

Pittsfield School District

**REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

A. Statutorily Mandated Reporting – All Persons.

Under New Hampshire law (RSA 169-C:29), every person who has “reason to suspect” that a child has been abused or neglected is required to report that suspicion to the Division of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) of the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services or directly to the police. Under RSA 169-C:30, the initial report “shall be made immediately via telephone or otherwise.”

The requirement to report is not dependent on whether there is proof of the abuse or neglect, nor is it dependent upon whether the information suggests the abuse or neglect is continuing or happened in the past. Any doubt regarding whether to report should be resolved in favor of reporting. Failure to report may be subject to criminal prosecution, while a report made in good faith is entitled to both civil and criminal immunity.

Additionally, a “credential holder”, as defined in the New Hampshire Department of Education Rule 501.02(h), who fails to report suspected abuse or neglect risks having action taken by the new Hampshire Department of Education against his/her credential (see New Hampshire Code of Conduct for Educators, Ed 510.05(e)).

The report should contain:

1. The name and address of the child suspected of being abused or neglected,
2. The person responsible for the child’s welfare,
3. The specific information indicating neglect/abuse or the nature and extent of the child’s injuries (including any evidence of previous injuries),
4. The identity of the person or persons suspected of being responsible for such neglect or abuse, and
5. Any other information that might be helpful in establishing neglect or abuse.

To report child abuse or neglect to the DCYF, call 24/7 (800) 894-5533 (in-state) or (603) 271-6562. In cases of current emergency or imminent danger, call 911.

B. Additional Provisions Relating to School Employees, Volunteers, and Contracted Service Providers.

Each school employee, designated volunteer, or contracted service provider having reason to suspect that a child is being or has been abused or neglected must also immediately report his/her suspicions to the building administration or designee. This initial report may be made orally, but must be supplemented with a written report as soon as practicable after the initial report, but in no event longer than one calendar day.

1. Request for Assistance in Making Initial Report.

The initial report to the building administrator or designee may be made prior to the report to DCYF / law enforcement, but only if:

- a. The initial report is made for the purpose of seeking assistance in making the mandated report to DCYF / law enforcement, and
- b. Reporting to the building administrator or designee, etc. will not cause any undue delay (measured in minutes) of the required report to the DCYF / law enforcement.

When receiving a request for assistance in making a report, the building administrator or designee who receives the request is without authority to assess whether the report should be made, nor shall he/she attempt in any way to dissuade the person from making the legally mandated report. Once the building administrator or designee receives the information, the law would impose a reporting requirement upon both the original reporter and the dean of operations.

2. Building Administration Action upon Receiving Report.

Upon receiving the report / request from the employee, volunteer, or any other person, the building administrator shall immediately assure that that DCYF / law enforcement is or has been notified, and then notify the superintendent that such a report to DCYF has been made.

A written report shall be made by the building administrator or designee to the superintendent within twenty-four hours, with a copy provided to DCYF, if so requested. The report shall include all of the information included in the initial oral report, as well as any other information requested by the superintendent, DCYF, or law enforcement.

3. Requirements for Reporting of Other Acts.

Employees / contract providers are also reminded of the requirements to report any act of “theft, destruction, or violence” as defined under RSA 193-D:4, I(a), incidents of “bullying” per Board Policy JICK, and hazing under RSA 671.7 and

Board Policy JICFA. A single act may simultaneously constitute abuse, bullying, hazing, and/or an act of theft, destruction, or violence.

C. Signage and Notification.

The superintendent is directed to assure that the building administration shall post a sign within the school that is readily visible to students, in the form provided by the DCYF, that contains instructions on how to report child abuse or neglect, including the phone number for filing reports and information on accessing the Division's website. Additionally, information pertaining to the requirements of Section A of this policy shall be included in each student / family handbook and placed on the district's website.

D. Training Required.

The superintendent shall assure that all district employees, designated volunteers, and contracted service providers receive training (in person or online) upon beginning service with the district, with annual refreshers thereafter, on the mandatory reporting requirements, including how to identify suspected child abuse or neglect.

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