



# WOODBIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

40 Beecher Road – South  
Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525

## MEMORANDUM

Jonathan S. Budd, Ph.D. – Superintendent  
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TO: Woodbridge Board of Education Policy Committee

FROM: Jonathan S. Budd, Ph.D., Superintendent

DATE: December 9, 2021

RE: Proposed Revision of Policy 5141.4, "Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Assault"

Please find attached a proposed revision of Policy 5141.4 to represent, primarily, the parameters of online mandated reporting as established by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). In addition, the policy has been updated to reflect a variety of minor changes to align with the recommendations of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE). The proposed changes are represented in red.

## Students

### Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Assault

Connecticut General Statutes § ~~17a~~-101, as periodically amended, ~~by Public Acts 02-138, 11-93, and~~ 15-205 requires all school employees including the Superintendent of Schools, school teachers, substitute teachers, administrators, school guidance counselors, school counselors, school paraprofessionals, licensed nurses, physicians, psychologists, social workers, licensed behavior analysts, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, or any other person, who, in the performance of his/her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to District students, who have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused, neglected, placed in imminent risk of serious harm, or sexually assaulted by a school employee to report such abuse, neglect and sexual assault in compliance with applicable state statutes.

An oral report by telephone or in person shall be made as soon as possible but not later than 12 hours to the Commissioner of Children and Families or a law enforcement agency, and to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee, followed ~~within not later than~~ 48 hours by a written report to the ~~Department~~ Commissioner of Children and Families or his/her designee. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has a 24-hour Child Abuse and Neglect Careline, "Careline", at 1-800-842-2288, for the purpose of making such oral reports.

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.

Online reports may be made to the Careline by mandated reporters if the report is of a non-emergent nature. A non-emergent situation is one in which a report is mandated but the child is not in immediate risk.

Reporting suspected abuse and/or neglect of children or sexual assault, in addition to the requirements pertaining to staff training, record keeping and dissemination of this policy, shall be in accordance with the procedures established and set forth in the Administrative Regulation 5141.4.

(cf. 4112.6/4212.6 – Personnel Records)

(cf. [5145.511](#) – Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-220a](#) Inservice training. Professional development committees. Institutes for educators. Cooperating teacher program, regulations (as amended by PA 11-93)

[10-221d](#) Criminal history records check of school personnel. Fingerprinting. Termination or dismissal (as amended by PA 11-93)

[10-221s](#) Investigations of child abuse and neglect. Disciplinary action. (as amended by PA 16-188)

[17a-28](#) Definitions. Confidentiality of and access to records; exceptions. Procedure for aggrieved persons. Regulations (as amended by PA 11-93 and PA 14-186)

[17a-101](#) Protection of children from abuse. ~~Reports required of certain professional persons. When child may be removed from surroundings without court order.~~ Mandated reporters. Educational and training program. Model mandated reporting policy. (as amended by PA 96-246, PA 00-220, PA 02-106, PA 03-168, PA 09-242, PA 11-93, PA 05-205, PA 18-15 and PA 18-17)

[17a-101a](#) Report of abuse or neglect by ~~mandated reporters~~ or injury of child or imminent risk of serious harm to the child. Penalty for failure to report. Notification of Chief State's Attorney. (as amended by PA 02-106, PA 11-93, PA 15-205, [PA 18-15](#) and [PA 18-17](#))

[17a-101b](#) Report by mandated reporters. Notification of law enforcement agency when allegation of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse. Notification of person in charge of institution, facility or school when a staff member suspected of abuse or neglect.

[17a-101c](#) Written or electronic report by mandated report.

17a-101d Contents of reports.

17a-101e Employer prohibited from discriminating or retaliating against employee who makes a good faith report or testifies re child abuse or neglect. Immunity from civil or criminal liability. False report of child abuse. Referral to Office of the Chief State's Attorney. Penalty.

17a-101f Classification and evaluation of reports. Determination of abuse or neglect of child. Investigation. Notice, entry of recommended finding. Referral to local law enforcement authority. Home visit. Removal of child in imminent risk of harm. Family assessment response program. Development of service plans and plans of care. Monitoring. Disclosure of information to community providers. Annual report.

17a-101g Abuse or neglect by school employees or staff member of public or private institution or facility providing care for children. Notice. Adoption of policy. Employee training program.

