

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT POLICY

The Board of Education is concerned with the physical and mental well-being of the children of this district and will cooperate with state government in the identification and reporting of cases of child abuse in accordance with law.

Any employee of this district who has reason to believe that a pupil of this district has been subject to abuse or neglect shall immediately report his or her belief to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). The employee may release to the Division of Youth and Family Services the child's name, address, age, and gender; the name and address of the child's parent or caretaker; the nature and extent of the child's injuries or condition of neglect, including previous injuries, if any; and any available information regarding the possible cause or circumstance of the suspected abuse or neglect, including explanations offered by the parent or child. An employee who reports a case of suspected child abuse shall promptly inform the building principal.

Under the law, school personnel reporting cases of suspected child abuse / neglect are immune from any liability, civil or criminal that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.

The principal and district staff members shall cooperate fully with the Division of Youth and Family Services as necessary and appropriate in the interests of the abused child. Consistent with this cooperative effort, the principal and Child Study Team shall release to DYFS representatives all records past and present pertaining to the child or children under investigation. If necessary, medical attention shall be given to a pupil's injuries.

The Child Study Team shall be notified to each suspected case of child abuse reported to the Division of Youth and Family Services and shall follow the progress of the reported child and maintain communication with the Division of Youth and Family Services on behalf of the child.

Information regarding child abuse and its prevention shall be incorporated into the district's family life education program in accordance with the consultation procedures set forth in Board policy on family life education. Staff members shall be provided with in-service training to assist them in the identification of child abuse and to instruct them in their responsibilities to the abused child.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REGULATIONS

- A. All district employees, professional and nonprofessional, are charged by law with the responsibility for reporting suspected cases of child abuse. The suspicion of child abuse may be based on the complaints of the child or on the direct observations of the employee over a period of time, or both. An employee should suspect child abuse whenever:
1. There is evidence of physical injury to a pupil not likely to have been caused by an accident, regardless of the pupil's explanation of the injury;
 2. A pupil complains of having been injured or having been sexually molested, with or without external signs of physical injury;
 3. A pupil appears to be malnourished;

4. A pupil's general condition indicates a persistent want of case, such as clothing inadequate for the weather, inadequate hygiene, lack of sleep, decayed and broken teeth, and the like;
5. A pupil complains of or indicates by other means that he or she has been subjected to threats or emotional abuse;
6. A pupil is excessively apprehensive, fearful, withdrawn, or aggressive; or
7. A parent or the caretaker of a child admits having abused the child.

The employee should not wait to assemble corroborating evidence of child abuse; the observations and/or complaints of the pupil that gave rise to the reasonable belief that child abuse may have occurred are sufficient to warrant reporting the incident or incidents to the Division of Youth and Family Services for investigation and remediation by that agency.

Any doubt about reporting suspected situations is to be resolved in favor of the child and the report made immediately.

- B. Whenever an employee has reason to believe that a pupil of this district has been abused, he or she shall immediately report that information to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) by telephone call to the Essex County office of the agency (telephone number: 648-3100). In the event the report is made after working hours, on a weekend, or on a holiday, the employee shall call the DYFS at 800-792-8610. The employee shall offer the following information:
 1. The child's name, address, age, and gender;
 2. The name and address of the child's parent or caretaker;
 3. The nature and extent of the child's injuries or condition of neglect, including previous injuries, if any; and
 4. Any available information regarding the possible cause or circumstance of the suspected abuse or neglect, including explanations offered by the parent or child.
- C. A pupil whose injuries or physical condition require immediate medical attention shall be reported promptly to the school nurse. The principal shall be informed of the referral to the school nurse.
- D. An employee who has reported suspected child abuse or neglect to DYFS shall report that action to the principal.
- E. The principal shall complete a child abuse and neglect form; one copy of the form shall be retained by the principal, and three copies shall be sent to the Division of Youth and Family Services. When the Division of Youth and Family Services returns one copy, that copy shall be filed with the copy originally retained by the principal.
- F. The principal shall cooperate fully with the assigned caseworker in supplying information required for the investigation of the suspected child abuse.

The caseworker's request for an interview with the pupil on school premises shall be granted, provided the principal or a professional staff member appointed by the principal is present during the interview. The caseworker's request to interview any and all personnel who may have knowledge germane to the investigation shall be granted.

Dated:
May 20, 1985

5/20/85