body Safety Awareness

Teacher Reflection

How did students demonstrate understanding of skills needed to avoid unhealthy decisions?

How did students demonstrate understanding of appropriate refusal skills?

How did students demonstrate understanding of distinguishing between safe, risky, or harmful relationships?

How did students demonstrate understanding of strategies to reduce threatening/unhealthy situations?

Selected Resource

<https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/3-5-Lesson.docx>

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Applicable Content Standards

3-5 Wellness Education Standards

- WE.3.9 Demonstrate decision-making skills to avoid unhealthy risk-taking behaviors (e.g. swimming alone, talking with strangers and taking medicines without adult supervision).
- WE.3.13 Demonstrate appropriate refusal skills (e.g. clear “no” statement, walk away, repeat refusal).
- WE.4.14 Define risk-taking behaviors and resulting consequences.
- WE.4.15 Explain the physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty and adolescence.
- WE.5.12 Demonstrate refusal skills to avoid risky behaviors or situations (e.g., drug use, criminal activity, being alone with a stranger, inappropriate digital communication).
- WE.5.15 Distinguish between safe, risky or harmful relationships and list strategies to reduce threatening situations (e.g., anger management, positive peer-pressure).

3-5 Dispositions and Standards for Student Success

- DSS.3-5.5 Protect Emotional and Physical Safety
- Express needs, wants and feelings appropriately.
 - Describe how situations such as teasing, bullying, harassment, breaking rules, threats, intimidation and damaging other’s property impact emotional safety.
 - Exhibit respect for physical boundaries, rights and personal privacy in relation to personal safety.
 - Demonstrate knowledge of emergency contact information (e.g., emergency [police, fire, medical, 911] and family phone numbers, addresses, contact names)..

Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Body Safety Awareness

Grades Six through Eight

Rationale

Abused and neglected children may be found in almost every school in the country. Recent research data indicates one in 10 children in West Virginia will be a victim of sexual abuse by age 18*. School-aged children make up more than half of the children who are abused and neglected. Educators serve as facilitators of the growth of children and are aware of the interrelationship among academic, emotional and physical development of children. Therefore, educators must take a proactive role in providing and supporting child abuse and neglect prevention programs.

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Developmentally appropriate practices for body safety awareness for grades 6-8:

- Students ages 12-14 begin to develop logical and abstract thought, deductive reasoning, and planning.
- Students are more motivated when what they are learning feels authentic and is relevant.
- Students benefit from learning experiences designed to actively engage them as they develop an understanding of the content.
- Students benefit from the use of a variety of research-based instructional strategies which allow for individualized support.
- Students benefit from practicing and modeling positive communication skills, decision making, and refusal skills as it relates to healthy relationships.

Ask Yourself...

Students need to identify a trusted adult in the school they can seek out for help. Ask yourself: *Do my students have opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with a trusted adult in the school? Do my students have opportunities to interact with the counselor?*

Students who are experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) may display difficulty regulating emotions. Ask yourself: *Am I meeting the social and emotional needs of all my students? What steps have I taken to support my trauma sensitive classroom environment?*

Students may disclose information during body safety lessons as part of the integrated approach to wellness education. Ask yourself: *Do I know how to support students who disclose such information to me?*

Grades Six through Eight Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Body Safety Awareness

Teacher Reflection

How did students demonstrate understanding of situations that may require professional health services?

How did students demonstrate understanding of explaining refusal and negotiation skills to avoid/reduce dangerous/unhealthy situations?

How did students demonstrate understanding of recognizing risky/harmful behaviors that may occur in relationships?

How did students demonstrate understanding of emergency contact procedures such as identifying and utilizing school and community resources to protect personal safety?

Selected Resource

<https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/6-8-Lesson.docx>

Above is a sample of a body safety education resource to assist in addressing HB 4402. Counties may choose to use other resources not listed. Counties must develop a plan to vet resources they choose to ensure the lessons are developmentally appropriate and meet the county needs and requirements of HB 4402

Applicable Content Standards

6-8 Wellness Education Standards

- WE.6.17 Describe situations that may require professional health services (e.g., drug addiction, suicide prevention, sudden illness, accidents)
- WE.6.22 Explain refusal and negotiation skills to avoid or reduce risks of dangerous situations.
- WE.7.18 Explain why a situation might require professional and community health services.
- WE.7.31 Recognize risky or harmful behaviors that may occur in relationships (e.g., abuse, date rape, sexual activity)
- WE.7.33 Role-play protective behaviors used to avoid and reduce threatening situations (e.g., anger, bullying, and harassment).
- WE.8.26 Distinguish between safe and risky or harmful behaviors in relationships (e.g., abuse, date rape, peer pressure, gang membership).
- WE.8.28 Explain protective behaviors used to avoid and reduce threatening situations (e.g., anger, bullying, harassment, gang membership, eating disorders).