17a-101h School employee failure or delay in reporting child abuse or neglect. Policy re delayed report by mandated reporters.

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

10-151 Teacher Tenure Act

DCF Policy 22-1-3 Mandated Reporter's Failure to Report.

~~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~~

**Policy adopted: ~~May 21, 2019~~**

**WOODBRIIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
Woodbridge, Connecticut

## Students

### Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault

#### a. What Must be Reported

A report must be made when any mandated reporter of the Board of Education, in his/her professional capacity, has reasonable cause to suspect or to believe that a child under the age of eighteen: (*Mandated reporters include all school employees, the Superintendent, administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, guidance counselors, school counselors, licensed behavior analysts, school paraprofessionals, coaches of intramural and interscholastic athletics, as well as licensed nurses, physicians, psychologists and social workers either employed by the Board or working in one of the District schools, 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.*)

1. Is in danger of being or has been abused;
2. Has had non-accidental physical injuries or physical injuries which are at variance with the history given for them, inflicted by a person responsible for the child's health, welfare or care, or by a person given access to such child by a responsible person;
3. Has been neglected;
4. Has been sexually assaulted **by a school employee**; or
5. Has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm.

A mandated reporter's suspicions may be based on such factors as observations, allegations, and facts by a child, victim or third party. Suspicion or belief does not require certainty or probable cause.

#### Definitions

**"Abused"** means that a child (a) has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him or her other than by accidental means, or (b) has injuries which are at variance with the history given of them, or (c) is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation or exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

**"Neglected"** means that a child (a) has been abandoned, or (b) is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally or morally, or (c) is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his well-being, or (d) has been abused.

**"School employee"** (a) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by the Board or who is working in an elementary, middle or high school; or (b) 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 the Woodbridge Public Schools, pursuant to a contract with the Board.

**"Sexual assault"** means for the purposes of mandatory reporting laws and this policy; a violation of Sections [53a-70a](#), [53a-71](#), [53a-72a](#), [53a-72b](#) or [53a-73a](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

**"Statutory mandated reporter"** means an individual **required** by CGS Sec. [17a-101](#) to report suspected abuse and/or neglect of children or sexual assault by a school employee. The term "statutory mandated reporter" includes all school employees, as defined above.

#### b. Reporting Procedures for Statutory Mandated Reporters

The following procedures apply only to statutory mandated reporters, as defined above.

1. When an employee of the Board of Education suspects or believes that a child has been abused, neglected, has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm, or sexually assaulted by a school employee, the following steps shall be taken:

(a) The employee shall immediately, upon having reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused, neglected, or placed in imminent danger of serious harm, or has had non-accidental physical injury or injury which is at variance with the history or such injury, or sexually assaulted by a school employee and **not in no case** later than twelve (12) hours after having such a suspicion or belief, make an oral report by telephone or in

person to the Commissioner of Children and Families or his/her designee or the local law enforcement agency. The Department of Children and Families has established a 24 hour Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (Careline) at 1-800-842-2288 for the purpose of making such oral reports.

Online reports may be made to the Careline by mandated reporters if the report is of a non-emergent nature. A non-emergent situation is one in which a report is mandated but the child is not in immediate risk.

(b) The employee shall also immediately make an oral report to the Building Principal or his/her designee and/or the Superintendent or his/her designee. If the building principal is the alleged perpetrator of the abuse/neglect, then the employee shall notify the Superintendent or his/her designee directly.

(c) If a report prepared in accordance with Section (a) above concerns suspected abuse, neglect or sexual assault by a school employee, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall immediately notify the child's parent or guardian that such a report has been made.

(d) Not later than 48 hours of making an oral report, the employee shall submit a written report to the Commissioner of Children and Families, or his/her representative, containing all of the required information. The written reports should be submitted on the DCF-136 form or any other form designated for that purpose.

(e) The employee shall immediately submit a copy of the written report to the Principal and/or Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

(f) If a report prepared in accordance with Section (c) above concerns suspected abuse, neglect or sexual assault by a school employee who possesses a certificate, permit or authorization issued by the State Board of Education, the Superintendent shall submit a copy of the written report to the Commissioner of Education, or his/her representative.

