

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse

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. Connecticut General Statutes 17a-101, as amended, require all employees of the Board of Education, including teachers, administrators school Superintendent, school guidance counselors, school paraprofessionals, licensed nurses, psychologists, social workers, substitute teachers and coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, 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 have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused, neglected, or placed in imminent risk of serious harm to report such abuse and/or neglect.

An oral report by telephone or in person shall be made as soon as possible but no later than 12 hours after the reporter has reasonable cause to suspect the child has been abused or neglected to the Commissioner of Children and Families or a law enforcement agency followed within 48 hours by 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 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 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 or neglect by a school employee who has been entrusted with the care of a child and who holds a certificate, permit or authorization issued by the State Board of Education, 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 certified staff employee when the investigation produces evidence that the employee abused a child. 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 has occurred, the Superintendent shall notify the Commissioner of Education within 72 hours of such termination.

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 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. District employees shall also participate in training offered by the Department of Children and Families. In addition, all District employees shall complete a training program pertaining to the accurate and prompt reporting of abuse and neglect, made available by the Commissioner of Children and Families. Also, 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.

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 training related to mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect as required by law.

Additionally, 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.

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.

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)

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

[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 and PA 00-220, PA 02-106, PA 03-168, PA 09-242 and PA 11-93)

[17a](#) 102 Report of danger of abuse.

P.A. 96 246 An Act Concerning The Reporting, Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse and the Termination of Parental Rights

[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. 16-188 An Act Concerning Educational Issues

Policy Adopted: March 1, 1995

Policy Revised: February 5, 1997

Policy Revised: December 4, 2002

Policy Revised: December 7, 2016

BRISTOL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bristol, Connecticut

5141.4

Students

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

1. The staff member (reporter) suspecting a child (including individuals with intellectual disability who are over eighteen years old) is abused/neglected must immediately report the suspicion to the Superintendent or building Principal or Principal's designee.
2. The staff member (reporter) shall also immediately make an oral report of suspected abuse to the regional office of DCF. The oral report should contain the following information, if known:

- a) Names and addresses of the child and his/her parents or other person responsible for the child's care;
- b) Age of the child;
- c) Gender of the child;
- d) Nature and extent of the child's injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect;
- e) Approximate date and time the injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect occurred;
- f) Information concerning any previous injuries to, maltreatment of or neglect to the child or his/her siblings;
- g) Circumstances in which the injuries, maltreatment or neglect came to be known to the mandatory reporter;
- h) Name of the person or persons suspected to be responsible for causing such injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect; and
- i) The reasons such person or persons are suspected of causing such injury or injuries;
- j) 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
- k) Whatever action, if any, was taken to treat, provide shelter or otherwise assist the child.

3. A building level support team comprised of the building Principal/designee and other appropriate school personnel will assist and support the staff member in making the oral report. The purpose will be to ensure support and advocacy for the child and the reporter through the reporting process. The suspicion of the mandated reporter should not be questioned or challenged during this process.

Note: The decision regarding parent or guardian contact should always be made after consultation with DCF in order to ensure the safety of the child.

- a) The building level support team will confer to decide if it is reasonable to interview the student or assess the student's physical status.
- b) The school nurse, psychologist, or other appropriate support personnel may interview the student and the school nurse may examine the child if the child is willing.
- c) A conference may be held with the parent/guardian in the school or a telephone call may be made. If the team feels the safety of the student may be jeopardized and

- further abuse of the child will occur, the parent/guardian will not be notified. Any notification must be done after consultation with DCF.
4. The reporter shall also submit a written report containing all information to the Principal and the Superintendent of Schools.
 5. If the mandatory reporter did not earlier provide all of the above information to the DCF in his/her oral report, the reporter shall submit a written report to DCF containing such information within forty eight hours of making an oral report.
 6. The Principal or designee will keep a log of all events, i.e. date and time of initial referral, report to Principal, examination by the nurse, interviews, filing of the oral and written report. The log will be continued if DCF has access to the student in the school.

Cooperation of School District in DCF Investigations

1. The DCF worker will notify the Principal or designee when access to any child at school is required and shall present official identification to the Principal or designee.
2. The Principal or designee will notify the Superintendent of Schools of a request by DCF for access to any child.
3. If deemed appropriate by DCF or the administration, the parent/guardian of the child will be notified prior to the interview taking place. If the administration or DCF feels the safety of the student may be jeopardized or further abuse to the child will occur, the parent/guardian will not be notified prior to the interview.
4. The Principal or designee will arrange for an appropriate setting for the DCF worker to interview the student and/or siblings.
5. During the interview of the student and/or siblings by the DCF worker a member of the school support team shall be present.
6. The investigation/interview will be conducted solely by the DCF social worker.
7. The removal of clothing as part of an investigation into an injury which may have been caused by child abuse shall be done only at the request of the school medical adviser or the school nurse.
8. If the DCF worker determines the need for further medical assessment in a health care facility, the DCF worker will notify the Principal and the parent/guardian and may sign the child out of school only with parental permission.

If the parent denies permission for the release of the child from school, the DCF worker will submit to the Principal either a court order or written authorization from DCF to invoke the 96 hour hold. A copy will be placed in the child's cumulative record.

If DCF does not have a court order or written authorization to invoke the 96 hour hold, the child will not be released to DCF by the school.

