

8462 CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

The Board of Education is concerned with the physical and mental well-being of the children of this district and recognizes the importance of early identification in halting child abuse and/or neglect. The Board will cooperate with state government and the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) in the identification and reporting of cases of child abuse and/or neglect in accordance with law.

School personnel, compensated and uncompensated (volunteer) having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse and/or neglect or acts of child abuse and/or neglect as defined under N.J.S.A. 9.6-8.9 shall immediately report to DYFS (see N.J.S.A. 9.6-8.10). School personnel reporting such abuse and/or neglect shall inform the school Principal or his/her designee of the report after the DYFS referral has been made. However, notice to the Principal or designee need not be given when the person believes that such notice would likely endanger the referrer or child(ren) involved or when the person believes that such disclosure would likely result in retaliation against the child or in discrimination against the referrer with respect to his/her employment.

The Board of Education and administration assure all school personnel there will be no employment discrimination in regards to compensation, hire, tenure or terms, conditions or privileges of employment upon making a good faith report or causing such report.

The Board of Education shall establish a DYFS liaison to facilitate communications and cooperation. The Board will provide for the annual delivery of information and in-service training of school personnel regarding child abuse and/or neglect. The Board and administration will cooperate with DYFS to investigate reports and provide staff to comfort and support the child(ren) during DYFS interviews and investigations. The Board will incorporate information regarding child abuse and/or neglect and its prevention into the district's health education program in accordance with the consultation procedures set forth in Policy No. 2422. The Board and administration will permit DYFS to remove pupils from school during the course of the day to protect the child(ren) and cooperate to relocate child(ren) to another school if necessary.

The Board and administration will release, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:36-19 and N.J.A.C. 6:3-6 et seq., all pupil records of the child(ren) under investigation that are deemed to be relevant to the assessment or treatment of child abuse and/or neglect. School district records of child abuse and/or neglect shall be kept confidential and disclosed only as prescribed by N.J.S.A. 9.6-8.10a., N.J.S.A. 18A:36-19, and N.J.A.C. 6:3-6 et seq.

Any employee's act of unbecoming conduct in the treatment of children, including alleged acts of child abuse and/or neglect reported to DYFS, shall be promptly reported to the Principal who shall immediately inform the Superintendent and institute an investigation. The Superintendent may temporarily reassign or, with the concurrence of the Board President, suspend the employee without loss of pay pending investigation.

Information regarding allegations of child abuse and/or neglect reported to, investigated and reported upon by DYFS about a school employee shall be confidential and may be disclosed only as required in order to cooperate with DYFS investigations or by court order. These records shall be maintained in a secure place and be accessible to the Superintendent and/or his/her designee.

The Board will provide due process rights to school personnel who have been reassigned or suspended in accordance with statutes. Temporary reassignment or suspension of school personnel alleged to have committed an act of child abuse and/or neglect shall occur if there is reasonable cause to believe the life or health of the alleged victim or other children is in imminent danger due to continued contact between the personnel and the child(ren). All records shall be removed from the school staff's personnel file if the school district receives official notice from DYFS that the allegation was unfounded. An unfounded allegation shall not be used against the employee for any purpose relating to employment.

The Superintendent shall develop regulations for the reporting of child abuse and/or neglect and for cooperation with DYFS in child abuse and/or neglect investigations. Policy and Regulation 8462 shall be submitted to the County Superintendent for review and approval pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.2(a).

N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-85; 2C:24-4

N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.8 et seq.

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

N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.1 et seq.