### **c. Contents of Reports**

Any report made pursuant to this policy shall contain the following information, if known:

1. The names and addresses of the child and his/her parents or other persons responsible for his/her care;
2. The age of the child;
3. The gender of the child;
4. The nature and the extent of the child's injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect;
5. The approximate date and time the injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect occurred;
6. Information concerning any previous injury or injuries to, or maltreatment or neglect of, the child or his/her siblings;
7. The circumstances in which the injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect came to be known to the reporter;
8. The name of the person or persons suspected to be responsible for causing such injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect;
9. The reasons such person or persons are suspected of causing such injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect;
10. Any information concerning any prior cases in which such person or persons have been suspected of causing an injury, maltreatment or neglect of a child; and
11. Whatever action, if any, was taken to treat, provide shelter or otherwise assist the child.

For purposes of this section pertaining to the required reporting, a child includes any victim under eighteen years of age educated in a technical high school or District school. Any person who intentionally and unreasonably interferes with or prevents the making of the required report or attempts to conspire to do so shall be guilty of a class D felony, unless such individual is under eighteen years of age or educated in the technical high school system or in a district school, other than part of an adult education program. The mandatory reporting requirement regarding the sexual assault of a student by a school employee applies based on the person's status as a student, rather than his or her age.

### **d. Investigation of the Report**

If the suspected abuser is a school employee, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall thoroughly investigate the report, provided that such investigation does not interfere with or impede the investigation by the Department of Children and Families or by a law enforcement agency. To the extent feasible, this investigation shall be coordinated with the Commissioner of Children and Families or the police in order to minimize the number of

interviews of any child and to share information with other persons authorized to conduct an investigation of child abuse and neglect. When investigating a report, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall endeavor to obtain, when possible, the consent of parents or guardians or other persons responsible for the care of the child, to interview the child, except in those cases in which there is reason to believe that the parents or guardians or other persons responsible for the care of such child are the perpetrators or the alleged abusers. (In all other cases, DCF shall be responsible for conducting the investigation with the cooperation and collaboration of the Board as appropriate.)

The investigation shall include an opportunity for the suspected abuser to be heard with respect to the allegations contained within the report. During the course of an investigation of suspected abuse by a school employee, the Superintendent may suspend the employee with pay or may place the employee on administrative leave with pay pending the outcome of the investigation.

A person reporting child abuse, neglect or sexual assault shall provide any person authorized to conduct an investigation into such claim with all information related to the investigation that is in the possession or control of the person reporting child abuse, neglect, or sexual assault except as expressly prohibited by state or federal law.

**1. Evidence of Abuse by Certain School Employees.** After an investigation has been completed, if the Commissioner of Children and Families, based upon the results of such investigation, has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused, neglected or sexually assaulted by an employee who has been entrusted with the care of a child or has recommended that such employee be placed on the Department of Children and Families abuse and neglect registry, the Commissioner shall notify within five (5) working days after the completion of the investigation into child abuse, neglect or sexual assault by a school employee, the Superintendent, the school employee, and the Commissioner of Education of such finding and shall provide records, whether or not created by the Department of Children and Families, concerning such investigation to the Superintendent and the Commissioner of Education. The Superintendent shall suspend the employee, if not previously suspended, with pay and without diminution or termination of benefits if DCF has reasonable cause that the employee abused or neglected a child and recommends the employee be placed on the DCF child abuse and neglect registry. Not later than 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 the conditions of suspension. The Superintendent shall disclose records received from the Department of Children and Families to the Commissioner of Education and the Board of Education, or its attorney, for the purposes of review of employment status, certification, permit or authorization. Any decision of the Superintendent concerning such suspension shall remain in effect until the Board of Education acts, pursuant to the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes. The Commissioner of Education shall also be notified if such certified person resigns from his/her employment in the District. Regardless of the outcome of any investigation by DCF and/or the police, the Superintendent and/or the Board, as appropriate, may take disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment in accordance with the provisions of any applicable statute, if the Superintendent's investigation produces evidence that a child has been abused by a certified, permit or authorized school staff member.

If the contract of employment of a certified school employee holding a certificate, permit or authorization issued by the State Board of Education is terminated as a result of an investigation into reports of child abuse and neglect, the Superintendent shall notify the Commissioner of Education, or his/her representative, within 72 hours of such termination.

