

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) recognizes that it is the responsibility of employees designated by law to report suspected cases of child abuse/neglect or at-risk children in order to protect children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected through injury and neglect.

Mandated reporters include all school employees, specifically the Superintendent, administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, guidance counselors, school counselors, paraeducators, coaches of intramural and interscholastic athletics, as well as licensed nurses, physicians, psychologists social workers, and licensed behavior analysts, either employed by CREC or working in one of the CREC schools or programs, or any other persons who, in the performance of their duties, have regular contact with students and who provide services to or on behalf of students enrolled in CREC schools/programs. These individuals, when they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of eighteen has been abused; is in danger of being abused; has been neglected; has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm; has had a non-accidental physical injury or an injury which is at variance with the history of such injury, or an injury which was inflicted by a person responsible for the child's health, welfare or care, or by a person given access to such child by a responsible person; or is a victim of sexual assault and the perpetrator is a school employee, and the child is not enrolled in adult education, are required to make a report.

Recognizing its responsibilities to protect children and in compliance with its statutory obligations, CREC shall provide in-service training, and all CREC employees shall complete all mandated training and refreshers regarding the requirements and obligations of mandated reporters. State law prohibits retaliation against a mandated reporter for fulfilling the obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect. CREC shall not retaliate against any mandated reporter for compliance with the law and CREC policy pertaining to the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Any person applying for employment with CREC shall submit to a record check of the Department of Children and Families Child Abuse and Neglect Registry before the person may be hired. CREC shall not employ any person whose employment contract was terminated or who resigned from employment following a suspension after the Commissioner of Children and Families found reasonable cause to believe that a child was abused or neglected and recommended that such person be placed on the Child Abuse and Neglect Registry, if such person is convicted of a crime involving an act of child abuse or neglect or sexual assault of a child. CREC shall not employ any person whose employment contract was terminated or who resigned from employment if such person was convicted of failure to make a mandated report, regardless of whether an allegation of abuse or neglect or sexual assault was substantiated.

A confidential response team shall be established to coordinate with the Department of Children and Families to ensure prompt reporting of suspected abuse or neglect, or sexual assault; and to provide immediate access to information and individuals relevant to the Department's investigation. The confidential rapid response team shall consist of the Superintendent or designee, a teacher, a local police officer and any other person appropriate to the team's mission.

The Executive Director is authorized to establish regulations to ensure the reporting by personnel of suspected child abuse/neglect or children who are at-risk as specified in the Connecticut General Statutes.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

17a-101 – 17a-101o Protection of children from abuse. (as amended by P.A. 24-41).

10-151 Teacher Tenure Act

10-220a In-service training. Professional development committees. Institutes for educators. Cooperating teacher program, regulations

10-221d Criminal history records check of school personnel. Fingerprinting Termination or dismissal

17a-28 Definitions. Confidentiality of and access to records; exceptions. Procedure for aggrieved persons. Regulations

17a-106 Cooperation in relation to prevention, identification and investigation of child abuse and neglect.

Policy adopted: June 18, 2003
Revised: April 18, 2012
Revised: April 20, 2016
Revised: May 15, 2019
Revised: October 19, 2022
Revised: January 15, 2025

CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL
Hartford, Connecticut

Students

Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

The CREC Council recognizes that a student's mental and physical health will have an effect on the student's ability to obtain the most benefit from attending school. In order to increase the student's ability to learn while in school, the CREC Council realizes the importance and legal responsibility of mandated reporters in identifying students who may be suffering from abuse or neglect.

Connecticut General Statutes 17a-101, as periodically amended, has defined various school employees as mandated reporters. Mandated reporters include all school employees, specifically the Superintendent, administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, school counselors, paraeducators, coaches of intramural and interscholastic athletics, as well as licensed nurses, physicians, psychologists, social workers and licensed behavior analysts, either employed by CREC or working in one of the CREC schools or programs, or any other persons who, in the performance of their duties, have regular contact with students and who provide services to or on behalf of students enrolled in CREC schools or programs.

Mandated reporters are required to report if, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of eighteen has been abused; is in danger of being abused; has been neglected; has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm; has had a non-accidental physical injury or an injury which is at variance with the history of such injury, or an injury which was inflicted by a person responsible for the child's health, welfare or care, or by a person given access to such child by a responsible person; or that a child under the age of eighteen who is not enrolled in adult education is a victim of sexual assault and the perpetrator is a school employee.

