

REPORTING POTENTIALLY MISSING OR ABUSED CHILDREN

ORANGE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS' POLICY 8462

ADMINISTRATORS' RETREAT

PRESENTERS: PAMELA R. HORN, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES
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THURSDAY, AUGUST 25, 2011

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

SUPERVISOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

NEW JERSEY LAW UNDER TITLE 9

- Defies child abuse and what constitutes different types of abuse
- Specifies that any person having reasonable cause to believe a child is subject to abuse must report it immediately to Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) (1-877-NJABUSE)

NEW JERSEY LAW UNDER TITLE 9

- Provides that a reporter acting in good faith is immune from liability
- Stipulates that any person who knowingly fails to report a case of child abuse is subject to legal consequences as a disorderly person, and may be fined up to \$1, 000.00 and or sentenced up to 6 months in jail

THE ORANGE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS' POLICY

The district policy is very much in keeping with the state law, but with a few additional requirements.

The board of Education recognizes early detection as important in protecting the health, safety and welfare of all children. Please read the district policy. Here are some key points to keep in mind.



REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

1. The person reporting the abuse may notify the building principal or designee prior to reporting to DFYS if it will not delay notification, otherwise, notifies the principal immediately afterwards.

If the child is in immediate danger, call 911 and 1- 877-njabuse. (it is not required to the principal or designee if the person believes it could result in retaliation against the pupil or discrimination against the reporter).

REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

2. The principal or designee will call the law enforcement authorities for all employee, intern or volunteer reports.
 3. School district staff must cooperate with DFYS and the law enforcement authorities in all investigations. This includes scheduling interviews, providing records, or releasing the child to authorities.
 4. The interview is conducted in the presence of the principal or designee, or if the student is intimidated by that person, the child may name a district person to accompany him/her in order to feel more comfortable during the interview.
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REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

5. All information pertaining to allegation of abuse is considered strictly confidential and disclosed only to cooperate with investigations.
 6. There will be no reprisal against any person who reports in good faith.
 7. A district employee, intern or volunteer named as a suspect is entitled to due process rights.
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DEFINITIONS

Abused child – under 18, under custody or control of parent or other who inflicts or allows

- **Physical Abuse:** injury – not accidental, with substantial risk to life or function; include excessive corporal punishment, hitting, burning, shaking, or excessive physical restraint
 - **Sexual Abuse** – inappropriate physical contact with child or exposing child to adult sexual activities
 - **Emotional Abuse** – verbal abuse including belittling, embarrassing, threatening, or intimidating comments
 - **Neglect** – lack of supervision, inadequate food, clothing, medical attention or lack of love and nurturing
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- Willful abandonment of a child
- There may be more than one type of abuse.
- Indications of Abuse of Neglect may be based on observation, child complaint or report, caretaker or parent report.

What we can do?

- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse
 - Be approachable and available to talk with the child
 - Be a good listener – ask open ended questions such as “what happened?” rather than leading questions
 - Be supportive and reassure the child that he/she did the right thing, that he/she is not to blame, and that you want to help
 - Stay calm – the child could be frightened and intimidated if the adult reacts strongly, preventing him/her from telling what happened
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- Do not speak negatively about the suspected abuser in front of the child
- Try to document your conversation as soon as possible, using the child's exact words as much as possible



**When Reporting:
Call State Central Registry (SCR)
1-877-NJ-ABUSE**

Provide as much information as you can

- **Child's name, age, address**
 - **Suspected abuser's name, relationship to child**
 - **Description of suspected abuse and when it occurred**
 - **Your concern for child's immediate safety**
 - **Any knowledge of past abuse**
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Other witnesses, if known

- Your name and phone number and relationship to child (allow DYFS to contact you if they have more questions – they keep your name confidential)
 - You can call anonymously
 - If you are uncertain as to whether to report an incident, call 1-877-NJ-ABUSE to speak to a screener.
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- After reporting, DYFS will investigate the report and determine if the child is in danger, and what if any action is warranted. Remember, DYFS is the investigating agency, not us. Our responsibility is to report suspected abuse.

- The effects of child abuse can last a lifetime and contribute to other societal troubles. Children who are abused grow up and may abuse their children or others.
- Reporting child abuse can help break the cycle.
- For further information:
[www.nj.gov /dcf](http://www.nj.gov/dcf)