**2. Evidence of Abuse by Other School Staff.** If the investigation by the Superintendent and/or Commissioner of Children and Families did produce evidence that a child has been abused by a non-certified school staff member the Superintendent and/or the Board, as appropriate, may take disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

3. The District 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. The State Department of Education is to have access to all such records.

4. The Board shall provide to the Commissioner of Children and Families, upon request for the purposes of an investigation by the Commissioner of Children and Families of suspected child abuse or neglect by a teacher employed by the Board, any records maintained or kept in District files. Such records shall include, but not be limited to, supervisory records, reports of competence, personal character and efficiency maintained in such teacher's personnel file with reference to evaluation of performance as a professional employee of such board of education, and records of the personal misconduct of such teacher. (*"Teacher" includes each certified*

*professional employee below the rank of Superintendent employed by a Board of Education in a position requiring a certificate issued by the State Board of Education.)*

5. The Board of Education shall permit and give priority to any investigation conducted by the Commissioner of Children and Families or the appropriate local law enforcement agency that a child has been abused or neglected. The Board shall conduct its own investigation and take any disciplinary action, in accordance with the provisions of section [17a-101i](#) of the general statutes, as amended, upon notice from the Commissioner or the appropriate local law enforcement agency that the Board's investigation will not interfere with the investigation of the Commissioner or such local law enforcement agency.

6. The Department of Children and Families will review, at least annually, with the State Department of Education all records and information relating to reports and investigations that a child has been abused and neglected by a school employee, in the Department of Children and Families' possession to ensure that records and information are being shared properly.

#### **e. Delegation of Authority by Superintendent**

The Superintendent may appoint a designee for the purposes of receiving and making reports, notifying and receiving notification, or investigating reports pursuant to this policy.

#### **f. Special Reporting Procedures Concerning Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Intellectually Disabled Persons**

In addition to the reporting procedures set forth above, Connecticut General Statutes require that certain school personnel, including teachers, licensed nurses, psychologists and social workers, report any suspected abuse or neglect of intellectually disabled persons over the age of 18. It is policy of the Board of Education to require ALL EMPLOYEES of the Board of Education to comply with the following procedures in connection with the suspected abuse or neglect, as defined below, of any intellectually disabled person over the age of 18.

1. **Definitions.** For the purposes of this policy:

“**Abuse**” means the willful infliction of physical pain or injury or willful deprivation by a caretaker of services which are necessary to the person's health or safety.

“**Neglect**” means a situation where an intellectually disabled person either is living alone or is not able to provide for him/herself the services which are necessary to maintain his/her physical and mental health, or is not receiving such necessary services from the caretaker.

2. **Reporting Procedures.** If an employee has reasonable cause to suspect that an intellectually disabled person has been abused or neglected, he/she shall, within five calendar days, make an oral report to the Director of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, to be followed by a written report within five additional calendar days, or shall immediately notify the Superintendent in order for the Superintendent to make such oral and written reports to the Office of Protection and Advocacy. In the event that an employee makes a report to the Office of Protection and Advocacy, the employee shall immediately notify the Superintendent.

3. **Contents of Report.** Any such report shall contain the following information:

- (a) The name and address of the allegedly abused or neglected person;
- (b) A statement from the reporter indicating a belief that the person is intellectually disabled, together with information indicating that the person is unable to protect himself or herself from abuse or neglect;
- (c) Information concerning the nature and extent of the abuse or neglect; and
- (d) Any additional information which the reporter believes would be helpful in investigating the report or in protecting the intellectually disabled person.

4. **Investigation of Report.** If the suspected abuser is a school employee, the Superintendent shall thoroughly investigate the report following the procedures regarding the investigation of reports of child abuse set forth in paragraph d above.

If the investigation by the Superintendent and/or the Office of Protection and Advocacy produces evidence that an intellectually disabled person has been abused by a school employee, the Superintendent and/or the Board, as appropriate, may take disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

#### **g. Disciplinary Action for Failure to Follow Policy**

Any employee who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy shall be subject to ~~discipline~~, disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## **h. Non-Discrimination Policy**

The Board of Education shall not discharge or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against any employee who, in good faith, makes a report pursuant to this policy or testifies or is about to testify in any proceeding involving abuse or neglect.