Mandated reporters' suspicion or belief may be based on factors including, but not limited to, observations, allegations, facts or statements by a child, victim, or third party. Such suspicion or belief does not require certainty or probable cause. A mandated reporter may conduct a preliminary inquiry to determine if reasonable cause exists to make a report. Such inquiry is not considered an investigation.

CREC shall not discharge or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against any mandated reporter school employee who in good faith makes a report pursuant to CGS 17a-101 or is involved in any proceedings pertaining to the alleged child abuse or neglect.

Reporting Procedures

When a mandated reporter has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused; neglected; is in danger of being abused; has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm; has had a non-accidental physical injury or an injury which is at variance with the history of such injury, or an injury which was inflicted by a person responsible for the child's health, welfare or care, or by a person given access to such child by a responsible person; or is a victim of sexual assault and the perpetrator is a school employee, the following steps shall be taken:

1. The mandated reporter shall immediately upon having such a suspicion or belief, and in no

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case later than twelve (12) hours after having such a suspicion or belief, make an oral report by telephone or in person to the Commissioner of Children and Families. The mandated reporter may also notify the local law enforcement agency.

2. The mandated reporter shall also immediately make an oral report to the building principal or program director.
3. If a report made in accordance with Paragraph 1, above, concerns suspected abuse or neglect by a school employee, the building principal or program director shall immediately notify the child's parent or guardian that such a report has been made. The building principal or program director shall also immediately notify the CREC Human Resources Department. Upon such notification, the Human Resources Department will take the appropriate action, up to and including immediate removal of the suspected perpetrator from the program or school.
4. No later than forty-eight (48) hours after making an oral report, the mandated reporter shall submit a written report (Form 136) to the Commissioner of Children and Families, or representative, containing all of the required information. A copy of such written report shall also be submitted to the Executive Director or designee.
5. The mandated reporter shall, as soon as practicable, notify the child's LEA of the filing of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) report.
6. If a report prepared in accordance with Paragraph 4, above, concerns suspected abuse or neglect by a school employee who possesses a certificate, permit or authorization issued by the State Board of Education, a copy of the written report shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Education, or representative.
7. Any report made pursuant to Paragraph 4, above, shall contain the following information, if known:
 - a. The names and addresses of the child and the child's parents or other persons responsible for the child's care.
 - b. The age of the child;
 - c. The gender of the child;
 - d. The nature and the extent of the child's injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect;
 - e. The approximate date and time the injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect occurred;
 - f. Information concerning any previous injury or injuries to, or maltreatment or neglect of, the child or siblings;
 - g. The circumstances in which the injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect came to be known to the reporter;
 - h. The name of the person or persons suspected to be responsible for causing such injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect; and

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- i. The reasons such person or persons are suspected of causing such injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect;
 - j. Any information concerning any prior cases in which such person or persons have been suspected of causing an injury, maltreatment or neglect of a child; and
 - k. Whatever action, if any, was taken to treat, provide shelter or otherwise assist, the child.
8. Each school/program shall post the telephone number for the Careline operated by the DCF and the Internet web site address that provides information about the Careline in a conspicuous location frequented by students. Such posting shall be in various languages that are the most appropriate for the students enrolled in the school/program.

Investigations

1. The mandated reporter reporting the child abuse or neglect shall provide any person authorized to conduct an investigation into such claim with all information related to the investigation that is in the possession or control of the reporter, except as expressly prohibited by state or federal law.
2. If the suspected abuser or perpetrator of sexual assault is a school employee, the Executive Director or designee shall thoroughly investigate the report; provided, however, that in cases where a report of abuse or neglect is made and DCF begins an investigation, any investigation by the district may begin only after DCF completes its own. The employee may be suspended with pay or may be placed on administrative leave pending the investigation.
3. If CREC is notified that the Commissioner of Children and Families, based upon investigation, has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected or sexually assaulted by a CREC employee; or has recommended that such employee be placed on the Department of Children and Families abuse and neglect registry, the Executive Director shall suspend the employee, if not previously suspended, with pay and without diminution or termination of benefits.

