

New York State Law (Child Protective Service Act of 1973, as amended) provides for reporting of suspected cases of child abuse by school personnel. These regulations are designed to implement this law within the District and to help protect students from the harmful effects of child abuse.

Definitions

The definition of child abuse, neglect and maltreatment is established by law as follows:

1. An Abused Child, according to Social Services Law and the Family Court Act, is a child less than 18 years of age whose parent or other person legally responsible for his/her care:
 - a. inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon such child physical injury by other than accidental means which causes or creates a substantial risk of death, or serious or protracted disfigurement, or protracted impairment of physical or emotional health or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ; or
 - b. creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of physical injury to such a child by other than accidental means which would be likely to cause death or serious or protracted disfigurement, or protracted impairment of physical or emotional health, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ; or
 - c. commits, or allows to be committed, a sex offense against such child, as defined in the penal law, provided, however, that the corroboration requirements contained therein shall not apply to proceedings under this article.

2. A Neglected or Maltreated Child, according to the Family Court Act, is a child less than 18 years of age:
 - a. whose physical, mental, or emotional condition has been impaired or is in danger of becoming impaired as a result of the failure of his/her parents or other person legally responsible for his/her care to exercise a minimum degree of care:
 - (1) in supplying the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or education in accordance with provisions of Part One, Article 65 of the Education Law (educational neglect), or medical, dental, optometric or surgical care though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so; or
 - a. Educational Neglect – Parents/guardians have a legal obligation to send their children to school on a full-time basis. The following three elements must exist in order to make a report of educational neglect:
 - i. excessive unexcused absence from school, defined as 10 school days absence from school without excuse;
 - ii. reasonable cause to suspect that the parent/guardian is or should be aware of the excessive absenteeism and is failing to take steps to effectively address the issue or is contributing to the problem; and
 - iii. reasonable cause to suspect educational impairment or harm to the child or imminent danger of such impairment or harm.

- (2) a. in providing the child with proper supervision or guardianship, by unreasonably inflicting or allowing to be inflicted harm, or a substantial risk thereof, including the infliction of excessive corporal punishment; or by using a drug or drugs; or by using alcoholic beverages to the extent that he/she loses self-control of his/her actions; or by any other acts of a similarly serious nature requiring the aid of the court; or
- b. who has been abandoned by his/her parent(s) or other person legally responsible for his/her care.
3. A Person Legally Responsible includes the child's custodian, guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's care at the relevant time. Custodian may include any person continually or at regular intervals found in the same household as the child when the conduct of such person causes or contributes to the abuse or neglect of the child.
4. Impairment of Emotional Health and Impairment of Mental or Emotional Condition includes a state of substantially diminished psychological or intellectual functioning in relation to, but not limited to, such factors as failure to thrive, control of aggressive or self-destructive impulses, ability to think and reason, or acting out of misbehavior, including incorrigibility, ungovernability, or habitual truancy; provided, however, that such impairment must be clearly attributable to the unwillingness or inability of the parent, guardian, or custodian to exercise a minimum degree of care toward the child. **Reporting procedures and related information:**
1. All district employees, including district-wide administrators, building level administrators, teachers, teaching assistants, registered nurses, psychologists, guidance counselors, social workers, therapists licensed by the New York State Education Department, and coaches and considered mandated reporters and shall report as described in Paragraph 2, below. All other employees who are not mandated reporters shall report all cases of suspected child abuse or maltreatment to the Building Principal. Reports shall be made when the mandated or other reporter suspects child abuse or maltreatment based upon criteria including those set forth in Exhibit "1", annexed to these regulations. The reporter will not conduct an investigation but will cooperate with the Child Protective Services workers who will be conducting any investigation.
2. The Building Principal and all mandated reporters as described in this Board Policy are required to:
- a. **either:**
- (1) call the Statewide Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment (800-635- 1522) and inform them verbally of the problem; or
- (2) contact the above agency by telephone facsimile machine on a form supplied by the Commissioner of Social Services; **and** receive a call ID number or facsimile confirmation for retention in school district records and as a personal copy.
- b. file a written report on form LDSS-2221-A with the local child protective services agency and the statewide central registry of child abuse and maltreatment within 48 hours after the above report.
- c. in the case of the Building Principal, inform the Superintendent of Schools of the information received.

3. The Building Principal may take photographs or cause photographs to be taken of the areas of visible trauma on the child and/or, if medically indicated, cause an examination to be

performed. Such actions may be performed at public expense if they will provide appropriate documentation when filing the report. A camera and film shall be kept at the school and be available for this purpose.

4. The written report that must be filed shall include:
- the name and address of the child and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s);
 - if applicable, the name and address of the residential care facility or program in which the child resides or is receiving care;
 - the child's age, sex, and race;
 - the nature of the child's injuries, abuse or maltreatment, including evidence of prior injuries, abuse or maltreatment to the child and his/her siblings;
 - if known, the name of the person(s) alleged to be responsible for causing the injury(ies), abuse or maltreatment;
 - the members of the family/family composition (e.g., father, mother, 2 sisters, grandmother, etc.);
 - the source of the report;
 - the person making the report and where he/she can be reached.
 - the actions taken by the reporting source, including the taking of photographs and/or x-rays, removal or retaining of the child, and/or notifying the medical examiner or coroner; and
 - any other information which the Commissioner of Social Services may require.
5. The school physician shall notify the appropriate police authorities or the local child protective service to take custody of any child the physician is treating, whether or not additional medical treatment is required, if he/she believes the child is in danger.
6. If it should be necessary for Child Protective Services to interview a child at school to ascertain whether he/she has been abused or maltreated, or to obtain documentation of such acts, the interview should be conducted in the presence of a school official, unless circumstances require otherwise. The school official shall examine and verify the credentials of Child Protective Services worker(s) before allowing such worker(s) to either interview the child or to examine the child's records.
- If sexual abuse is indicated, the presence of a same-sex staff member during the interview is appropriate.
7. The Superintendent can request a summary report of an investigation of a case referred to Child Protective Services. The adult subject of a case of suspected child abuse or maltreatment has a right to a copy of all information in the State Central Register. Personnel have the right to request that information which would identify the individual making the report be withheld if furnishing such data might prove detrimental to the safety or interest of that individual.
8. All district employees who are required to report suspected child abuse shall be required to attend ongoing training sessions regarding identification and reporting of all cases of suspected child abuse.

9. All district employees who are required to report suspected child abuse shall be provided with a copy of these regulations and the related Board policy concerning child abuse and reporting requirements.
10. Only one report of any suspected abuse is required.
11. School personnel who, in good faith, make a report or take photographs of injuries and bruises have immunity from any civil or criminal liability. The good faith of any person required to report cases of child abuse or maltreatment is presumed.
12. School personnel who have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has died as a result of child abuse or maltreatment shall report that fact to the appropriate medical examiner or coroner.
13. Any person required to report suspected cases of child abuse or maltreatment and who fails to do so may be found guilty of a class A misdemeanor and may be held civilly liable for the damages caused by this failure.
14. If a report of child abuse or maltreatment has been determined to be unfounded, all records, both in the State Central Register and in school files, shall be expunged.