
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The board of education believes that a child's physical and mental well-being must be maintained as a prerequisite to achievement through the formal educational process. The board therefore believes that it is important to identify and investigate suspected child abuse or neglect immediately. The school district will cooperate with the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) in identifying and reporting all such cases, whether institutional or noninstitutional. The chief school administrator/designee shall act as liaison between DYFS and the district. The liaison shall facilitate communication and cooperation between the district and DYFS and act as primary contact between the schools and DYFS.

The board directs the chief school administrator/designee to gather, maintain, secure and make available to DYFS the relevant confidential district records of any pupil alleged either by school personnel or DYFS to be the victim of abuse or neglect as defined by law. The board also directs the chief school administrator/designee to cooperate with DYFS in scheduling interviews with any employee, volunteer or pupil who may have information relevant to an investigation of child abuse.

In order to increase school employees' and volunteers' awareness of the symptoms of child abuse and neglect and cause them to be better informed on all aspects of abuse and neglect, the board directs the chief school administrator to provide information and inservice training on the subject to all school employees and volunteers.

The chief school administrator is therefore directed to develop procedures for compliance with statutory requirements that child abuse and neglect be reported. All procedures as well as this policy shall be reviewed by the county superintendent. Procedures shall:

- A. Impress on all staff members and volunteers having contact with pupils of their responsibility to report directly and immediately to DYFS all cases of suspected abuse, abandonment, cruelty or neglect resulting in physical or mental injury, and the penalties for failing to do so. Point out that institutional abuse--abuse alleged to have taken place in the school or other institutional setting by paid school staff or a volunteer--must be reported on the same basis as noninstitutional abuse. Information reported shall include the name, age, and grade of the child, as well as the name and address of the child's parents/guardians. The report shall also include a description of the child's condition, nature and extent of his/her possible injuries, and any other information pertinent to the child abuse or neglect or identification of the suspected perpetrator;

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- B. Provide for the annual delivery of information and inservice training to all school staff members and volunteers concerning child abuse and neglect. This shall include instructional methods and personnel responsibilities;
- C. Provide for the delivery of information and inservice training to all new school district employees, both paid and voluntary, as part of their orientation;
- D. Require all school personnel and volunteers to report suspected instances of child abuse or neglect to the building principal after reporting to DYFS, unless the reporting personnel believes that he/she may be endangering the welfare of the child or himself/herself or causing retaliation or discrimination against the child or himself/herself by such notice to the building principal;
- E. Require prompt action to secure treatment of such injuries as result from abuse or neglect so as to protect the health of the child;
- F. Provide for DYFS investigators to interview alleged victims in the presence of the school principal, his/her designee, or any staff member with whom the child is comfortable;
- G. Provide for cooperation with DYFS in scheduling interviews with any school personnel or volunteers who may have information relevant to the investigation;
- H. Allow DYFS to physically remove from school children who are involved in child abuse or neglect investigations or to transfer children between schools should such action be necessary for their health or protection, or to take the child to a service provider;
- I. Require that a report of each case of unexplained absence which might be a cause of child abuse or neglect be reported to DYFS as the law provides, and to other appropriate school staff;
- J. Require that appropriate school staff follow the progress of the child and maintain communication through the liaison with DYFS in order to ensure continuance of the appropriate educational program for the child;
- K. Release all pupil records of the child(ren) under investigation that are deemed relevant and maintain, secure and release all confidential information about child abuse cases, according to law;
- L. Fulfill all other procedural requirements of the law.

The board assures all school personnel and volunteers that no one will be discharged from employment or discriminated against in any way as a result of making in good faith any reports of child abuse and neglect.

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Due process rights will be provided to school personnel or volunteers who have been reassigned or suspended as a result of an accusation of child abuse or neglect. Temporary reassignment or suspension of school personnel or volunteers alleged to have committed an act of child abuse or neglect shall occur if there is reasonable cause to believe that the life or health of the alleged victim or other children is in imminent danger due to continued contact between the school personnel and a child.

All references to a report of child abuse or neglect against school personnel shall be removed from employee personnel records immediately following the receipt of an official notice from DYFS that such allegations were unfounded.