Not later than seventy-two (72) hours after such suspension, the Executive Director shall notify the CREC Council and the Commissioner of Education, or representative, of the reasons for and conditions of the suspension. The Executive Director shall disclose records received from the Department of Children and Families to the Commissioner of Education and the CREC Council or its attorney, for the purposes of review of employment status, certification, permit or authorization.

Such suspension shall remain in effect until the incident of abuse or neglect has been satisfactorily resolved by CREC, or until an appeal of the Commissioner of Children and Families findings has resulted in a finding that the employee is not responsible for the abuse

or neglect or does not pose a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children. The suspension of an employee who is in a position requiring a certificate, permit or authorization issued by the State Board of Education shall remain in effect until the CREC Council takes action pursuant to CGS 10-151 (Teacher Tenure Act).

4. If the contract of employment of a certified school employee is terminated as a result of an investigation which reveals that child abuse has occurred, the Executive Director shall notify the Commissioner of Education with 72 hours of such termination. If the employee resigns, the Executive Director shall notify the Commissioner of Education within 72 hours after such resignation.
5. If CREC is notified that the Commissioner of Children and Families, upon completion of an investigation of a report that a child has been abused or by a CREC school employee, has found that such abuse or neglect is unsubstantiated, all references to the report and investigation shall be removed from the school employee's records.

A report that a child has been abused or neglected by a CREC school employee that is found by the Commissioner of Children and Families to be unsubstantiated shall not be used against the school employee for any purpose relating to employment, including, but not limited to, discipline, salary, promotion, transfer, demotion, retention or continuance of employment, termination of employment or any right or privilege relating to employment.

6. CREC shall permit and give priority to any investigation conducted by the Commissioner of Children and Families or the appropriate local law enforcement agency that a child has been abused or neglected.

Identification of Problem

The following are indicators of possible abuse and neglect:

- A. Bruising, burns, injuries of suspicious origin
- B. Ongoing malnutrition
- C. Chronic Illnesses
- D. Excessive absenteeism
- E. Sub-Standard Cleanliness
- F. Inadequate Clothing
- G. Excessive cuts, scrapes, and broken bones
- H. Any mention by the student or others of episodes of physical or sexual abuse as well as neglect, including lack of supervision.
- I. Gross neglect of child's physical needs
- J. Lack of medical treatment for the sick child

Emergency Health Care and Reasonable Inquiry

When reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused or neglected exists or when a child has a visible injury, school personnel may take reasonable inquiry of a child regarding such suspicion or visible injury.

School personnel, except for a school nurse or a School Medical Advisor, may not remove or insist that a child remove clothing to confirm suspected abuse or neglect, except in those circumstances where immediate action or emergency medical treatment is required. A School Medical Advisor or school nurse may request that a child remove clothing when the following conditions exist:

1. A child has identified a particular injury, the extent of which can only be determined by removing the child's clothing, and
2. The examination is necessary to determine whether medical attention is required and not merely to confirm suspected abuse, and
3. The request is made in such a manner that the child clearly understands that compliance with the request is optional and that no adverse consequences will result from a refusal to comply.

Investigation of Reports of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect in the School or Program Setting

As part of the investigative process, the Department of Children and Families social worker and social work supervisor may determine, based upon the nature of the referral, that an interview with the child needs to be conducted in the school or program setting. In such situations a member of the CREC program or school's crisis team should sit in to provide emotional support to the student being interviewed. The CREC employee is a "silent member" of the interview team.

School personnel who believe that an interview in the school or program setting may be necessary in order to protect the child, must notify the Department of Children and Families as early in the day as possible to provide both the Department and the school/program ample time to coordinate activities and actions as may be appropriate. Upon receipt of such notice, the Department will advise school personnel whether the child must be interviewed in the school/program.

The Department of Children and Families shall be solely responsible for notifying the parent/guardian of the interview. The Department shall also be responsible for notifying the parent/guardian of any activities or actions taken by the Department following the interview.

Reports and recordkeeping

1. CREC shall maintain records of allegations, investigations and reports that a child has been

abused or neglected or sexually assaulted by a school employee. Such records will be maintained in CREC's Central Office. The records shall include any reports made to the Department of Children and Families, which shall have access to all such records.