6-8 Dispositions and Standards for Student Success

- DSS.6-8.5 Protect Emotional and Physical Safety
 - Identify and apply strategies to reduce stress and protect safety, differentiating between situations requiring self-help, peer support, adult or professional help.
 - Develop and implement plans for situations such as teasing, bullying, harassment, threats, intimidation, and other violent acts or dangerous situations.
 - Identify and utilize communication skills and strategies to participate in only safe and healthy activities.
 - Know emergency contact information; identify and utilize school and community resources to protect personal safety.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Body Safety Awareness

Grades Nine through Twelve

Rationale

Abused and neglected children may be found in almost every school in the country. Recent research data indicates one in 10 children in West Virginia will be a victim of sexual abuse by age 18*. School-aged children make up more than half of the children who are abused and neglected. Educators serve as facilitators of the growth of children and are aware of the interrelationship among academic, emotional and physical development of children. Therefore, educators must take a proactive role in providing and supporting child abuse and neglect prevention programs.

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Developmentally appropriate practices for body safety awareness for grades 9-12:

- Students ages 15-19 continue to improve their ability to quickly plan an organized method to solve problems as it relates to moral, philosophical, ethical, social, and political issues that require theoretical and abstract reasoning.
- Students consider past experiences, present demands, and future consequences to maximize the potential for post-secondary success.
- Students are more motivated when what they are learning feels authentic and is relevant.
- Students benefit from learning experiences designed to actively engage them as they develop an understanding of the content.
- Students benefit from the use of a variety of research-based instructional strategies which allow for individualized support.
- Students benefit from practicing and modeling positive communication skills, decision making, and refusal skills as it relates to healthy relationships.

Ask Yourself...

Students need to identify a trusted adult in the school they can seek out for help. Ask yourself: *Do my students have opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with a trusted adult in the school? Do my students have opportunities to interact with the counselor?*

Students who are experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) may display difficulty regulating emotions. Ask yourself: *Am I meeting the social and emotional needs of all my students? What steps have I taken to support my trauma sensitive classroom environment?*

Students may disclose information during body safety lessons as part of the integrated approach to wellness education. Ask yourself: *Do I know how to support students who disclose such information to me?*

Grades Nine through Twelve Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Body Safety Awareness

Teacher Reflection

How did students demonstrate understanding of healthy ways to express emotions, needs, and desires in different situations?

How did students demonstrate understanding of potentially harmful situations and devise strategies to avoid such situations?

How did students demonstrate understanding of utilizing communication skills and strategies to participate in only safe and healthy activities?

How did students demonstrate understanding of emergency contact procedures such as identifying and utilizing school and community resources to protect personal safety?

Selected Resource

<https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/9-12-Lesson.docx>

Above is a sample of a body safety education resource to assist in addressing HB 4402. Counties may choose to use other resources not listed. Counties must develop a plan to vet resources they choose to ensure the lessons are developmentally appropriate and meet the county needs and requirements of HB 4402

Applicable Content Standards

9-12 Health Education Standards

- HE.15 Utilize effective communication skills in a variety of situations.
- HE.16 Describe healthy ways to express emotions, needs and desires in different situations (e.g. sportsmanship, relationships, death, dying and grief).
- HE.17 Demonstrate a variety of communication skills (e.g. verbal, non-verbal, listening, writing, technology, workplace).
- HE.18 Identify potentially harmful situations and devise strategies and develop skills to avoid such situations through refusal, negotiation and collaboration skills (e.g., violence and abuse situations, peer mediation, conflict resolution, support groups, "I" statements).
- HE.40 Identify school support staff and community health services and describe the impact this service has on individual school and community (e.g. school nurse, civic organizations, volunteering opportunities).

9-12 Dispositions and Standards for Student Success

- DSS.9-12.5 Protect Emotional and Physical Safety
 - Apply strategies to reduce stress and protect safety, differentiating between situations requiring self-help, peer

support, adult or professional help.

- Utilize communication skills and strategies to participate in only safe and healthy activities.
- Develop and implement plans for situations such as teasing, bullying, harassment, threats, intimidation and other violent acts or dangerous situations.
- Know emergency contact information and utilize school and community resources to protect personal safety.

DSS.9-12.2 Maintain Positive Relationships

- Distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Apply appropriate anger management and conflict resolution techniques.
- Minimize words and actions that hurt self and others.
- Address peer pressure in safe and effective ways.
- Identify bullying behaviors and utilize appropriate skills to address and decrease bullying.

DSS.9-12.3 Exhibit Respectful Behavior

- Respect personal boundaries and privacy needs.
- Interact appropriately with varying audiences in all settings.
- Use social and communication skills, dispositions and character traits appropriate for various situations and audiences

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS (USE COUNTY/ SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)

Date:

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

On March 5, 2018, the West Virginia Legislature passed House Bill 4402 which requires that children in grades K-12 receive age-appropriate body safety education. The goal of body safety education is to educate and empower West Virginia public school children. In accordance with W. Va. Code §18-2-41, your child will be provided body safety education.

It is recognized that the basic responsibility for the teaching of body safety education belongs in the home with the support of the school and other community agencies to strengthen the efforts of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

You are encouraged to review all instructional materials and continue to be involved in the discussions which promote body safety education.

Sincerely,

Superintendent/Principal

**It is recommended counties and/or schools inform families prior to beginning body safety education. The above template may be edited for use to meet the needs of the county and/or school.*

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS (USE COUNTY/ SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)

Date:

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian:

Abused and neglected children may be found in almost every school in the country. Recent research data indicates one in 10 children in West Virginia will be a victim of sexual abuse by age 18. School-aged children make up more than half of the children who are abused and neglected.

As a result of these alarming statistics, in 2018 the West Virginia Legislature passed House Bill 4402 which requires that children in grades K-12 receive age-appropriate body safety education. The goal of body safety education is to educate and empower West Virginia public school children. In accordance with West Virginia code §18-2-41 your child will be provided body safety education.

It is recognized that the basic responsibility for the teaching of body safety education belongs in the home with the support of the school and other community agencies to strengthen the efforts of parents/guardians.

You are encouraged to review all instructional materials and continue to be involved in the discussions which promote body safety education.

Sincerely,

Superintendent/ Principal

**It is recommended counties and/or schools inform families prior to beginning body safety education. The above template may be edited for use to meet the needs of the county and/or school.*

West Virginia Support Organizations and Resources

Below are links to West Virginia organizations with resources which could assist counties in addressing HB 4402. Counties may choose to use other resources not listed. Counties must develop a plan to vet resources they chose to ensure the lessons are developmentally appropriate and meet the county needs and requirements of HB 4402.

Child Protect of Mercer County
<http://www.mercerchildprotect.com/>

Family Refuge Center
<https://www.familyrefugecenter.org/>

Harrison County Child Advocacy Center
<http://www.harrisoncountychildadvocacycenter.com/>

Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia
<https://teamwv.org/prevent-child-abuse-wv-landing/>

Southern Educational Services Cooperative
<http://sescwv.org/>

West Virginia FREE
<https://www.wvfree.org/>

West Virginia Child Advocacy Network
<https://wvcan.org/>

Women's Aid in Crisis
<http://waicwv.com/>

WV Foundation for Rape Information and Services
<http://fris.org/>

National Support Organizations and Resources

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/index.html>

National Sexual Assault Phone (800-656-4673)
<https://www.rainn.org/about-national-sexual-assault-telephone-hotline>

Centralized Intake for Abuse and Neglect



West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

To make a report of abuse or neglect:
1.800.352.6513

What information do I need to provide when calling Centralized Intake?

- Demographic information of the victim(s)
- Type of abuse or neglect suspected
- Is the victim in imminent danger?
- Location of the victim and caregivers
- Is there a protective caregiver present?
- Does the alleged perpetrator have access to the victim?
- General functioning of victim and caregivers
- Any safety threats for first responders

Mandated reporters:

Anyone may report suspected abuse or neglect. However, under WV Code §49-6A-2, certain persons are mandated reporters and required to make a report. These persons are:

- Child care or foster care workers
- Christian Science practitioners
- Circuit court judges, family court judges or magistrates
- Commercial film or photographic print processor
- Emergency medical services personnel
- Employee, coach or volunteer of an entity that provides organized activities for children
- Employees of the Division of Juvenile Services
- Humane officers
- Medical, dental or mental health professionals
- Members of the clergy
- Peace officers or law enforcement officials
- Religious healers
- School teachers and other school personnel
- Social Service Workers
- Youth camp administrator or counselor

Report NOW under the following circumstances:

In any case where a mandated reporter believes the child suffered serious physical abuse, the reporter shall immediately make a report to the West Virginia State Police and any law enforcement agency having jurisdiction to investigate the report.

Also, any person over the age of 18 who receives information from a credible witness or observes any sexual abuse or sexual assault of a child, shall immediately and not more than 24 hours report the circumstances to the Department of Health and Human Resources and the West Virginia State Police or other law enforcement agency having jurisdiction to investigate the report.

If the reporter feels making a report of sexual abuse will expose himself or herself, the child, the reporter's children or other children in the subject's household to an increased threat of serious bodily injury, the individual may delay the report while he or she takes measure to remove himself or herself or the affected children from the perceived threat of additional harm. The individual must make the report as soon as practical after the threat of harm has been reduced.

Am I protected if I make a report?

Under WV Code §49-6A-6 persons making a report in good faith are immune from civil or criminal liability.



W. Clayton Burch
West Virginia Superintendent of Schools