

DRAFT

V.A. 13. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The East Providence School Department recognizes that employees, because of their contact with students, may be in a position to identify suspected child abuse or neglect. In accordance with Rhode Island law, any employee who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall ensure that a report is made to the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) within twenty-four (24) hours.

Employees shall also immediately notify the principal or immediate supervisor so that the District may respond appropriately; however, internal notification does not replace or delay the legal duty to report to DCYF.

In compliance with the Rhode Island Child Abuse and Neglect Law, RI Gen. Laws § 40-11-1 et seq., it shall be the policy of the East Providence School Department that any teacher or any other employee who suspects that a child's physical or mental health or welfare may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall have the duty to report according to the following procedures.

For the purposes of this policy, an abused or neglected child means a child whose physical or mental health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm by the acts or omissions of his or her parents or other persons (e.g. school employees, bus monitors, etc.) responsible for his or her welfare.

The following regulations and procedures concerning suspected cases of child abuse or neglect have been formulated to conform to the Rhode Island Child Abuse and Neglect law and the Policy of the East Providence School Committee:

I. Immediate Reporting Duty

Any East Providence School Department employee who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall ensure that a report is made to DCYF within twenty-four (24) hours.

The employee shall also immediately notify the building principal or immediate supervisor. Internal notification is required for administrative purposes but does not replace the employee's legal duty to report

II. Administrative Response to a Report

After being informed of suspected child abuse or neglect, the principal or designee shall ensure that a report is made to the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) as required by law, and in all cases within twenty-four (24) hours of the concern being identified.

The principal may consult with the school nurse or other appropriate staff to assist in documenting any observed injuries or conditions and to provide appropriate support for the student. Such consultation shall **not delay the required report to DCYF.**

V.A. 13. Child Abuse and Neglect

The principal or designee shall notify the Superintendent and complete an incident report containing all pertinent information. The incident report shall be submitted to the Superintendent within twenty-four (24) hours.

III. Consultation with Student Support Services

When concerns involve emotional abuse, neglect, trauma, or mental health indicators, appropriate student support personnel may be consulted to assist the student and provide support services.

IV. Before or promptly after making a report, the principal or designee shall document available information including, to the extent known:

a. Certain information shall be obtained in the form of an anecdotal record. This written account shall include such information as:

- Child's name, address, age, and sex
- Name and address of parents or guardians
- Name of person allegedly responsible, if known
- Names of siblings who may also be at risk
- Description of injuries or condition observed
- Other relevant information regarding the child's safety

V. Reporting Instances of Child Abuse And Neglect for students (ages 3-21)

- a. The reporting employee shall complete the District's required internal reporting form as soon as practicable after the DCYF report and submit it to the principal or immediate supervisor.
- b. The principal or designee shall forward the internal report to the Superintendent or designee, who shall maintain records of reported incidents in accordance with applicable laws and district record-retention practices.
- c. **Parent Notification**
In general, it is not the responsibility of school personnel to notify a parent or guardian that a report has been made to DCYF. DCYF is responsible for notifying parents or guardians regarding reports and investigations.
- d. If the parent or guardian is requesting specific information from the school in regards to a DCYF school incident report, the parent or guardian must follow all legal procedures through DCYF. The East Providence school department will not share DCYF school incident reports with the parent or guardian.
- e. DCYF incident reports should be kept separate from the educational record.

If DCYF removes a child from school custody or directs the school regarding parent contact, the principal or designee shall follow DCYF or law enforcement instructions.

VI. Definitions

For purposes of this policy:

Child, abuse, and neglect shall have the meanings set forth in Rhode Island General Laws Chapter 40-11, as amended from time to time.

Nothing in this policy limits the District's obligations under Rhode Island child protection laws, federal law, or Rhode Island Department of Education guidance

regarding mandated reporting.

VII. Reporting Sexual Abuse by a School Employee, Contractor, or Volunteer

Suspected sexual abuse of a child by an employee, agent, contractor, or volunteer of an educational program shall be handled in accordance with Rhode Island General Laws §40-11-3.3 and guidance issued by the Rhode Island Department of Education.

Any employee who has reasonable cause to suspect such abuse shall immediately notify the principal or person in charge of the educational program, who shall ensure that the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is notified within twenty-four (24) hours as required by law.

VIII. Confidentiality and Limits on Internal Investigation

Information related to suspected child abuse or neglect shall be treated as confidential and shared only with individuals who have a legitimate need to know.

School personnel shall not conduct their own investigation beyond documenting observations and making a report to DCYF. Staff shall cooperate fully with DCYF and law enforcement investigations.

IX. Staff Training and Notice

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that employees receive periodic training regarding their responsibilities as mandated reporters.

The DCYF child abuse reporting hotline number shall be posted prominently in each school in accordance with Rhode Island law.

DCYF Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-RI-CHILD (1-800-742-4453)
Available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week

August 19, 1980
Revised February 1999
Revised October 2001
Revised July 7, 2008

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR SUSPECTED CHILD
ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child Abuse and Neglect

1. All employees of the East Providence School Department are mandated reporters and required by law to immediately report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to their principal or immediate supervisor.
2. The principal shall consult with the school nurse to determine if there are any injuries. If abuse or neglect is suspected, the principal or designee shall notify the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) within 24 hours.
3. In the event that mental/emotional abuse is suspected, members of the School System's Pupil Personnel Services may be called.
4. All staff shall be made aware of School Committee Policy V.A.13. Child Abuse and Neglect regarding reporting child abuse/neglect during teacher/staff orientation.

Referrals

Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) 457-4708

Victim Assistance (24 Hours)

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Line Statewide 1-800-742-4453

Revised 8/08