

Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

It is the policy of the Ashland School District to comply with the requirements of RSA 169-C in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. It is also the policy of the Ashland School District to cooperate with the New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) and law enforcement agencies in investigations into alleged child abuse and neglect.

If a teacher or other school employee suspects that a child has been abused or neglected, the teacher or school employee shall immediately make a report by telephone to DCYF and then immediately notify the principal, guidance counselor, or school nurse that a report has been filed. The principal, guidance counselor, or school nurse will notify the Superintendent of the report.

The teacher's or school employee's oral report to DCYF shall, if known, contain the following:

1. Name, address, age and sex of student.
2. Name and address of parent or caretaker.
3. Name and address of the person allegedly responsible for the abuse and neglect, if known.
4. Name of siblings who may be in danger, if known.
5. The nature and extent of injuries or description of neglect.
6. Any other information that might be helpful in the investigation or that may be required by DCYF.

If requested by DCYF, the teacher or school employee within forty-eight (48) hours of making the report shall file a report in writing.

It is not the responsibility of the school employee to investigate whether the child has been abused or neglected, or to determine whether the child is in need of protection.

An abused child is a child under the age of 18 who has been sexually abused; intentionally physically injured; psychologically injured so that said child exhibits symptoms of emotional problems generally recognized to result from consistent maltreatment or neglect; or physically injured by other than accidental means.

A neglected child is a child who has been abandoned by his parents or caretakers; whose parents or caretakers are unable to discharge their responsibilities to and for the child because of incarceration, hospitalization or other physical or mental capacity; or whose parents or caretakers have failed to provide necessary food, care, clothing, shelter, or medical attention for the child's physical, mental and emotional health.

School personnel who, in good faith, make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect or participate in any investigation by DCYF or in a judicial proceeding resulting from the report are immune from any civil or criminal liability. The law presumes the good faith of the reporter.

Any persons who knowingly fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, which, under New Hampshire law, is punishable by a sentence of up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

The Principal or Administrator of each school shall post a sign in a public area within the school that is readily accessible to students, in the form provided by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Division for Children, Youth, and Families, that contains instructions on how to report child abuse or neglect, including the phone number for filing reports and information on accessing the Divisions website.

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(a)(10), Reporting of Suspected Abuse or Neglect
RSA 169-C
RSA 189:72, Child Abuse or Neglect Information

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