Date: February 10, 1998

Legal References:

<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 9:6-1 <u>et seq.</u>	Abuse, abandonment, cruelty and neglect of child; what constitutes
<u>See particularly:</u> <u>N.J.S.A.</u> 9:6-3.1; -8.9 through -8.14; -8.21; -8.34 through -8.36; -8.40; -8.46; -8.56	
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:6-7A, -10, -11,-13,-14, -18.1, -30, -30.1	Dismissal and reduction in compensation of persons under tenure in public school system ...
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:25-1	Transfer of teaching staff members
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:25-6, -7	Suspension of assistant superintendents, principals and teachers ...
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-19	Pupil records; creation; maintenance and retention, security and access; regulations; nonliability
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-19a	Newly enrolled students; records and identification
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-24 through -26	Missing children; legislative findings and declarations ...
<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 52:17B-9.8a through -9.8c	Marking of missing child's school record
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6:3-6.1 <u>et seq.</u>	Pupil records
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6:29-9.1 <u>et seq.</u>	The reporting of allegations of child abuse
<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 10:129-2.2	Definition of sexual abuse

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Cross References:

5113 Absences and excuses
5125 Pupil records
5141.1 Accidents
5142 Pupil safety

REGULATION

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Reporting Suspected Acts of Child Abuse

All school employees and volunteers having contact with students MUST IMMEDIATELY report to proper authorities any suspected act of institutional and/or non-institutional child abuse. For the purpose of this regulation and its related policy:

1. "Institutional" is defined as a public or private facility located outside a student's home environment. This definition includes, but is not limited to, a child day care center, a public or private school building, etc.
2. "Non-institutional" is defined as any location within a student's home environment. This definition includes, but is not limited to, a student's immediate home or any location relating to a student's private life.

Any school employee or volunteer having contact with students and suspecting that a child has been abused should:

1. If it is suspected that the abusive act occurred in a non-institutional setting, call: Salem County Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) at (609) 935-6350.
2. If it is suspected that the abusive act occurred in an institutional setting, call: DYFS headquarters in Hammonton at (609) 567-0010.
3. Upon contacting DYFS the following information should be supplied to the organization:
 - a. The name of the child;
 - b. The age and grade of the child;
 - c. The name and address of the child's parent or guardian who has current custody and control of the child;
 - d. A description of the child's condition, including any available information concerning current or previous injuries, abuse or maltreatment; and

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- e. Any other pertinent information that the employee believes may be relevant with respect to the child abuse and/or to the identity of the alleged perpetrator.
4. Immediately after reporting the abusive act to DYFS, report it to your building principal.
5. If appropriate, have the school building nurse check the child to determine his/her physical condition and well being.
6. If, in the opinion of the school nurse, the attention of a medical doctor is needed, one should be contacted in accordance with normal school procedure.
7. The building principal MUST contact the Office of the Superintendent immediately after DYFS has been called.

Related Responsibilities of the Board of Education to DYFS

1. All school employees and volunteers are expected to facilitate a DYFS investigation in any or all of the following procedures, during the regular work day and on school property:
 - a. DYFS investigators will be permitted to interview the suspected abused child in the presence of the building principal or his/her designee. If the child is intimidated by the presence of the building administrator or his/her designee, the child may name another staff member to be present in place of the administrator or his/her designee.
 - b. Building principals will aid DYFS in the scheduling of interviews of appropriate staff members who may have information pertaining to the investigation of a child abuse case.

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- c. In conjunction with a valid investigation, appropriate school employees may release those parts of a suspected abused child's records that might pertain to the assessment or treatment of child abuse.
 - d. If it is necessary to protect the suspected abused child or take the child to another service provider and ONLY after appropriate authorization is presented by a DYFS staff member, a building principal or his/her designee may release the suspected abused child into the custody of the DYFS staff member.
 - e. If it is appropriate, a school employee and/or volunteer, will facilitate DYFS in the removal of a suspected abused child from his or her home as long as the help has to do with activities and/or action conducted on school property during the regular school day.
 - f. If a suspected abused child is to be moved to another school for his or her protection and well being, all appropriate school employees will facilitate such a move in accordance with his/her authority.
2. The Board of Education has appointed a child abuse liaison to:
- a. Facilitate communication and cooperation between the district and DYFS;
 - b. Act as a primary contact person between the district and DYFS regarding general information sharing, developing mutual training activities and other cooperative efforts necessary to facilitate the implementation of these procedures;
 - c. Provide for the delivery of information and in-service training programs to school personnel concerning child abuse, instructional methods and techniques relative to issues of child abuse in the local curriculum.