## **i. Training**

All District employees are required to complete a training program pertaining to the accurate and prompt reporting of abuse and neglect, made available by the Commissioner of Children and Families. In addition, all employees must complete a refresher program at least once every three years. Employees hired before July 1, 2011 must complete the refresher training program by July 1, 2012 and must retake it once every three years thereafter.

The School Principal shall annually certify to the Superintendent that each school employee working at his/her school has completed the required initial training and the refresher training.

## **j. Foster Care**

Upon request of the Board of Education, the Department of Children and Families shall provide the name, date of birth and school of origin for each child in the custody of the Department of Children and Families who has been placed in foster care and is attending a District school.

## **Confidential Rapid Response Team**

The District will establish, not later than January 1, 2016, 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 consists of a local teacher, the Superintendent, a local police officer, and 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.

## **Hiring Prohibitions**

The Board of Education will not employ anyone who was terminated or resigned after a suspension based on DCF's investigation, if he or she has been convicted of (1) child abuse or neglect; or (2) 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th degree sexual assault; 1st degree aggravated sexual assault; or 3rd degree sexual assault with a firearm of a student who is not enrolled in adult education.

The Board of Education will not employ an individual who was terminated or resigned, if he or she (1) failed to report the suspicion of such crimes when required to do so; or (2) intentionally and unreasonably interfered with or prevented a mandated reporter from carrying out this obligation or conspired or attempted to do so. This applies regardless of whether an allegation of abuse, neglect, or sexual assault has been substantiated.

## **Posting of DCF's "Careline"**

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.

(cf. [4112.5/4212.6](#) – Personnel Records)

(cf. 5145.511 – Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-220a](#) Inservice training. Professional development committees. Institutes for educators. Cooperating teacher program, regulations (as amended by PA 11-93)

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17a-101g Abuse or neglect by school employees or staff member of public or private institution or facility providing care for children. Notice. Adoption of policy. Employee training program.

17a-101h School employee failure or delay in reporting child abuse or neglect. Policy re delayed report by mandated reporters.

~~17a-101i Abuse of child by school employee or staff member of public or private institution or facility providing care for children. Suspension. Notification of state's attorney re: conviction. Boards of education to adopt written policy re: reporting of child abuse by school employee.~~

~~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.

DCF Policy 22-1-3 Mandated Reporter's Failure to Report.

~~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 15-112 An Act Concerning Unsubstantiated Allegations of Abuse and Neglect by School Employees~~

~~PA 15-205 An Act Protecting School Children~~

## Definitions and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

### Physical Abuse

A child may be found to have been physically abused who:

- has been inflicted with physical injury or injuries other than by accidental means,
- is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment, and/or
- has injuries at variance with the history given of them.

Evidence of physical abuse includes:

- excessive physical punishment;
- bruises, scratches, lacerations;
- burns, and/or scalds;
- reddening or blistering of the tissue through application of heat by fire, chemical substances, cigarettes, matches, electricity, scalding water, friction, etc;
- injuries to bone, muscle, cartilage, ligaments: fractures, dislocations, sprains, strains, displacements, hematomas, etc.;
- head injuries;
- internal injuries;
- death;
- misuse of medical treatments or therapies;
- malnutrition related to acts of commission or omission by an established caregiver resulting in a child's malnourished state that can be supported by professional medical opinion;
- deprivation of necessities acts of commission or omission by an established caregiver resulting in physical harm to child; and
- cruel punishment.

**Note:** Evidence must be ruled in after accounting for the child's misbehavior, surrounding circumstances including the parents' motive; the type of punishment administered; the amount of force utilized; the child's age, size, and ability to understand the punishment.

### Sexual Abuse / Exploitation

Sexual Abuse/Exploitation is any incident involving a child(ren)'s non-accidental exposure to sexual behavior. Evidence of sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to the following:

- rape;
- penetration: digital, penile, or foreign objects;
- oral / genital contact;
- indecent exposure for the purpose of sexual gratification of the offender, or for purposes of shaming, humiliating, shocking or exerting control over the victim;
- incest;
- fondling, including kissing, for the purpose of sexual gratification of the offender, or for purposes of shaming, humiliating, shocking or exerting control over the victim;
- sexual exploitation, including: possession, manufacture, or distribution of child pornography; online enticement of a child for sexual acts; child prostitution; child-sex tourism; unsolicited obscene material sent to a child; or misleading domain name likely to attract a child to an inappropriate website;
- coercing or forcing a child to participate in, or be negligently exposed to, pornography and/or sexual behavior;
- disease or condition that arises from sexual transmission;
- other verbal, written or physical behavior not overtly sexual but likely designed to "groom" a child for future sexual abuse.

