

## **Students**

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

The Board of Education (“the Board”) 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 realizes the importance of identifying students who may be suffering from abuse, neglect, or placed in imminent danger of serious harm.

When any (A) teacher, substitute teacher, school based administrator, district administrator, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional, or coach employed by the Board or who is working in a Board elementary, middle or high school; (B) any other person, who, in the performance of his or her duties has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in the Weston Public Schools, pursuant to a contract with the Board; or (C) any employee or independent contractor of the Board not listed in (A) or (B ) above has reasonable cause to suspect or believe a child under the age of eighteen (18) has been abused or neglected or has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm, he/she shall report such abuse, neglect, or risk of imminent risk of serious harm as required by Board Policy 4118.25/5141.4.

### **Penalty**

Under state law, any person who is: (A) a teacher, substitute teacher, school based administrator, district administrator, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional, or coach employed by the Board or who is working in a Board elementary, middle or high school; (B) any other person, who, in the performance of his or her duties has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in the Weston Public Schools, pursuant to a contract with the Board and who fails to make such a report shall be subject to criminal penalties and disciplinary action by the District. Likewise, under state law, any person who knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or neglect shall be subject to criminal penalties and disciplinary action by the District.

### **Protection for Good Faith Reporting**

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 is not readily available and the rendering of emergency first aid is necessary 911 must be called immediately. If the administration did not initiate the 911 call, an administrator must be notified of the 911 call as soon as possible after the 911 call is made.

### **Removal of Clothing**

In the event that visual confirmation of injury or neglect is necessary, only a school nurse may request or remove the child's clothing. A school nurse may request that a child remove clothing when the following three (3) 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 a school nurse, 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.

A school nurse may not 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.

### **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 or guardians of the child, except where the alleged abuse involves the parents or guardians.

### **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 and the administration shall retain a copy of such identification. If the DCF 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 or guardians of the child that the child will be late, except where the alleged abuse involves the parents or guardians.

### **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 may request that school personnel be present during the interview. In all cases, the school administration shall request that an appropriate staff member (as assigned by the school principal or his/her designee) be present during the interview. The investigation is to be conducted solely by the DCF social worker.

#### Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes

10-151 Teacher Tenure Act.

Public Act 14-186 “An Act Concerning the Department of Children and Families and the Protection of Children

17a-101 et seq.

53a-65

#### Policy References:

Policy 4118.25/5141.4

Regulations revised: December 16, 2002  
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Weston Public Schools  
Weston, Connecticut