

To bring this policy into full compliance, the New Fairfield Board should consider updating this policy with the revisions provided:

- Modernizing the terminology to “person with intellectual disabilities;
- Striking all references to the “Office of Protection and Advocacy” and replacing them with the current agencies and adding correct reporting pathways for vulnerable adults over 18;
- Updating Section L to accurately reflect that failure to report is a criminal offense;
- Ensuring staff know that online reporting via the DCF portal is strictly reserved for non-emergent, non-school, and/or employee-perpetrated situations;

In addition to these suggested revisions, the Board should ensure this policy includes an updated link to the current active CT.gov portal page for the DCF Careline, so staff can easily access digital reporting forms.

Finally, you may find non-substantive edits throughout the policy and its regulations (e.g., punctuation and sentence simplification) to provide greater specificity and clarity.

Students

Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault

Connecticut General Statutes 17a-101, as periodically amended by Public Act 96-246, 97-319, 02-106, 02-138, 09-242, 11-93 and 15-205 requires all school employees including the school Superintendent, school teachers, substitute teachers, administrators, school guidance counselors, school counselors, school paraprofessionals, tutors, mentors, licensed nurses, physicians, psychologists, social workers, licensed behavior analysts and coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, co-curricular advisors, 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, or placed in imminent risk of serious harm or sexually abused by a school employee to immediately report such abuse, neglect, and sexual assault in compliance with applicable state statutes. Furthermore, it is the policy of the New Fairfield Board of Education to require all personnel who have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any child under the age of 18 has been abused or neglected or placed in imminent risk of serious harm by any person to report such suspected abuse and/or neglect. Reports must be made when information is learned or obtained during the ordinary course of such person’s employment or profession.

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. **For the purpose of this policy, “school employee” encompasses contract service providers, virtual or remote instructors, and regular volunteers who have direct student contact.**

Students

Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault (continued)

An oral report by telephone or in person shall be made as soon as possible but not later than twelve (12) hours to the Commissioner of Children and Families (DCF) or a law enforcement agency, and to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee followed not later than forty-eight (48) hours by a written report to the Commissioner of Children and Families or his/her designee. The Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, 1-800-842-2288, should be used for telephone reports; DCF Form #136 should be used for written reports. Forms are located in all schools.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has a 24-hour Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, “Careline” at 1-800-842-2288, for the purpose of making such oral reports.

Mandated reporters are equally responsible for complying with procedures and timeline requirements for oral and written reports. District social workers or, in their absence, building administrators may assist in filing these reports if the reporter chooses. This confidential copy of the official written report, prepared and submitted by the mandated reporter, shall be submitted to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS), and it shall be maintained in a confidential file in the PPS office.

In all cases, the Building Principal shall be notified immediately after the oral report has been made to DCF. The Building Principal will then notify the Superintendent of Schools.

For these purposes, a child has been the object of child abuse or neglect if he or she has a specific injury or injuries inflicted upon him or her by a person responsible for such child’s or youth’s health, welfare, or care by a person given access to such child by such responsible person, or by a school employee other than by accidental means, or has injuries which are at variance with the history given of them, or is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to malnutrition, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment, or cruel punishment, or has been neglected as defined by the Connecticut General Statutes, regardless of the offender-victim relationship and regardless of the offender’s affiliation with any organization. [See Appendix A, Indicators of Abuse and Neglect.]

Any school personnel who has reasonable cause to suspect that a district employee is abusing 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 forty-eight (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. **No internal school protocol or lack of a principal’s agreement can delay or prevent a staff member from dialing the Careline.**

Students

Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault (continued)

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.

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 or sexually assaulted a child. The Department of Children and Families is required to send a copy of the report to the State Department of Education. ~~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 **immediately, but no later than five (5) business days** 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 immediately, **but no later than five (5) business days**. ~~within 72 hours of such termination or resignation.~~

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.

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 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 each employee with 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.

Students

Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault (continued)

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. The Principal of each school in the district shall annually certify to the Superintendent that each school employee working at that school has completed the required initial and refresher training.

