

Policy

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The Holmdel Township 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 missing, abused or neglected children 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 non-institutional. The Superintendent/designee shall act as liaison between DYFS and the district. The liaison shall facilitate communication and cooperation between the district and DYFS, as well as law enforcement, and act as primary contact between the schools, DYFS and law enforcement.

The Board directs the Superintendent/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 Superintendent/designee to cooperate with DYFS in scheduling interviews with any employee, volunteer, intern or pupil who may have information relevant to an investigation of child abuse.

In order to increase school employees,' volunteers' and interns' awareness of the symptoms of child abuse and cause them to be better informed on all aspects of abuse and neglect, the Board directs the Superintendent to provide information and in-service training on the subject to all school employees, volunteers and interns.

The Superintendent 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, volunteers and interns 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 non-institutional 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, abuse or maltreatment and any other information pertinent to the child abuse or identification of the suspected perpetrator;

- b. Provide for the delivery of information and in-service training to all school staff members, volunteers and interns concerning child abuse. This shall include instructional methods and personnel responsibilities;
- c. Provide for the delivery of information and in-service training to all new school district employees, both paid and voluntary, as part of their orientation;
- d. Require all school personnel, volunteers and interns to report a missing child, or 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 so as to protect the health of the child;
- f. Provide DYFS investigators with the facility 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, volunteers or interns who may have information relevant to the investigation;
- h. Allow DYFS to physically remove from school children who are involved in child abuse 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 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 to the assessment or treatment of a potentially missing, abused or neglected child; and maintain and secure all confidential information about child abuse cases, according to law;
- l. Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee to notify appropriate law enforcement authorities when a potential missing or abused child situation is detected.
- m. Fulfill all other procedural requirements of the law.

The Board assures all school personnel, volunteers and interns 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.

Due process rights will be provided to school personnel, volunteers or interns who have been reassigned or suspended as a result of an accusation of child abuse. Temporary reassignment or suspension of school personnel, volunteers or interns alleged to have committed an act of child abuse 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 information regarding allegations of potential missing, abused or neglected

children reported to authorities about a district employee, volunteer or intern will be kept confidential and may be discussed only as required in order to cooperate in the investigation or by court order. All records will be maintained and secured in a location separate from other employee personnel files and accessible by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. All references to a report of a potential missing, abused or neglected child situation against school personnel shall be removed from employee personnel records immediately following the receipt of an official notice from DYFS stating that such allegations were unfounded.

Source: Regular Board Meeting

Date: August 20, 1986

Revised: March 8, 1995

Revised: January 14, 1998

Revised: September 30, 2009

Legal References: N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq;

See particularly: N.J.S.A. 9:6-3.1; -8.9 through -8.14; -8.21; -8.34 through -8.36; -8.40; -8.46; -8.56

N.J.S.A. 18A:6-10, -11, -13,-14, -18.1, -30, -30.1

N.J.S.A. 18A:25-1

N.J.S.A. 18A:25-6, -7

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-19

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-19a

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-24-26

N.J.S.A. 52:17B-9.8a et seq

N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.4 et seq

N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1 et seq

N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7.1 et seq

N.J.A.C. 10:129

Possible Cross References:

***5113 Absences and excuses**

***5125 Pupil records**

***5141.1 Accidents**

***5142 Pupil safety**

***Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.**