

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Assault

The Board of Education recognizes that a student's mental and physical health will have an effect on the student's ability to obtain the most benefit from attending school. In order to increase the student's ability to learn while in school, the Board of Education realizes the importance of identifying students who may be suffering from abuse, neglect, or placed in imminent danger of serious harm or sexually assaulted. Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 17a-101, as amended, all school employees, including the Superintendent of Schools, administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, guidance counselors, school counselors, paraprofessionals, psychologists and social workers licensed behavior analysts, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, as well as school nurses, physicians, working in the school system, or any other person who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in District schools, who suspects child abuse, neglect or sexual assault by a school employee must first report it to the Department of Children and Families or to a law enforcement agency. When a school employee suspects child abuse, neglect or that a child has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm or has been sexually assaulted, he/she shall within twelve (12) hours make an oral report by telephone or in person to the Commissioner of Children and Families, or a law enforcement agency, followed within 48 hours with a written report. The Building Principal shall be notified immediately after the oral report has been made and the Principal in turn will notify the Superintendent of Schools and the child's parents. The written report prepared and submitted by the mandated reporter shall also be submitted to the Principal.

Any school personnel who has reasonable cause to suspect that a district employee is abusing, neglecting, or sexually assaulting a student shall orally report that suspicion as soon as possible but no later than twelve (12) hours by telephone or in person to the Commissioner of Children and Families followed no later than 48 hours of making the oral report with a written report to the Department of Children and Families. The Superintendent of Schools or supervising agent may be notified immediately after the oral report has been made. The Commissioner of Children and Families or his/her designee, is required to notify the school employee and the head of a school, except when that person is the alleged perpetrator. The Superintendent or supervising agent must: 1) immediately notify parent(s) of the alleged abuse that a report has been made; and 2) immediately notify the Police Department of the alleged abuse.

In addition, the Superintendent or supervising agent must submit a written report of suspected child abuse, neglect or sexual abuse by a school employee who has been entrusted with the care of a child to the Commissioner of Education or his/her representative. The Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families has a similar obligation. The Superintendent shall suspend a District employee when the DCF investigation results in a finding of reasonable cause that the employee abused, neglected, or sexually assaulted a child and recommends the employee be placed on the DCF Child Abuse and Neglect Registry. The Department of Children and Families is required to send to the State Department of Education a copy of the report. Within seventy two (72) hours after such suspension the Superintendent shall notify the Board of Education and the

Commissioner of Education or his/her representative of the reasons for and conditions of the suspension.

If the contract of employment of a school employee who possesses a certificate, permit or authorization issued by the State Board of Education is terminated, or if such certified school employee resigns his/her employment, as a result of an investigation which reveals that child abuse, neglect or sexual assault has occurred, the Superintendent shall notify the Commissioner of Education within 72 hours of such termination or resignation.

If the report of abuse or neglect involves an employee of the District as the perpetrator, the District may conduct its own investigation into the allegation, provided that such investigation shall not interfere with or impede any investigation conducted by the Department of Children and Families or of law enforcement agencies.

The Board recognizes that the Department of Children and Families is required to disclose records to the Superintendent of Schools in response to a mandated reporter's written or oral report of abuse or neglect or if the Commissioner of Children and Families has reasonable belief that a school employee abused or neglected a student. Not later than five (5) working days after an investigation of child abuse or neglect by a school employee has been completed, DCF is required to notify the school employee and the Superintendent and the State Department of Education of the investigation's results. If DCF has reasonable cause, and recommends the employee be placed on DCF's Child Abuse and Neglect Registry, the Superintendent shall suspend such employee.

The Superintendent shall maintain records of allegations, investigations and reports that a child has been abused or neglected by a school employee. Such records will be maintained in the District's Central Office. The records shall include any reports made to the Department of Children and Families. Such Department is to have access to all such records.

The Board, recognizing its responsibilities to protect children and in compliance with its statutory obligations shall provide in-service regarding the requirements and obligations of mandated reporters. In addition, all District employees shall complete a training program pertaining to the accurate and prompt reporting of abuse, neglect and sexual assault made available by the Commissioner of Children and Families. Also, all employees must complete a refresher program at least once every three years.

The Board, recognizing its responsibilities to protect children and in compliance with its statutory obligations, shall provide to each employee in-service training regarding the requirements and obligations of mandated reporters. District employees shall also participate in training offered by the Department of Children and Families. Each school employee is required to complete a refresher training program annually.

The Board shall annually distribute the mandated reporter policy electronically to all school employees and contractors employed by the Board of Education in regular contact with children. The Board shall annually distribute electronically, to all school employees and relevant contractors. Board members, and parents and guardians of enrolled students, (1) guidelines on identifying and reporting child sexual abuse, starting in the 2022-23 school year, and (2) information on DCF's sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program.

Documentation shall be maintained by the Principal of each school and reported to the Superintendent that all employees have, in fact, received the written policy and completed initial training and refresher training related to mandated reporting of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault as required by law.

The Board shall not retaliate against any mandated reporter for his/her compliance with the law and Board policy pertaining to the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect.

The Board of Education will post the telephone number of the Department of Children and Families' child abuse hotline, Careline, and the Internet web address that provides information about the Careline in each District school in a conspicuous location frequented by students. Such posting shall be in various languages most appropriate for the students enrolled in the school.

Establishment of the Confidential Rapid Response Team

The Board of Education shall establish a confidential rapid response team to coordinate with DCF to (1) ensure prompt reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect; or 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th degree sexual assault; 1st degree aggravated sexual assault; or 3rd degree sexual assault with a firearm of a student not enrolled in adult education by a school employee and (2) provide immediate access to information and individuals relevant to DCF's investigation of such cases.

The confidential rapid response team shall consist of (1) a local teacher and the Superintendent, (2) a local police officer, and (3) any other person the Board of Education deems appropriate.

DCF, along with a multidisciplinary team, is required to take immediate action to investigate and address each report of child abuse, neglect or sexual abuse in any school.

(cf. 4112.6/4212.6 - Personnel Records)

(cf. 5141.511 - Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-220a In service training. Professional development committees. Institutes for educators. Cooperating teacher program, regulations

10-221d Criminal history records check of school personnel. Fingerprinting. Termination or dismissal

10-221s Investigations of child abuse and neglect. Disciplinary action.

17a-28 Definitions. Confidentiality of and access to records; exceptions. Procedure for aggrieved persons. Regulations 17a-101 Protection of children from abuse. Reports required of certain professional persons. When child may be removed from surroundings without court order

17a-101a Report of abuse or neglect by mandated reporters.

17a-102 Report of danger of abuse. (as amended by PA 02-106)

17a-106 Cooperation in relation to prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse/neglect

10-151 Teacher Tenure Act

PA 11-93 An Act Concerning the Response of School Districts and the Departments of Education and Children and Families to Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect and the Identification of Foster Children in a School District

PA 14-186 An Act Concerning the Department of Children and Families and the Protection of Children

PA 15-205 An Act Protecting School Children

Adopted: June 25, 1984

Revised: September 24, 1990

April 7, 1997

November 24, 2003

November 23, 2009

February 13, 2012

March 9, 2015

February 29, 2016

September 11, 2016

September 10, 2018

August 28, 2023