

NEW BOSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

JLF

REPORTING 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 New Hampshire Department Education Rule 501.02(h), who fails to report suspected abuse or neglect risks having action taken by the New Hampshire Education Department (NHED) against their credential (see NH Code of Conduct for Educators, Ed. 510.05 (e)).

The report should contain:

- a. the name and address of the child suspected of being abused or neglected,
- b. the person responsible for the child's welfare,
- c. the specific information indicating neglect/abuse or the nature and extent of the child's injuries (including any evidence of previous injuries),
- d. the identity of the person or persons suspected of being responsible for such neglect or abuse, and
- e. any other information that might be helpful in establishing neglect or abuse.

To report child abuse or neglect to DCYF, call 24/7 (800) 894-5533 (in-state only) 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 is encouraged to report their suspicions to Administration.

1. Request for Assistance in Making Initial Report.

The initial report to Administration 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 Administration will not cause any undue delay (measured in minutes) of the required report to DCYF/law enforcement.

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When receiving a request for assistance in making a report, Administration, or other person receiving the request, is without authority to assess whether the report should be made, nor shall they attempt, in any way, to dissuade the person from making the legally mandated report. Once Administration receives the information, the law would impose a reporting requirement upon both the original reporter and Administration.

2. Administration's Action upon Receiving Report.

Upon receiving the report/request from the employee, volunteer, or any other person, Administration shall immediately assure 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 Administration to the Superintendent within twenty-four (24) hours, with a copy provided to DCYF if requested. The report shall include all information included in the initial oral report, as well as any other information requested by the Superintendent, law enforcement, or DCYF.

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 – Student Safety and Violence Prevention - Bullying, and hazing under RSA 671:7, and Policy JICFA – Hazing. 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 Administration shall post a sign within the school that is readily visible to students in the form provided by the Division for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The sign shall contain 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 handbook, or 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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Legal References:

RSA 169-C, Child Protection Act

RSA 169-C:29-39, Reporting Law

RSA 189:72, Child Abuse or Neglect Information

RSA 193-D:4, Safe School Zones, Written Report Required

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Ed 510.05(e) Code of Conduct for NH Educators, Duty to Report

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Ed 306.04(a)(10), Reporting of Suspected Abuse or Neglect

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