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.

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. This information is contained in Appendix B.

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. *(Note: Mandated reporters reporting electronically when they reasonably suspect that a child has been abused, neglected, or placed at risk of imminent harm in a "non-emergent" situation can do so without risk that they will be subject to a failure to report finding and subsequent penalties.)*

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.

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.

Students

Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault (continued)

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 Boards 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 Inservice 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. Mandated reporters.
 Educational and training program. Model mandated reporting policy.
 17a-101a Report of abuse, neglect or injury of child or imminent risk of
 serious harm to the child. Penalty for failure to report. Notification of Chief
 State's Attorney.
 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 reporter.
 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-101g 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.

Students

Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault (continued)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
17a-101i 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-101o 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 22-87 An Act Concerning the Identification and Prevention of and Response to Adult Sexual Misconduct Against Children.

Policy adopted: May 6, 2004
Policy readopted: June 16, 2005
Policy readopted: December 17, 2009
Policy readopted: March 15, 2012
Policy readopted: March 3, 2016
Policy readopted: November 2, 2016
Policy revised: December 6, 2018
Policy revised: June 17, 2021
Policy revised: October 6, 2022

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New Fairfield, Connecticut

Students

Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault

This regulation is intended to safeguard children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected through injury and neglect and to ensure a nurturing and safe environment.

A. What Must be Reported

A report must be made when any mandated reporter of the New Fairfield Board of Education, in his/her professional capacity, has reasonable cause to suspect or to believe that a child under the age of eighteen:

1. has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him /her, other than by accidental means, by a person responsible for the child's health, welfare, or care, or by a person given access to the child.
2. has injuries that are at variance with the explanation given of their occurrence.
3. is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual abuse, sexual maltreatment, or cruel punishment.
4. has been neglected in one or more of the following ways:
 - a. has been abandoned;
 - b. is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally or emotionally;
 - c. is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to the child's well-being;
 - d. is in danger of being abused even though one does not have reasonable cause to suspect or believe any such abuse has actually occurred.
5. has been sexually assaulted by a school employee.

B. Reporting Procedures for Statutory Mandated Reporters

The following procedures apply only to statutory mandated reporters, as defined in policy 5141.4.

1. When an employee of the Board suspects or believes that a child has been abused, neglected, or has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm, 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 and not 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 (DCF) or his/her designee or the local law enforcement agency. (Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (Careline): 1-800-842-2288.)

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Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault

B. Reporting Procedures for Statutory Mandated Reporters (continued)

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. *(Note: Mandated reporters reporting electronically when they reasonably suspect that a child has been abused, neglected, or placed at risk of imminent harm in a “non-emergent” situation can do so without risk that they will be subject to a failure to report finding and subsequent penalties.)*

- b. The employee shall also immediately make an oral report to the Superintendent’s designee, the Building Principal.
- c. With the advice of the Building Principal, the employee shall determine if the child’s parents will be contacted.
 - Mandated reporters are under no legal obligation to inform parents that they have made a report to DCF about their child. However, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary and/or beneficial to do so.
 - Health care professionals *may need* to talk with parents to assess the cause of a child’s injuries. Mental health professionals may *want* to talk with parents in order to offer support and guidance.
 - However, in cases of serious physical or sexual abuse, it may *not* be wise to talk with parents before reporting the case to DCF. This may put the child at greater risk and interfere with a possible criminal investigation.
- d. If a report prepared in accordance with Section (a) above concerns suspected abuse, neglect, or sexual assault by a school employee, the Building Principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent, who shall then notify the child’s parent or guardian that such a report has been made.
- e. Within 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. DCF Form #136 should be used for the written report, and it is available in all school buildings.
- f. The employee shall immediately submit a copy of this written report to the Building Principal and the Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education.
- g. If a report prepared in accordance with Section (c) above concerns suspected abuse or neglect by a certified school employee, the Superintendent shall submit a copy of the written report to the Commissioner of Education, or his/her representative.

