

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Procedure

I. Definitions

- A. Child abuse or neglect: Child abuse or neglect is defined by Maine law as “threat to a child’s health or welfare by physical, mental or emotional injury or impairment, sexual abuse or exploitation, deprivation of essential needs or lack of protection from these.”
- B. Person responsible for the child: A “person responsible for the child” means a person with responsibility for a child’s health or welfare, whether in the child’s home or another home or a facility which, as part of its function, provides for the care of the child. It includes the child’s parent, guardian, or other custodian.

II. Employee’s Duty to Report

- A. Any employee of the school unit who has reason to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected must immediately notify the building Principal/Guidance Counselor/Nurse/Home School Coordinator who shall process the report. In addition to notifying the building principal, the employee may also make a report directly to the Department of Human Services or the District Attorney when the employee believes a direct report will better protect the child in question.
- B. The law provides that a report must be made to D.H.S. when the person suspected is a “person responsible for the child”, or to the District Attorney when the person suspected is not a person responsible for the child. However, because the legal definition of “person responsible for the child” is vague, Administration/Guidance shall report all cases of suspected abuse or neglect to D.H.S. In addition, if the person suspected is not the parent, guardian, or other custodian of the child, the Administration/Guidance may also make a report to the District Attorney.
- C. The principal or designee will report directly to D.H.S. This person is also responsible for notifying the building principal of said referral within 24 hours if the principal has not been part of the reporting process. The Policy JLF-R will be used system-wide by all persons making a D.H.S. referral. The Policy JLF-R will be completed at time of referral and will be placed in a secured location in the Principal’s or Guidance Office. No copy shall be made of the report, nor shall the names on it be released to any party/agency.

First Reading: April 10, 2000
Second Reading: May 8, 2000
Adopted: May 8, 2000