

STUDENTS

5141.2

REPORTS OF SUSPECTED ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT OF CHILDREN

The Manchester Board of Education recognizes that a student's mental and physical health effect the student's ability to learn and realizes the importance of identifying students who may be experiencing abuse and neglect, or in imminent risk of being harmed.

Connecticut General Statute Section 17a-101 et seq. requires ALL EMPLOYEES of the Manchester Board of Education to report suspected abuse and/or neglect, or imminent risk of serious harm, in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

The Manchester Board of Education directs the Superintendent of Schools to administrative procedures and guidelines to deal with suspected cases of abuse and neglect in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes:

- Section 10-151
- Section 17a-101 et seq.
- Section 17a-103
- Section 53a-6

Adopted:	October 15, 1974
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ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING

This policy applies not only to employees who are required by law to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect, but to ALL EMPLOYEES of the Board of Education. These regulations are intended to safeguard children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected through injury and neglect, and to ensure a nurturing and safe environment.

I. Definitions

A. Abused means that a child (a) has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him or her other than by accidental means, or (b) has injuries which are at variance with the 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.

B. Neglected means that a child (a) has been abandoned, or (b) is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally or morally, or (c) is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances, or associations injurious to his/her well-being, or (d) has been abused.

C. Statutory mandated reporter includes all employees of the Manchester Public Schools.

II. What Must Be Reported

A report must be made when any employee of the Board of Education in the ordinary course of such person's employment or profession has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of eighteen:

- A. Has been abused or neglected;
- B. Has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him/her (other than by accidental means) by a person responsible for the child's health, welfare, or care, or by a person given access to the child, or;
- C. Has injuries which are at a variance with the explanation given of their occurrence;
- D. Is in a condition, which is the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment, or cruel punishment;
- E. Has been abandoned;

- F. Is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally or morally;
- G. Is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances, or associations injurious to the child's well-being;
- H. Is placed at imminent risk of serious harm.

It should be especially noted that it is not necessary to know or prove that abuse is occurring or has occurred in the past. It is sufficient only to suspect that it may be occurring or that it might occur. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the agency charged with the responsibility to investigate such cases. Additionally, reports should be made as soon as the child abuse is suspected, even though the incident may not be a recent one. (See attached Chart "Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect")

III. Reporting Procedures

When an employee of the Board of Education who is a statutory mandated reporter and who, in the ordinary course of the employee's employment, has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused or neglected or placed at imminent risk of serious harm, the following steps shall be taken:

A. Making a Report:

1. The employee shall make an oral report as soon as practicable, but not later than twelve hours after having reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused or neglected or placed at imminent risk of serious harm. Such oral report shall be made by telephone or in person to the Commissioner of Children and Families or the local law enforcement agency. The person making the oral report to DCF must also submit a written report (Form: CYS-136) within 48 hours of the oral report. Send report to:

Department of Children and Families
HOTLINE
505 Hudson Street Hartford, CT
06106-7107 (Telephone: 1-800-
842-2288)
(TDD Telephone Number: 1-800-624-5518)

2. A copy of the written report will be sent to the superintendent and principal. All copies are to be kept in confidential or limited access files.
3. The employee shall also make an oral report as soon as practicable to the building principal or designee when the suspected abuse or neglect is not by a school employee.
4. The child will be referred to the school nurse.
5. The school social worker will be notified. This will allow for appropriate staff to support the student and ensure safety.
6. In cases involving suspected or believed abuse or neglect by a school employee, the building administrator or designee shall immediately notify the Superintendent or his/her designee.
7. The employee shall immediately submit a copy of the written report to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.
8. If the report concerns suspected abuse or neglect by a school employee holding a certificate, authorization or permit issued by the State Department of Education, the Superintendent shall submit a copy of the written report to the Commissioner of Education or his/her representative.

A. Contents of Reports:

Any oral or written report made pursuant to this policy shall contain the following information, if known:

1. The names and addresses of the child and his/her parents or other person responsible for his/her 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 injury or injuries to, or maltreatment or neglect of the child or his/her siblings;
7. The circumstances in which the injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect came to be known to the reporter;
8. The name of the person or persons suspected to be responsible for causing such injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect;
9. The reasons such person or persons are suspected to be responsible for causing such injury or injuries maltreatment or neglect;

10. Any information concerning any prior cases in which such person or persons have been suspected of causing an injury, maltreatment or neglect of a child; and
11. Whatever action, if any, was taken to treat, provide shelter or otherwise assist the child.

B. Investigation of the Report:

If the suspected abuser is a school employee, the Superintendent shall thoroughly investigate the report, provided such investigation does not impede an investigation by the Department of Children and Families DCF). In all other cases, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) will be responsible for conducting the investigation with the cooperation and collaboration of the Board.

Recognizing the fact that the Department of Children and Families (“DCF”) is the lead agency for the investigation of child abuse and neglect reports, the Superintendent's investigation shall be coordinated with DCF and/or the police in order to minimize the number of interviews of any child and to share information with other persons authorized to conduct an investigation of child abuse and neglect. When investigating a report, the Superintendent shall endeavor to obtain, when possible, the consent of parents or guardians or other persons responsible for the care of the child to an interview with a child, except in those cases in which there is reason to believe that the parents or guardians or other persons responsible for the care of such child are the perpetrators of the alleged abuse, or where DCF has indicated that obtaining such consent will interfere with its investigation.

The investigation shall include an opportunity for the suspected abuser to be heard with respect to the allegations contained within the report. During the course of an investigation of suspected abuse by a school employee, the Superintendent may suspend the employee with pay or may place the employee on administrative leave with pay, pending the outcome of the investigation.