## Definitions and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

### Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking includes, but is not limited to:

- **sex trafficking:** the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.
- **labor trafficking:** the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

### Emotional Maltreatment / Abuse

Emotional Maltreatment /Abuse are act(s), statement(s), or threats, which:

- has had, or is likely to have an adverse impact on the child; and/or
- interferes with a child's positive emotional development.

**Note:** Whether or not the adverse impact has to be evident is a function of the child's age, cognitive abilities, verbal ability and developmental level. Adverse impact is not required if the action/inaction is a single incident which demonstrates a serious disregard for the child's welfare.

The adverse impact may result from a single event and/or from a consistent pattern of behavior and may be currently observed, and/or predicted, as supported by evidenced based practice.

Evidence of emotional maltreatment-abuse includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- rejecting;
- degrading;
- isolating and/or victimizing a child by means of cruel, unusual, or excessive methods of discipline; and exposing the child to brutal or intimidating acts or statements.

Indicators of Adverse Impact of emotional maltreatment- abuse may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- depression;
- withdrawal;
- low self-esteem;
- anxiety;
- fear;
- aggression/passivity;
- emotional instability;
- sleep disturbances;
- somatic complaints with no medical basis;
- inappropriate behavior for age or development;
- suicidal ideations or attempts;
- extreme dependence;
- academic regression; and/or trust issues.

### Physical Neglect

A child may be found neglected who:

- has been abandoned;
- is being denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally, or morally;

## Definitions and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

- is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his well-being; and/or
- has been abused.

Evidence of physical neglect includes, but is not limited to:

- inadequate food;
- malnutrition;
- inadequate clothing;
- inadequate housing or shelter;
- deviant, or impaired behavior by the person responsible for the child's health, welfare or care; by a person given access to the child; or by a person entrusted with the child's care which adversely impacts the child;
- permitting the child to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his well-being including, but not limited to, the following:
  - substance use by caregiver, which adversely impacts the child physically;
  - substance use by the mother of a newborn child and the newborn has a positive urine or meconium toxicology for drugs;
  - psychiatric problem of the caregiver which adversely impacts the child physically;
  - exposure to family violence which adversely impacts the child physically;
  - exposure to violent events, situations, or persons that would be reasonably judged to compromise a child's physical safety;
  - non-accidental, negligent exposure to drug trafficking and/or individuals engaged in the active abuse of illegal substances;
  - voluntarily and knowingly entrusting the care of a child to individuals who may be disqualified to provide safe care (e.g. persons who are subject to active protective or restraining orders; persons with past history of violent/drug/sex crimes; persons appearing on the Central Registry);
  - non-accidental or negligent exposure to pornography or sexual acts;
  - inability to consistently provide the minimum of child-caring tasks; and/or
  - inability to provide or maintain a safe living environment.
- action/inaction resulting in death;
- abandonment;
- action/inaction resulting in the child's failure to thrive;
- transience;
- inadequate supervision: creating or allowing a circumstance in which a child is alone for an excessive period of time given the child's age and cognitive abilities;
- holding the child responsible for the care of siblings or others beyond the child's ability; and/or
- failure to provide reasonable and proper supervision of a child given the child's age and cognitive abilities.

### Note:

- inadequate food, clothing, or shelter or transience: finding must be related to caregiver acts of omission or commission and not simply a function of poverty alone.
- whether or not the adverse impact has to be demonstrated is a function of the child's age, cognitive abilities, verbal ability and developmental level.
- adverse impact may not be required if the action/inaction is a single incident that demonstrates a serious disregard for the child's welfare.

### Medical Neglect

Medical Neglect is the unreasonable delay, refusal or failure on the part of the person responsible for the child's health, welfare or care or the person entrusted with the child's care to seek, obtain, and/or maintain those services for necessary medical, dental or mental health care when such person knows, or should reasonably be expected to know, that such actions may have an adverse impact on the child.