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault (continued)

C. Reporting Procedures for Employees Other Than Statutory Mandated Reporters

The following procedures apply only to employees who are not mandated reporters, as defined above:

1. When an employee who is not a statutory mandated reporter suspects or believes that a child has been abused, neglected or placed in imminent danger of serious harm, 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, and 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 Principal, or his/her designee, to be followed by an immediate written report to the Superintendent, or his/her designee. A copy of the report should be sent to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education.
 - b. The Superintendent, or his/her designee, shall immediately, upon suspecting or believing that a child has been abused, neglected or placed in imminent risk of serious harm, and in no case later than 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 the local law enforcement agency.
 - c. In cases involving suspected abuse or neglect by a school employee, the Superintendent, or his/her designee, shall immediately follow protocol in Section D, **Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect, or Sexual Assault by School Employees** and notify the child's parent or guardian that such a report has been made.

D. Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect/Sexual Assault by School Employees

CGS 17a-101 requires mandated reporters to report child abuse, neglect or sexual assault by school employees.

1. In cases where the mandated reporter suspects or believes such injury has been inflicted by a school employee, he/she shall report that suspicion orally or in person to the Department of Children and Families within 12 hours, followed within 48 hours with a written report.
2. The Superintendent of Schools or supervising agent shall be notified immediately after the oral report has been made and shall also receive a copy of the written report.

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Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault

D. Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect/Sexual Assault by School Employees (continued)

3. The Superintendent shall immediately notify the child's parent or other person responsible for the child's care that a report has been made.
4. The written report to the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families or his/her representative, concerning a certified school employee, shall also be sent by the Superintendent to the Commissioner of Education or his/her representative.
5. The report shall contain information listed in Section G of this Board regulation.
6. The Superintendent is obligated to immediately begin the investigation of the report with the Department of Children and Families. The Superintendent may request assistance from the local police or state police in the investigation.
7. If the Superintendent finds evidence of child abuse, neglect or sexual assault by a school employee, he/she must immediately notify the child's parent or guardian, the local or state police, the Commissioner of Children and Families or his/her representative, and, in the case of an investigation of a certified school employee, the Commissioner of Education or his/her representative.
8. When an investigation produces such evidence, and the employee in question is in a position requiring a certificate, the Superintendent must suspend the certified employee with pay and without diminution or termination of benefits, provided he/she notifies the Board of Education of the reasons for the suspension **immediately, but no later than five (5) business days** ~~within 72 hours thereafter~~.
9. The suspension remains in effect until the Board takes action pursuant to CGS 10-151 (Teacher Tenure Act).

E. Investigation of the Report

If the suspected abuser is a school employee, the Superintendent shall thoroughly investigate the report, provided that such investigation does not interfere with or impede DCF's investigation or the law enforcement agency's investigation. In all other cases, DCF shall be responsible for conducting the investigation, with the Board's cooperation and collaboration, as appropriate. To the extent feasible, this investigation shall be coordinated with the Commissioner of Children and Families or the police to minimize the number of interviews of any child and to share information with other persons authorized to conduct investigations of child abuse and neglect. When investigating a report, the Superintendent 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.

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault

E. Investigation of the Report (continued)

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

1. **Evidence of Abuse by Certified School Employee:** After an investigation has been completed and 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 in a position requiring a certificate, the Commissioner shall notify the Superintendent of such finding and shall provide records, whether or not created by the Department of Children and Families, concerning such investigation to the Superintendent, who shall suspend the employee, if not previously suspended, with pay and without diminution or termination of benefits. ~~Within 72 hours~~ **After such suspension, the Superintendent shall notify the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education immediately, but no later than five (5) business days,** 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 reviewing employment status or certification. 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.

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 collective bargaining agreement and/or statute, if the Superintendent's investigation produces evidence that a child has been abused by a certified school staff member.

If the contract of employment of a certified school employee 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~~ **immediately, but no later than five (5) business days 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.

