

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)).

A. Definitions includes but are not limited to:

- a. An **abused** child is a child under the age of 18 who has been sexually abused; intentionally physically injured; psychologically injured so that said child exhibits symptoms of emotional problems generally recognized to result from consistent maltreatment or neglect; or physically injured by other than accidental means; subjected by any person to human trafficking as defined in RSA 633:7; or subjected to an act prohibited by RSA 632-A:10-d (female genital mutilation). *This definition will apply to students who are over the age of 18.*
- b. A **neglected** child is a child who has been abandoned by his parents or caretakers; whose parents or caretakers are unable to discharge their responsibilities to and for the child because of incarceration, hospitalization or other physical or mental capacity; or whose parents or caretakers have failed to provide necessary food, care, clothing, shelter, or medical attention for the child's physical, mental and emotional health. *This definition will apply to students who are over the age of 18*
- c. **Position of Authority**  
The Pittsfield School District recognizes each employee, volunteer and contracted service provider as being in a “position of authority” with anyone under the age of 18; and therefore, regardless of age of consent may not

engage in any type of sexual relationship with anyone under age 18 who is participates in the Pittsfield School District. Any employee, volunteer or contracted service provider who engages in such relationships/behavior(s) risk termination and being reported to the law enforcement and/or New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) as required by state law, as applicable. For concerns or questions, contact the Camp Program Manager/Director.

NOTE: When a student has made a disclosure to you; remember that it is okay to ask clarifying questions, but it is important to not complete a full interview of a child, especially when the allegations are of physical or sexual abuse. DCYF and law enforcement should be the entities to determine the best course of action in interviewing a child. Interviewing a child multiple times can both lead to unintended trauma and harm to the child and can potentially impede a future criminal case. Include any clarifying questions asked and child's responses in your report to DCYF. Incidents involving students over the age of 18 will only be reported to law enforcement.

The report should contain the following information *if known*.

1. The name and address of the child suspected of being abused or neglected, and any information known of siblings to the child,
2. The person(s) 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 documentation or evidence of previous injuries,
4. The identity of the person or persons suspected of being responsible for such neglect or abuse, and
- a. Any other information that might be helpful in establishing neglect or abuse (e.g., domestic violence, substance abuse, physical or mental impairment of the child of their caregiver).

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.**

When making a report to DCYF Central Intake, there are 3 modes of reporting that the Central Intake Service Provider ask you before you proceed to the actual report. The modes of reporting are:

1. Disclosure Allowed – The Caller/Reporter provides all identifying information to DCYF, and it may be provided to the child's family upon request.

2. Disclosure NOT Allowed – The Caller/Reporter provides identifying information to DCYF; however, information is redacted in official paperwork provided to the child's family unless the case goes on to prosecution. At prosecution, identifying information in all reports become public record.
3. Anonymous – The Caller/Reporter calls the (603) 271-6562 number, blocks their "Caller ID" when calling DCYF, and does not provide any identifying information (personal or organizational). If calling anonymously, be sure to get the "Report Number" from Central Intake for your call and document it on the Pittsfield School District Reporting Form. It is the only proof the caller/reporter made the report to DCYF.

**NOTE:** *As professional reporters (reports to DCYF regarding a child/family involved with your organization), it is the policy Pittsfield School District that all Employees/Volunteers/Contracted Service Providers etc. that reports to DCYF are made either as "Disclosure Allowed" or as "Disclosure NOT Allowed" to assure there is a legal record of the report being made on behalf of the district. If there are concerns about these reporting modes due to potential retaliation from the family or others, consult the Pittsfield School District Counselors and/or Administration for support.*

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

## D. 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.

## E. 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.

Adopted: August 15, 2024

**JLF**

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