Procedure for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse of Students by a School Employee

1. The staff member suspecting a child is abused/neglected by another employee of the school system, must immediately report the suspicion to the Superintendent of Schools or building Principal or Principal's designee. The staff member (reporter) shall also immediately make an oral report of suspected abuse to the regional office of DCF.
2. When an investigation by DCF produces evidence of child abuse by a certified school employee, the Superintendent may suspend the certified professional employee with pay and without termination of benefits if the Commissioner of Children and Families recommends such school employee be placed on the child abuse and neglect registry. The Superintendent shall notify the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education of the reasons for and the conditions of the suspension within 72 hours.
3. If the employee suspected of child abuse/neglect is a non certified employee, that employee would be entitled to any due process rights and/or contractual right that may exist before he/she is suspended or discharged.

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](#) 102 Report of danger of abuse.

[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

Regulation Approved: July 11, 1990

Regulation Revised: September 11, 1991

Regulation Revised: March 1, 1995

Regulation Revised: February 5, 1997

Regulation Revised: December 4, 2002

Regulation Revised: November 3, 2004

Regulation revised: December 7, 2016

BRISTOL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bristol, Connecticut

Handbook Inclusion

For Inclusion in Staff Handbooks

Indicators of Abuse/Neglect

Indicators of Physical Abuse

HISTORICAL

- Delay in seeking appropriate care after injury
- No witnesses
- Inconsistent or changing descriptions of accident by child and/or parent
- Child's developmental level inconsistent with history
- History of prior "accidents" Absence of parental concern
- Child handicapped (physically, mentally, developmentally) or otherwise perceived as "different" by parent
- Unexplained school absenteeism
- History of precipitating crisis

PHYSICAL

- Soft tissue injuries on face, lips, mouth, back, buttocks, thighs or large areas of the torso
- Clusters of skin lesions; regular patterns consistent with an implement

- Shape of lesions inconsistent with accidental bruise
- Bruises/welts in various stages of healing
- Burns; pattern consistent with an implement on soles, palms, back, buttocks and genitalia; symmetrical and/or sharply demarcated edges
- Fractures/dislocations inconsistent with history
- Laceration of mouth, lips, gums or eyes
- Bald patches on scalp
- Abdominal swelling or vomiting
- Adult-size human bite mark(s)
- Fading cutaneous lesions noted after weekends or absences
- Rope marks

BEHAVIORAL

- Wary of physical contact with adults
- Affection inappropriate for age
- Extremes in behavior, aggressiveness/withdrawal
- Reports injury by parent
- Expresses fear of parents
- Reluctance to go home
- Feels responsible (punishment "deserved")
- Poor self-esteem
- Clothing covers arms and legs even in hot weather

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

HISTORICAL

- Vague somatic complaints
- Excessive school absence
- Inadequate supervision at home

- History of urinary tract infection or vaginitis
- Complaint of pain; genital, anal or lower back/abdominal
- Complain of genital itching
- Any disclosure of sexual activity, even if contradictory

PHYSICAL

- Discomfort in walking, sitting
- Evidence of trauma or lesions in and around mouth
- Vaginal discharge/vaginitis
- Vaginal or rectal bleeding
- Bruises, swelling or lacerations around genitalia, inner thighs
- Dysuria
- Vulvitis
- Any other signs or symptoms of sexually transmitted disease
- Pregnancy

BEHAVIORAL

- Low self-esteem
- Change in eating patterns
- Unusual new fears
- Regressive behaviors
- Personality changes (hostile/aggressive or extreme compliance) Depression
- Decline in school achievement
- Social withdrawal; poor peer relationships
- Indicates sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge for age seductive behavior, promiscuity or prostitution
- Substance abuse
- Suicide ideation or attempt

- Runaway
- Inappropriate language or sexual touching at a young age

Indicators of Emotional Abuse

HISTORICAL

- Parent ignores/isolates/belittles/rejects/scapegoats child
- Parent's expectations inappropriate to child's development
- Prior episode(s) of physical abuse
- Parent perceives child as "different"

PHYSICAL

- (Frequently none)
- Failure to thrive
- Speech disorder
- Lag in physical development
- Signs/symptoms of physical abuse

BEHAVIORAL

- Poor self-esteem
- Regressive behavior (sucking, rocking, enuresis)
- Sleep disorders
- Indicators of Emotional Abuse
- Adult behaviors (parenting siblings)
- Antisocial behaviors
- Emotional or cognitive developmental delay
- Extremes in behavior - overly aggressive/compliant
- Depression
- Suicide ideation/attempt

Indicators of Neglect

HISTORICAL

- High rate of school absenteeism
- Frequent visits to school nurse with nonspecific complaints
- Inadequate supervision, especially for long periods and for dangerous activities
- Child frequently unattended; locked out of house
- Parental inattention to recommended medical care
- No food intake for 24 hours
- Home substandard (no windows, doors, heat); dirty, infested, obvious hazards
- Family member addicted to drugs/alcohol

PHYSICAL

- Hunger, dehydration
- Poor personal hygiene, unkempt, dirty
- Dental caries/poor oral hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing for weather/size of child, clothing dirty; wears same clothes day after day
- Constant fatigue or listlessness
- Unattended physical or health care needs
- Infestations
- Multiple skin lesions/sores from infection

BEHAVIORAL

- Comes to school early, leaves late
- Frequent sleeping in class
- Begging for/stealing food
- Adult behavior/pseudomaturity (parenting siblings)
- Delinquent behaviors

- Drug/alcohol use/abuse

Students

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CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT BY CARTAKER:

INTERVENTION DECISION MAKING

(Document all Procedures)

5141.4 Appendix C