

REVERE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect

I. Definitions

A. Mandated Reporter

As professionals in contact with children and their families, we have a responsibility to help the Department of Social Services become aware of children who may be abused or neglected.

All professional school staff are mandated by state law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect if, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 is suffering physical or emotional injury as a result of abuse or neglect by a caretaker. It is not necessary to provide proof of abuse or neglect. Any mandated reporters who fail to make a required report can be penalized by a fine of up to one thousand dollars. As mandated reporters, you are protected by law from being sued for reporting suspected abuse or neglect.

B. Caretakers

A "caretaker" includes a child's parent, step-parent, guardian, any other household member entrusted with the responsibility for a child's health and welfare; and any other person entrusted with the responsibility for a child's health and welfare, whether in the child's home, a relative or friend's home, school setting, day-care setting, including babysitting, foster home, group care facility, or any other comparable residential setting.

C. Abuse/Neglect

1. *Abuse* includes: Non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker which causes or creates a substantial risk or harm or threat of harm to a child's well-being; and the commission of a sex offense against a child.
2. *Neglect* includes: Failure by caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence, to take actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical

care, supervision or other essential care; and physical dependence of a child upon an addictive drug at birth.

3. *Serious Physical Injury* includes: Any non-trivial injury, death, malnutrition and failure to thrive.
4. *Serious Emotional Injury* means an extreme emotional condition such as severe state of anxiety, depression, or withdrawal.

II. Reporting Procedures

1. When a school staff member suspects child abuse or neglect, based on observation or information received, s/he will inform and discuss suspicion with the social worker, school nurse, and/or building principal. In cases of physical evidence of abuse and/or neglect, the school nurse will be asked to assess the student and document any findings.
2. If the circumstances warrant filing a 51A report, the building principal will be informed, and the social worker or school nurse will make an oral and written report to the Department of Social Services (DSS) within 24 hours. Reports involving educational neglect may be filed with DSS by a building administrator. Allegations against a staff member must be reported to the superintendent or his/her designee for investigation and reporting.

DSS area office telephone number (9:00 am - 5:00 pm)
617-660-3400 (Ask for Screening Unit)

DSS 24-hour Child-at-Risk Hotline (After 5:00 pm)
1-800-792-5200

3. It is recommended that the building principal or designee inform the family that a referral to DSS is being made to help the family, unless informing the family would increase the risk to the child.
4. Upon completion of DSS investigation, a written report will be sent by DSS to the person filing the initial report.
5. All records concerning reports of suspected abuse or neglect are held and kept in confidence at the office of the building principal or designee.

