

SOUTH BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

The purposes of these procedures are to protect children whose health and welfare may be jeopardized by abuse or neglect and to ensure that school district employees meet their legal reporting obligations. Additionally, it is the purpose of these procedures to make clear to school district employees that it is **not** their responsibility to determine whether or not neglect or abuse has occurred. Rather, it is the responsibility of school district employees to be faithful and timely reporters of suspected abuse or neglect so that allegations can be brought to the attention of objective, trained and experienced investigators.

PROCEDURES

Any school district employee who is a mandated reporter, in addition to reporting such suspected abuse or neglect to the principal, principal's designee, or superintendent, shall immediately report or cause a report of the suspected child abuse or neglect to be made to the Department for Children and Families (DCF) at 863-7370. Any School District employee, regardless of whether he/she is a "mandated reporter," shall report suspected child abuse or neglect to the building principal or designee. If the building principal or designee is the person suspected of child abuse the report shall be made to the superintendent of schools.

Upon receiving any report, the principal, principal's designee, or superintendent, as the case may be, shall remind the reporter of his/her legal responsibility to ensure a report is made to DCF immediately.

DEFINITIONS

Mandated reporter means all school employees listed below. This means that if you have reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected, are required by law to make a report or cause a report to be made to DCF within 24 hours.

- Superintendent, school principal, school teachers, school guidance counselor, school nurse, school librarian, school-based clinician
- Childcare worker, camp administrator, camp counselor

In addition, it is the expectation that any employee or contracted worker of the South Burlington School District will report suspected child abuse to a school administrator.

An abused or neglected child refers to a child, an individual under age 18, whose physical health, psychological growth and development, or welfare is harmed or is at

substantial risk of harm by the acts or omissions of his or her parent or other individual responsible for the child's welfare (e.g. guardian, foster parent, stepparent, teacher, etc.) It also means a child who is sexually abused or at substantial risk of sexual abuse by any person (including another child). Harm can occur by:

- 1) abandonment;
- 2) emotional maltreatment, physical injury, or sexual abuse; or
- 3) failure to supply a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or health care.

Emotional maltreatment refers to a pattern of malicious behavior that results in impaired psychological growth and development.

Physical injury refers to death, permanent or temporary disfigurement, impairment of any bodily organ or function other than by accidental means.

Sexual abuse means any act or acts by any person involving sexual molestation or exploitation of a child including, but not limited to, incest, rape, prostitution, sodomy, child pornography, or any lewd and lascivious conduct involving a child. Sexual abuse also includes the aiding, abetting, counseling, hiring or procuring a child to perform or participate in any photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation or other presentation which is whole or in part, depicts sexual conduct, sexual excitement or sadomasochistic abuse involving a child. Note: Sexual abuse may also be sexual harassment. However, following this school district's policy on harassment does not fulfill a mandatory reporter's legal responsibilities under the DCF reporting law. Suspected sexual abuse must be reported to DCF.

Risk of harm refers to a significant danger that a child will suffer serious harm other than by accidental means.

Immediately means as soon as the abuse or neglect is suspected but in no case later than 24 hours after such abuse or neglect is suspected.

Suspected means when the school district employee has reasonable cause to believe such abuse or neglect occurred. This does not mean that the employee must be convinced the abuse or neglect occurred; only that it might have occurred. Any doubts the employee may have shall be resolved in favor of reporting the suspicion. Further, the employee shall not refrain from making a report under these procedures for the reason that there may be retaliation against the child, the employee has a confidential relationship with the child, or for any other reason no matter how well intentioned.

Report refers to the oral or written description of the suspected abuse or neglect. If the report is made orally, the reporter should make a written notation of the name of the intake worker and when the report was made. Form number FS-305 R 2/00 which is attached is available in each school and is to be completed and forwarded to DCF-Burlington District Office, 1193 North Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401-2778. A copy of the report is to be given to the school principal who maintains it in a confidential file. The

principal will forward a copy of the report to the superintendent who will keep the report on file for ten years. In the absence of this form, a written memorandum must be prepared containing the following information and forwarded to the DCF District Office.

- 1) The name and address of the reporter.
- 2) The name and address, if known, of the child and the child's parents or other persons responsible for the child's care.
- 3) The age of the child.
- 4) The nature and extent of the child's injuries together with any evidence of previous abuse or neglect of the child or the child's siblings.
- 5) Any other information the report believes might be helpful.

TRAINING

All staff shall receive training once each school year in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. Such training shall include assistance in recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. The principal or designee will ensure that all staff members are trained. Procedures are posted on the South Burlington School District web site at www.sbschools.net.

[FORM FS-305 R 2/00 \(Attachment 1\)](#)