

BLOOMFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bloomfield, Connecticut

BOARD POLICY

No. 5141.4(a)

**RE: Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect
Students**

Approved: 11/12/2002
Revised: 12/08/2015
Revised: 11/13/2018
Revised: DATE

The Board of Education (Board) recognizes its legal and ethical obligations in the reporting of suspected child abuse, neglect and sexual assault. Any person applying for employment with the Board shall submit to a record check of the Department of Children and Families Child Abuse and Neglect Registry before the person may be hired. Mandated reporters include all school employees, specifically Superintendent, administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, guidance counselors, school counselors, paraprofessionals, coaches of intramural and interscholastic athletics, as well as licensed nurses, physicians, psychologists and social workers and licensed behavior analysts 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. Such individual(s) 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 is required to report such abuse, neglect or risk and/or sexual assault.

The Board shall annually distribute the mandated reporter policy electronically to all school employees. The Board shall annually distribute electronically, to all school employees, 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.

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

Alternate Language: In furtherance of CGS 17a-101 et. seq., and its purpose, it is the policy of the Board of Education to require ALL EMPLOYEES of the Board of Education to report suspected abuse and/or neglect, or imminent risk of serious harm, in accordance with the procedures set forth in this policy.

Furthermore, the Board of Education requires all personnel who have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child, under the age of eighteen (18), except in the case of sexual assault by a school employee, has been abused, neglected, has had non-accidental physical injury, or injury which is at variance with the history given of such injury, is placed in imminent danger of serious harm or has been sexually abused by a school employee to report such cases in accordance with the law, Board policy and administrative regulations. 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.

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A mandated reporter shall make an oral report, by telephone or in person, to the Commissioner of Children and Families or a law enforcement agency as soon as possible, but not later than twelve (12) hours after the mandated reporter has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused, neglected or placed in imminent risk of serious harm.

The oral and written reports shall include, if known: (1) the names and addresses of the child and his/her parents/guardians or other persons responsible for his/her care; (2) the child's age; (3) the child's gender; (4) the nature and 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(s) 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.)

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 by a law enforcement agency.

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 Commissioner of

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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 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, not later than three years after completion of the initial training program, and shall thereafter retake such refresher training course at least once every three years. The principal of each school in the district shall annually certify to the superintendent that each school employee working at such school has completed the required initial training and the refresher training.

State law prohibits retaliation against a mandated reporter for fulfilling his/her obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect. 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.

(This paragraph is optional) It is mandated that policy and procedure development include three major components: Education, Intervention and Evaluation. The Education component requires that school personnel be provided with ongoing education (staff development) related to the recognition and reporting of suspected child abuse, neglect and sexual assault. Intervention requires that "at risk" students be identified and that suspected child abuse, neglect and sexual assault be reported. Evaluation is essential in order to determine whether policy and procedures are effective and appropriately updated to incorporate changes in knowledge, personnel, student and family needs, community resources and law. Such evaluation should take place annually, or more frequently as needed.

In accordance with the mandates of the law and consistent with its philosophy, the Board in establishing this policy directs the superintendent of schools to develop and formalize the necessary rules and regulations to comply fully with the intent of the law.

This policy will be distributed annually to all employees. documentation shall be maintained that all employees have, in fact, received the written policy and completed the required initial and refresher training related to mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect as required by law.

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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.

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.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-220a In-service 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)

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Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)

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. (as amended by pa 96-246, pa 00-220, pa 02-106, pa 03-168, pa 09-242, pa 11-93, pa 15205, pa 18-15 and pa 18-17)

17a-101a Report of abuse or neglect by mandated reports. (as amended by pa 02-106, pa 11-93, and pa 15-205, pa 18-15 and pa 18-17)

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

P.A. 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

P.A. 15-205 An Act Protecting School Children.

P.A. 14-186 An Act Concerning The Department of Children and Families and the Protection of Children