

Students**Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect**

The Board of Education recognizes that a student's mental and physical health will have an effect on the student's ability to obtain the most benefit from attending school. In order to increase the student's ability to learn while in school, the Board of Education realizes the importance of identifying students who may be suffering from abuse, neglect, or placed in imminent danger of serious harm. Pursuant to state law, when any certified personnel, paraprofessional, social worker, coach of intramural or interscholastic athletics, psychologist, medical examiner and/or school nurse in the school system has reasonable cause to suspect or believe a child under the age of 18 has been abused or neglected or has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm, he/she shall within twelve (12) hours make an oral report by telephone or in person to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or a law enforcement agency, followed within 48 hours with a written report. The building Principal shall be notified immediately after the oral report has been made or if the reporter chooses to seek consultation from the principal prior to reporting, the reporter is reminded that the 12 hours must be met and it is the responsibility of the reporter, not the administration to file the report within the 12 hours. The Principal in turn will notify the Director of Pupil Personnel Services and the child's parents, except when the parent is the alleged abuser. The written report prepared and submitted by the mandated reporter shall also be submitted to the Principal, who in turn will submit it to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services. The Principal and/or the Director of Pupil Personnel Services shall not be notified or given a copy of the written report if he/she is the alleged perpetrator of abuse and neglect. In this instance, copies are given to the Superintendent of Schools.

Reports of suspected abuse and neglect by the above mentioned personnel ("mandatory reporters") shall include the following information, if known:

1. the names and addresses of the child and his/her parents or other person responsible for the child's care;
2. the age of the child;
3. the gender of the child
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 injuries to maltreatment of or neglect to the child or his/her siblings;
7. the circumstances in which the injuries, maltreatment or neglect came to be known to the mandatory reporter;
8. the name of the person or persons suspected to be responsible for causing such injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect; and
9. whatever action, if any, was taken to treat, provide shelter or otherwise assist the child.

The mandated reporter shall submit a written report to DCF containing the above-mentioned information within 48 hours of making the oral report. The reporter shall also submit a copy of the written report to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services, except

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when the Director of Pupil Personnel Services is the alleged perpetrator of abuse. In this instance, the written report is given to the Superintendent of Schools. In making all written reports required under this policy, the reporter must use the DCF-136 form. Reports under this policy should be made where a mandated reporter in his/her professional capacity has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any child under the age of eighteen:

1. has been abused or has been placed in imminent danger of serious harm in one or more of the following ways:
 - a. has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him/her other than by accidental means, or
 - b. has injuries which are at variance with 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.
2. has had non-accidental physical injury, or injury or has been placed in imminent danger of such harm which is at variance with the history given of such injury inflicted upon his/her person by a person responsible for such child's health, welfare or care or by a person given access to such child by said responsible person: or
3. has been neglected or placed in imminent danger of said harm in one or more of the following ways:
 - a. has been abandoned
 - b. is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally or morally;
 - c. is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to the child's well-being.

Any school personnel who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused, neglected or placed in imminent risk of serious harm by a district employee shall orally report that suspicion within twelve (12) hours by telephone or in person to the Commissioner of Children and Families followed within 48 hours with a written report. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services shall be notified immediately after the oral report has been made. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services will immediately notify the Superintendent of Schools of Schools. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services and/or the Superintendent of Schools shall not be notified or given a copy of the written report if he/she is the alleged perpetrator of abuse and neglect. 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 of Schools or Director of Pupil Personnel Services must: 1) immediately notify the parent(s) of the allegedly abused student that a report has been made; and 2) immediately notify the police department of the alleged abuse.

In addition, the Superintendent of Schools or Director of Pupil Personnel Services

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must submit a written report of suspected child abuse by a school employee who holds a certificate, permit or authorization issued by the State Board of Education, to the Commissioner of Education or his/her representative. The Superintendent of Schools shall suspend a certified staff employee when the investigation produces evidence that the employee abused a child. When an investigation by DCF has determined that there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused by a school employee who holds a certificate, permit or authorization issued by the State board of Education, the Superintendent shall suspend such employee with pay and without termination of benefits. Within seventy-two (72) hours after such suspension the Superintendent of Schools 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 as a result of an investigation which reveals that child abuse has occurred, the Superintendent of Schools shall notify the Commissioner of Education within seventy-two (72) hours of such termination.