C. Evidence of Abuse by a School Employee Holding a Certificate, Authorization or Permit Issued by the State Department of Education

1. If, upon completion of the investigation by the Commissioner of Children and Families (“Commissioner”), the Superintendent has received a report from the Commissioner that he or she has 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 Department of Education, and that the Commissioner has recommended that such employee be placed on the child abuse and neglect registry, the Superintendent shall make a written request to the Commissioner that he or she provide all records, whether or not created by DCF, concerning such investigation to the Superintendent. In addition, if the employee has not been previously suspended, the Superintendent shall suspend the employee, with pay and without diminution or termination of benefits.

2. Within seventy-two (72) hours after such suspension the Superintendent shall notify the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education, or his or her representative, of the reasons for and the conditions of the suspension. The Superintendent shall disclose records received from DCF to the Commissioner of Education and the Board of Education or its attorney for purposes of review of employment status or the status of such employee's certificate, permit, or authorization. For certified personnel, such suspension shall remain in effect until the Board of Education acts pursuant to the provisions of Connecticut General Statute Section 10-151.
3. Regardless of the outcome of any investigation by the Commissioner of Children and Families and/or the police, the Superintendent and/or the Board, as appropriate, may take disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with the provisions of any applicable statute, if the Superintendent's investigation produces evidence that a child has been abused by a school staff member who holds a certificate, permit or authorization issued by the State Department of Education.
4. If the contract of employment of such certified school employee is terminated as a result of an investigation into reports of child abuse and neglect, the Superintendent shall notify the Commissioner of Education, or his or her representative, within seventy-two (72) hours after such termination.

D. Evidence of Abuse or Neglect by any Other Non-Certified Employee

If the investigation by the Superintendent and/or the Commissioner of Children and Families produces evidence that a child has been abused by a non-certified school staff member, the Superintendent and/or the Board, as appropriate, may take disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

IV. Delegation of Authority by Superintendent

The Superintendent may appoint a designee for the purposes of receiving and making reports, notifying and receiving notification, or investigating reports pursuant to this policy.

V. Disciplinary Action for Failure to Follow Policy

Except as provided in Section VII, below, any employee who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

VI. Non-discrimination Policy

The Manchester Board of Education shall not discharge or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against any employee who, in good faith makes, or in good faith does not make, a report pursuant to this policy, or testifies or is about to testify in any proceeding involving abuse or neglect. The Board of Education also prohibits any employee from hindering or preventing or attempting to hinder or prevent any employee from making a report pursuant to this policy or state law concerning suspected child abuse or neglect or testing in any proceeding involving child abuse and neglect.

VII. Education of Employees

Superintendent will ensure that all school employees have received this written policy, and completed a refresher training program for prompt and accurate identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect at least once in three years.

All new employees will be required to complete an educational training program for prompt and accurate identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.

Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect

The most common way to identify maltreatment is through the child and parent's behavior. Here is a list of the key physical and behavioral indicators of each type of maltreatment. A combination or pattern of indicators should especially alert you to the possibility of maltreatment.

	CHILD INDICATORS		CARETAKER INDICATORS
	Physical Signs	Child's Behavior	
PHYSICAL ABUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unexplained bruises, welts or abrasions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -in various stages of healing -in shape of object (cord, rope, belt Buckle) -human bite marks • unexplained burns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -cigarette (on soles, palms, back, buttocks) -immersion (sock or glove-like) • unexplained broken bones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -skull, nose, facial structure -in various stages of healing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reports injury by a parent (or threatened injury) -shrinks from adult's touch -frightened of parents -afraid to go home -withdrawn or aggressive -complains of soreness, moves uncomfortably -wears clothing inappropriate to weather -reluctant to change clothes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offers vague, illogical, contradictory or no explanation of child's injury • attempts to conceal child's injury • delays, or does not seek, medical treatment for injury when warranted • uses harsh discipline inappropriate to child's age and transgression • has unrealistic expectations of child • significantly misperceives child (e.g. sees child as bad, stupid, different) • misuses alcohol or drugs
SEXUAL ABUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • torn, stained or bloody underwear • difficulty walking or sitting • pain or itching in genital area • bruises or bleeding in external genitalia • frequent urinary or genital infections • venereal disease, especially in pre-teens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -reports sexual assault by caretaker -reluctant to change clothes -withdrawal, fantasy or infantile behavior -bizarre sexual behavior or detailed sexual knowledge, especially in young children -poor peer relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extremely protective or jealous of child • sexually abused as a child • misuses alcohol or drugs • non-abusing caretaker/spouse is frequently absent from home
EMOTIONAL ABUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speech disorders • lags in physical development • failure-to-thrive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -sucking, biting, rocking in older child -antisocial, destructive (and self-destructive) -sleep disorders, inhibition of play -compliant/passive or aggressive/demanding -inappropriately adult or infantile -developmental lags (emotional, intellectual) -attempts suicide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excessively blames or belittles child • repeatedly ignores or rejects child • treats siblings unequally • seems unconcerned about child's problems • unreasonable demands or impossible expectations without regard to child's developmental capability
NEGLECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constant hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress • consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous, activities or for long periods • lack of needed medical or dental care • abandonment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -arrives early at school, stays late; often absent; often falls asleep in class -begs, steals food..... -constant fatigue, listlessness -says there is no caretaker -shunned by peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • misuses alcohol or drugs • maintains chaotic home • consistently fails to keep appointments • demonstrates apathy or hopelessness • has mental health problems

To report suspected child abuse or neglect, call the Child Protection CARELINE; 1-800-842-2288 (24 hours a day)