

**Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect or Sexual Assault of Students by School Employees**

The Sharon Board of Education recognizes that student's mental and physical health will have an effect on the student's ability to obtain the most benefit from attending school. The Board of Education also recognizes its obligations in the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect.

The purpose of this policy is to inform all employees in the school system of the statutory requirements to report suspected child physical or sexual abuse, and neglect, and of their immunity from civil liability or criminal penalty for making such reports.

Mandated reporters include all school employees, specifically Superintendent, administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, guidance counselors, school paraprofessionals, coaches of intramural and interscholastic athletics, as well as licensed nurses, physicians, psychologists and social workers either employed by the Board or working in one of the schools, or any other person who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in the District school.

Such individual(s) who have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused, neglected or placed in imminent risk of serious harm, is required to report such abuse and/or neglect or risk in accordance with the procedures in the law, Board policy and administrative regulations.

A mandated reporter shall make **either** an oral report, by telephone or in person, **or an online electronic report (once the Department has made such an option available to the public)** to the Commissioner of Children and Families or a law enforcement agency as soon as possible, but no later than twelve (12) hours after the reporter has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse, neglect or that a child has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm, followed within forty- eight (48) hours with a written report.

In addition, the mandated reporter shall inform the building principal immediately after the oral report has been made, and the Principal in turn will notify the Superintendent of Schools and the child's parents. The written report prepared and submitted by the mandated reporter shall also be submitted to the Principal.

Any person, in good faith, making the above report shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such report.

In addition, the Superintendent or supervising agent, must submit a written report of suspected child abuse by a certified school employee to the Commissioner of Education or his/her representative.

If the report of abuse or neglect involves an employee of the District as the perpetrator, the District may conduct its own investigation into the allegation, provided that such investigation shall not interfere with or impede any investigation conducted by the Department of Children and Families or by a law enforcement agency.

The Board recognizes that the Department of Children and Families is required to disclose records to the Superintendent of Schools in response to a mandated reporter's written or oral report of abuse or neglect or if the Commissioner of Children and Families has reasonable belief that a school employee abused or neglected a student.

Not later than five (5) working days after an investigation of child abuse or neglect by a school employee has been completed, DCF is required to notify the Superintendent and the State Department of Education of the investigation's results.

The Superintendent shall suspend a certified staff employee when the investigation produces evidence that the employee abused and/or neglected a child. Within seventy-two (72) hours after such suspension, the Superintendent shall notify the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education or his/her representative of the reasons and conditions of the suspension. If the contract of employment of a certified school employee is terminated as a result of an investigation which reveals the child abuse has occurred, the Superintendent shall notify the Commissioner of Education with seventy-two (72) hours of such termination.

The Board shall provide in-service training regarding the requirements and obligations of mandated reporters. District employees may also participate in training offered by the Department of Children and Families.

State law prohibits retaliation against a mandated reporter for fulfilling his/her obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The Board shall not retaliate against any mandated reporter for his/her compliance with the law and Board policy pertaining to the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect.

In accordance with the mandates of the law and consistent with its philosophy, the Board in establishing this policy directs the Superintendent of Schools to develop and formalize the necessary regulations to comply fully with the intent of the law.

This policy will be distributed annually to all employees. Documentation shall be maintained that all employees have, in fact, received the written policy and completed training related to mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect as required by law.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

17a-101 Protection of children from abuse.

17a-102 Report of danger of abuse.

17a-103 Report by others.

- 17a-106 Cooperation in relation to prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse/neglect.
- 10-151 Teacher Tenure Act
- 53a-65-53a-81 Sexual Offenses

Policy adopted:  
Policy revised: