

PA26-IA-01

ISSUED DATE: January 12, 2026**TO:** Children's Division Contracted Staff**FROM:** Sara Smith, Children's Division Director**SUBJECT:** Interviewing Children in a School or Daycare Setting**OVERVIEW:**

Pursuant to Section 210.145, RSMo., “if the parents of the child are *not* the alleged perpetrators, a parent of the child **must** be notified prior to the child being interviewed by the division.”

Workers and Chief Investigators must review [Section 2, Ch. 5.2.4, Parental and Alleged Perpetrator Notification](#) as there continues to be statewide misunderstanding of this statute and policy. These notification requirements are the same for Family Assessments, Investigations, and Juvenile Assessments.

If the alleged perpetrator is the parent, the child *may* be interviewed in a school setting. Workers may find it necessary to interview the child at school when interviewing the child in the home is unsafe, inappropriate, or infeasible.

If the alleged perpetrator is *not* a parent, workers must notify a parent before interviewing the child in a school setting.

Workers should be cognizant of the child’s privacy when interviewing in a school setting. Arrangements for the interview should be made with school staff to keep the disruption of the child’s schedule to a minimum.

When considering whether to interview the child at school, the worker must also be aware that pursuant to Section 210.145, RSMo., if the abuse is alleged to have occurred in a school or childcare facility workers shall not interview the child in any school building or childcare facility building where the abuse is alleged to have occurred. Thus, workers should not interview victims in Investigations, Assessments, or Juvenile Assessments in the same school or childcare facility where the incidents of the alleged abuse or problematic sexual behavior occurred.

If the child’s safety can only be assured at the school or daycare facility where the alleged incident occurred, workers must ensure safety of the child in a different building where the incident did not occur and outside of the presence of the alleged perpetrator(s). If a child attends school at a residential facility, the worker must assure the child’s safety in an area where the alleged incident did not occur and outside of the presence of the alleged perpetrator(s).

NECESSARY ACTIONS

- Review this Practice Alert with all leadership, supervisory, and investigative staff, and any other staff that are responsible for responding to CA/N reports.
- Review [Section 2, Ch. 5.2.4, Parental and Alleged Perpetrator Notification](#)

PDS CONTACT: Name: Cari Pointer Email: <u>Cari.A.Pointer@dss.mo.gov</u>	MANAGER CONTACT: Name: Kara Wilcox Email: <u>Kara.B.Wilcox@dss.mo.gov</u>
DEPUTY DIRECTOR CONTACT: Name: Marcia Hazelhorst Email: <u>Marcia.Hazelhorst@dss.mo.gov</u>	
CHILD WELFARE MANUAL POLICY AND COLLATERAL DOCUMENTATION:	
<u>Section 2, Ch. 5.2.4, Parental and Alleged Perpetrator Notification</u>	
<u>Section 2, Ch. 5.2.5.2.1, Interview with Students at a School Setting When Parents/Guardians Named as Alleged Perpetrator</u>	
<u>Section 2, Ch. 5.5.3.1.5, Child Interviews</u>	