Evidence of medical neglect includes, but is not limited to:

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- frequently missed appointments, therapies or other necessary medical and/or mental health treatments;
- withholding or failing to obtain or maintain medically necessary treatment from a child with life-threatening, acute or chronic medical or mental health conditions;
- withholding medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life threatening conditions.

Note: Failure to provide the child(ren) with immunizations or routine well child care in and of itself does not constitute medical neglect.

*Cross Reference: DCF Policy 21-24, “Disabled Infants with Life Threatening Conditions”*

### Educational Neglect

Definition: Educational neglect occurs when a school-aged child has excessive absences from school through the intent or neglect of the parent or caregiver.

Note: Excessive absenteeism and school avoidance may be presenting symptoms of a failure to meet the physical, emotional or medical needs of a child. Careline staff shall consider these potential additional allegations at the time of referral.

### Criteria:

- For children school-aged to age 12 excessive absenteeism may be indicative of the parent’s or caregiver’s failure to meet the educational needs of the student.
- For children older than age 12 excessive absenteeism, coupled with a failure by the parent or caregiver to engage in efforts to improve the child’s attendance, may be indicative of educational neglect.

Note: For children older than age 12, excessive absenteeism through the child’s own intent, despite the parent’s or caregiver’s efforts, is not educational neglect. Rather this is truancy which is handled through the school district.

Considerations in determining the criteria for excessive absenteeism, the following characteristics of the child shall be considered by the Social Worker:

- age;
- health;
- level of functioning;
- academic standing; and dependency on parent or caregiver.

In determining the criteria for **excessive absenteeism**, the following **characteristics of the parent or caregiver** shall be considered by the Social Worker:

- rationale provided for the absences;
- efforts to communicate and engage with the educational provider; and
- failure to enroll a school-aged child in appropriate educational programming (including home schooling).

**Definition of School-Aged Child:** Except as noted below, a school-aged child is a child five years of age and older and under 18 years of age who is not a high school graduate.

Exceptions:

- A parent or person having control of a child may exercise the option of not sending the child to school at age five or six years by personally appearing at the school district office and signing an option form. In these cases, educational neglect occurs if the parent or person having control of the child has enrolled the child at age five or six years and then does not allow the child to attend school or receive home instruction.
- A parent or person having control of a child 17 years of age may consent to such child’s withdrawal from school. The parent or person shall personally appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form.

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**Note:** Failure to sign a registration option form for the child is not in and of itself educational neglect.

### Emotional Neglect

**Emotional Neglect** is the denial of proper care and attention, or failure to respond, to a child's affective needs by the person responsible for the child's health, welfare or care; by the person given access to the child; or by the person entrusted with the child's care which has an adverse impact on the child or seriously interferes with a child's positive emotional development.

**Note:** Whether or not the adverse impact has to be demonstrated is a function of the child's age, cognitive abilities, verbal ability and developmental level. Adverse impact is not required if the action/inaction is a single incident which demonstrates a serious disregard for the child's welfare.

The adverse impact may result from a single event and/or from a consistent pattern of behavior and may be currently observed or predicted as supported by evidenced based practice.

Evidence of emotional neglect includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- inappropriate expectations of the child given the child's developmental level;
- failure to provide the child with appropriate support, attention and affection; and/or
- permitting the child to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his well-being including, but not limited to, the following:
  - substance use by caregiver, which adversely impacts the child emotionally;
  - psychiatric problem of the caregiver, which adversely impacts the child emotionally; and
  - exposure to family violence which adversely impacts the child emotionally.

Indicators may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- depression;
- withdrawal;
- low self-esteem;
- anxiety;
- fear;
- aggression / passivity;
- emotional instability;
- sleep disturbances;
- somatic complaints with no medical basis;
- inappropriate behavior for age or development;
- suicidal ideations or attempts;
- extreme dependence;
- academic regression; and/or trust issues.

### Moral Neglect

**Moral Neglect:** Exposing, allowing, or encouraging the child to engage in illegal or reprehensible activities by the person responsible for the child's health, welfare or care or person given access or person entrusted with the child's care.

Evidence of Moral Neglect includes but is not limited to:

- stealing;
- using drugs and/or alcohol; and/or involving a child in the commission of a crime, directly or by caregiver indifference.

**Legal References:** Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-184  
Federal Law 18 U.S.C. 2215 Sexual Exploitation of Children