The Superintendent of Schools is authorized to delegate his or her responsibilities for receiving and making reports, notifying and receiving notification, and conducting investigations to a designee acting in his or her behalf. Under state law, the Superintendent of Schools is authorized to receive notice from the State's Attorney or Assistant Attorney of convictions of certified school employees for crimes involving an act of child abuse or neglect or sexual assault.

Penalty

Under state law, any person who is required to report suspected child abuse/neglect and fails to make such a report shall be fined between \$500.00 and \$2,500.00. Under state law, any person who knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or neglect shall be fined no more than \$2,000.00 nor imprisoned not more than one year or both.

Legal Risk

Under state law, any person who in good faith makes a report of suspected child abuse/neglect is immune from any civil or criminal liability.

Emergency Health Care and Reasonable Inquiry

When reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused, neglected or is placed in serious risk of imminent harm or when a child has a visible injury, public school personnel may make reasonable inquiry of the child regarding such suspicion or visible injury.

If a school nurse or School Medical Advisor is not readily available and the rendering of emergency first aid is necessary, Building Administration will call 911 immediately.

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Other public school personnel who have completed a course in first aid offered by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or the Connecticut Department of Health Services may render such emergency first aid to a child in the interim. In accordance with state law, any person providing such aid is not liable for civil damages for any personal injuries which result from acts or omissions by such person rendering the emergency first aid, which constitute ordinary negligence. The immunity does not apply to acts or omissions constituting gross, willful or wanton negligence.

Removal of Clothing

In the event that visual confirmation of injury or neglect is necessary, only the school nurse or school doctor may request or remove the child's clothing. Neither school nurse or a school doctor may remove or insist that a child remove clothing to confirm suspected abuse or neglect, except in those circumstances where there is a need of emergency medical treatment. The school nurse or school doctor 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 doctor, a staff member of the same sex as the child, who, if possible, is known to the child, will be present during such an examination.

Interviewing the Child

Public school personnel who believe that an interview in the school setting may be necessary in order to protect the child must notify DCF as early in the day as possible to provide both DCF and the school administration ample time to coordinate appropriate activities and actions. Upon receipt of such notice, DCF will advise school personnel whether the child must be interviewed in the school. If school personnel decide to retain the child after the scheduled school day in order to ensure an interview by DCF or local or state police, school personnel must attempt to notify the parents of the child, except where the alleged abuse involves the parents.

Preparation for the Interview

If DCF determines that a school interview is appropriate, the DCF social worker shall be required to notify the Director of Pupil Personnel Services prior to the school visit with as much advance notice as possible. The DCF social worker shall provide the Director of Pupil Personnel Services or Building Administration with DCF identification. If the DCF

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social worker is not known to school personnel, a verifying call to the local DCF office shall be made. If deemed appropriate by DCF or the administration, the parent or guardian of the child will be notified prior to the interview. DCF personnel are solely responsible for scheduling such interviews. If the DCF social worker does not arrive as scheduled and school personnel decide that the retention of the child beyond the school day is necessary to protect the child's physical well-being, school personnel must attempt to notify the parents of the child that the child will be late, except where the alleged abuse involves the parents.

The Interview

To ensure confidential communication, the school administration shall provide a private place to interview the child. As part of the investigative process, the DCF social worker or the school administration may request that school personnel be present during the interview. The investigation is to be conducted solely by the DCF social worker.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

17a-101 Protection of children from abuse. Reports required of certain persons. When child may be removed from surroundings without court order. (as amended by PA 96-246, PA 00-220 and PA 02-106)

17a-101b. Oral report by mandated reporter (as amended by PA 02-138)

17a-102 Report of danger of abuse (as amended by PA 02-106 and PA 02-138)

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

PA 96-246 An act concerning the reporting, investigation and prosecution of child abuse and the termination of parental rights

10-151 Teacher Tenure Act.