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault (continued)

F. 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.

G. Contents of All 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 injuries, maltreatment, or neglect that has occurred;
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; and
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.

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault (continued)

H. Removal of Clothing

In the event that visual confirmation of injury or neglect is necessary, only the school nurse or school physician may make a request to remove the child's clothing. Neither a school nurse nor a school physician may remove or insist that a child remove clothing to confirm suspected abuse or neglect, except in those circumstances where there is a need for emergency medical treatment. The school nurse or school physician may request that a child remove clothing when the following three conditions exist:

1. a child by word or action, has identified a particular injury, the extent of which can only be determined by removing the child's clothing;
2. the examination is necessary to determine whether medical attention is required and not merely to confirm suspected abuse;
3. the request is made in such a manner that the child clearly understands that compliance with the request is optional and that no adverse consequences will result from a refusal to comply.

In addition to the school nurse or school physician, a staff member of the same sex as the child will be present during such an examination.

I. Emergency Care

If a school nurse or school medical adviser is not readily available and emergency first aid is needed, other public school personnel who have completed a first aid course may render emergency first aid to the child. A person providing such aid is not liable for civil damages for any personal injuries that result from acts or omissions in rendering the emergency first aid.

Transportation for a child to a hospital in an emergency situation that may be a result of abuse or neglect will be provided to the same extent as it would be provided to any other child in need of emergency service.

J. Role of Department of Children and Families

1. Determination of Need (In-School Interview)

If the Child Study Team or the Principal believes that an interview in the school setting may be necessary in order to protect the child, the Department of Children and Families must be notified as early in the school day as possible. DCF will advise school personnel whether the child must be interviewed in the school.

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault

J. Role of Department of Children and Families (continued)

If the DCF determines that a school interview is appropriate, the DCF social worker will notify the building Principal prior to the school visit. The DCF worker will provide the building Principal or Principal's designee with DCF notification upon request.

Should the DCF social worker not arrive as scheduled and school personnel determine that retaining the child beyond the school day is necessary to protect the child's physical well-being, the principal or his/her designee must attempt to notify the child's parents. If reasonable attempts to notify the parents fail, the principal will notify the police of the child's retention.

2. Process (In-school Interview)

The school will provide a private place for the DCF worker to interview the child. School personnel will not be a part of the interview unless specifically asked to do so. In either event, the investigation is to be conducted solely by the DCF worker.

If, during the course of the investigation, the DCF worker requests the removal of clothing worn by the child, the examination will be made by the school nurse or the school physician in the presence of the DCF worker in accordance with the procedures outlined above.

3. Removal from the Home and/or School

If the DCF has probable cause to believe that the child is suffering from serious physical illness or injury or is in immediate danger from his/her surroundings, and that immediate removal from such surroundings is necessary to ensure the child's safety, the DCF may remove or authorize a law enforcement official to remove the child from such surroundings without the consent of the child's parent or guardian. If the child's removal from the school is determined, the DCF shall inform the building Principal of the removal.

It is the DCF's responsibility to notify parents of any activities or actions taken by the DCF following the interview.

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Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault (continued)

K. Special Reporting Procedures Concerning Suspected Abuse or Neglect of ~~Mentally Retarded Persons~~ **Persons with Intellectual Disabilities**

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 ~~mentally retarded persons or~~ **persons with intellectual disabilities** over the age of 18. It is the 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 ~~mentally retarded person~~ **person with intellectual disabilities** 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 a ~~mentally retarded person~~ **person with intellectual disabilities** either is living alone or is not able to provide for himself/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 a ~~mentally retarded person~~ **person with intellectual disabilities** 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,~~ **the Disability Rights Connecticut (DRCT) or the Department of Developmental Services (DDS)** 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.~~ **Reports regarding individuals aged 60 or older must be submitted to the Department of Social Services (DDS) Protective Services for the Elderly.** If an employee reports ~~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 mentally retarded~~ **has an intellectual disability**, 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 ~~mentally retarded person~~ **person with an intellectual disability**.

