

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT - REGULATION

Any and all reports and documentary records generated under this policy shall be confidential and shall be maintained as required under 20-A M.R.S.A. sea. 6001 as amended.

In all instances when a staff member of the Maine school Administrative District No. 9 has reason to suspect that child abuse and/or neglect has occurred that staff member shall make the report to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services as required by statute and shall also make a report to the Principal of the school building in which the child is enrolled.

The principal shall be the administrator responsible for supervising all subsequent aspects of the process. In appropriate situations the Principal may delegate responsibilities to the Special Services Director.

The Principal or the Principal's designee shall:

1. Notify the superintendent in a timely manner; and,
2. Follow the procedures set out below:

Parental Notification

Parental notification shall be made as soon as it is appropriate unless after consultation with an intake worker from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) it is determined that there is a threat of harm to the child in which case there shall be no notification to the parents.

Investigation

A. Investigation of reported, suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect is the responsibility of the DHHS. School personnel will cooperate with the DHHS's investigation by providing pertinent information and personnel observations which are necessary for an appropriate assessment of the child's welfare.

B. The Principal or the Principal's designee will request notification by DHHS representatives of any student referred by Mt. Blue Regional School District staff members regarding the following:

1. When an investigation is being conducted where Mt. Blue Regional School District staff members are not the referring agents and it is in the interest of the child that the school department become involved;
2. When and to whom a case is assigned;
3. When a case is closed; or,
4. Anytime a student needs to be interviewed at school.

Interviewing Children

A. The DHHS representative may interview a child on school property and/or during school hours without prior notification to the parent or legal guardian when:

1. The DHHS has reason to believe that prior notice would increase the threat of serious harm to the child or another person; or,
2. The child has initiated direct or indirect (not involving Mt. Blue Regional School District) contact with the DHHS.

B. The Principal or the principal's designee will authorize such interviews upon request of the DHHS representative with verification of identity of the DHHS interviewer as a duly authorized representative of the DHHS which verification includes the name or names of the student to be interviewed.

C. The only function of Mt. Blue Regional School District is to provide space for the interview to take place. The Principal shall neither encourage nor discourage the child from participating in the process. The Principal or the Principal's designee may be present during any interview conducted on school property. If the Principal or the Principal's designee elects not to be present during the entire interview that person shall be present at least at the beginning and at the end of the interview to clarify reasons for the interview and to understand and describe to the student the process and that person's immediate and on-going responsibilities to the student.

Communication Linkages

A. If Mt. Blue Regional School District experiences difficulties in a particular case the Principal shall coordinate with the Director of Special Services of the District so the Director can make contact with the Supervisor of the DHHS social worker.

B. If DHHS experiences difficulties in a particular case, the DHHS supervisor or Regional Program Manager shall contact the Superintendent of Schools of Mt. Blue Regional School District.

C. Mt. Blue Regional School District personnel must call DHHS to report suspected abuse or neglect. Immediately thereafter the reporting person shall complete paperwork informing the Principal or the Principal's designee of the report giving the name of the DHHS person to whom the initial report was made.

D. The Principal shall provide a copy of all paperwork to the Director of Special Services who shall maintain records of all reports and investigations generated under this policy.

Adopted: April 4, 1995
Reviewed: June 4, 2002
Reviewed: November 17, 2009