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault

K. Special Reporting Procedures Concerning Suspected Abuse or Neglect of ~~Mentally Retarded Persons~~ **Persons with Intellectual Disabilities** (continued)

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 (E) above.

If the investigation by the Superintendent and/or the Office of Protection and Advocacy produces evidence that a ~~mentally retarded person~~ **person with intellectual disabilities** 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.

L. Disciplinary Action for Failure to Follow Policy

~~Any employee who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. A mandated reporter who intentionally fails to report suspected abuse or neglect is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor for a first offense (punishable by up to one year in prison and a Class E felony for subsequent offenses. Additionally, any delayed report without a valid reason is subject to strict DCF and State Department of Education administrative review.~~

Other Penalties:

- Financial penalty of ~~between \$500 and \$2,500~~ up to \$2000.00 may be levied against the mandated reporter; penalty is to be paid by the mandated reporter.
- Participation in an educational training program at the personal expense of the mandated reporter, as decided by DCF.
- Written notification to the Commissioner of Education by the state's attorney for being a mandated reporter who failed to report.

ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS OF P.A. 02-138: AN ACT CONCERNING PENALTIES FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT OF A MINOR, CIVIL AND CRIMINAL STATUTES OF LIMITATIONS IN SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES, REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS OF TEACHER MISCONDUCT. . . .

- Expands significantly the statutes of limitations for certain criminal and civil matters related to sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and sexual assault of a minor.
- Increases the penalties for various sex crimes in cases where the victim is under 16 years of age.
- Creates an exception to the statutes concerning teacher performance and evaluation that makes a teacher's personal misconduct records public and subject to disclosure under FOI without the teacher's consent.

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault (continued)

M. 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.

N. 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.

O. Confidential Rapid Response Team

The District will 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 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.

P. 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.

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault

P. Hiring Prohibitions (continued)

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.

(cf. 4112.5/4212.6 – Personnel Records)

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

Regulation approved: May 6, 2004
Regulation reapproved: June 16, 2005
Regulation reapproved: December 17, 2009
Regulation reapproved: March 3, 2016
Regulation reapproved: November 2, 2016
Regulation reapproved: December 6, 2018
Regulation reapproved: June 17, 2021
Regulation reapproved: October 6, 2022

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New Fairfield, Connecticut

Students

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
- Expresses fear of parents
- Reports injury by parent
- Reluctance to go home
- Feels responsible (punishment "deserved")
- Poor self-esteem
- Clothing covers arms and legs even in hot weather

Students

Indicators of Abuse/Neglect

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

Students

Indicators of Abuse/Neglect

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
- Adult behaviors (parenting siblings)
- Antisocial behaviors
- Emotional or cognitive developmental delay
- Extremes in behavior - overly aggressive/compliant
- Depression
- Suicide ideation/attempt

Students

Indicators of Abuse/Neglect

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 (tooth decay)/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/maturity (parenting siblings)
- Delinquent behaviors
- Drug/alcohol use/abuse



Department of Children & Families CARELINE

To make a child abuse or neglect report, please call
1-800-842-2288 (TDD: 1-800-624-5518)

The Careline is staffed by full-time, highly-skilled professionals of the Department who receive and process reports of alleged child abuse and neglect. The Careline worker gathers critical information from the caller to determine if a report meets Connecticut's statutory criteria for child abuse or neglect. Those reports that meet the criteria are forwarded to a Department of Children & Families (DCF) case investigator for prompt and appropriate action.

Current law requires that DCF make its best effort to begin an investigation within two hours if there is imminent risk of physical harm and within 72 hours for other reports.

In situations where it has been determined that an investigation is not warranted, the Careline worker may refer the caller to an appropriate service program in his/her community.

If child abuse or neglect is substantiated, a case may be opened by the Department for protective services provided by staff from the DCF Regional Office or sub-office covering the child's hometown.

<http://www.ct.gov/dcf/cwp/view.asp?a=2534&Q=532140#Careline>