2. Upon request for the purposes of an investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect or sexual assault by a certified professional employee below the rank of Superintendent employed in a position requiring a certificate issued by the State Board of Education, CREC shall provide to the Commissioner of Children and Families any records maintained or kept at CREC or in CREC school files. Such records shall include, but not be limited to, supervisory records, reports of competence, personal character and efficiency maintained in such employee's personnel file with reference to evaluation of performance as a professional employee, and records of the personal misconduct of such employee.

Training

All CREC employees are required to complete a training program pertaining to the accurate and prompt reporting of abuse and neglect, made available by the Commissioner of Children and Families. In addition, all employees must complete a refresher program at least once every three years.

Each principal/program director shall annually certify to the Superintendent or designee that each school/program employee is in compliance with the training requirements. The Superintendent or designee shall certify such compliance to the State Board of Education.

This regulation and accompanying policy shall be annually distributed electronically to all employees. The guidelines regarding identifying and reporting child sexual abuse that were developed by the Governor's Task Force on Abused Children shall be annually distributed electronically to CREC employees and Council members and to parents/guardians.

Regulation Issued: June 18, 2003
 Revised: February 27, 2006
 Revised: April 18, 2012
 Revised: January 20, 2016
 Revised: January 18, 2017
 Revised: April 18, 2018
 Revised: April 17, 2019
 Revised: September 21, 2022
 Revised: November 20, 2024

CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL
 Hartford, Connecticut

Indicators of Abuse/Neglect

Indicators of Physical Abuse

HISTORICAL

- Delay in seeking appropriate care after injury
- No witnesses
- Inconsistent or changing descriptions of accident by child and/or parent
- Child's developmental level inconsistent with history
- History of prior "accidents"
- Absence of parental concern
- Child handicapped (physically, mentally, developmentally) or otherwise perceived as "different" by parent
- Unexplained school absenteeism
- History of precipitating crisis

PHYSICAL

- Soft tissue injuries on face, lips, mouth, back, buttocks, thighs or large areas of the torso
- Clusters of skin lesions; regular patterns consistent with an implement
- Shape of lesions inconsistent with accidental bruise
- Bruises/welts in various stages of healing
- Burns; pattern consistent with an implement on soles, palms, back, buttocks and genitalia; symmetrical and/or sharply demarcated edges
- Fractures/dislocations inconsistent with history
- Laceration of mouth, lips, gums or eyes
- Bald patches on scalp
- Abdominal swelling or vomiting
- Adult-size human bite marks(s)
- Fading cutaneous lesions noted after weekends or absences
- Rope marks

BEHAVIORAL

- Wary of physical contact with adults
- Affection inappropriate for age
- Extremes in behavior, aggressiveness/withdrawal
- Expresses fear of parents
- Reports injury by parent
- Reluctance to go home
- Feels responsible (punishment "deserved")
- Poor self-esteem
- Clothing covers arms and legs even in hot weather

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Indicators of Sexual Abuse

HISTORICAL

- Vague somatic complaints
- Excessive school absence
- Inadequate supervision at home
- History of urinary tract infection or vaginitis
- Complaint of pain; genital, anal or lower back/abdominal
- Complain of genital itching
- Any disclosure of sexual activity, even if contradictory

PHYSICAL

- Discomfort in walking, sitting
- Evidence of trauma or lesions in and around mouth
- Vaginal discharge/vaginitis
- Vaginal or rectal bleeding
- Bruises, swelling or lacerations around genitalia, inner thighs
- Dysuria
- Vulvitis
- Any other signs or symptoms of sexually transmitted disease
- Pregnancy

BEHAVIORAL

- Low self-esteem
- Change in eating patterns
- Unusual new fears
- Regressive behaviors
- Personality changes (hostile/aggressive or extreme compliance)
- Depression
- Decline in school achievement
- Social withdrawal; poor peer relationships
- Indicates sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge for age
- Seductive behavior, promiscuity or prostitution
- Substance abuse
- Suicide ideation or attempt
- Runaway

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Indicators of Emotional Abuse

HISTORICAL

- Parent ignores/isolates/belittles/rejects/scapegoats child
- Parent's expectations inappropriate to child's development
- Prior episode(s) of physical abuse
- Parent perceives child as "different"

PHYSICAL

- (Frequently none)
- Failure to thrive
- Speech disorder
- Lag in physical development
- Signs/symptoms of physical abuse

BEHAVIORAL

- Poor self-esteem
- Regressive behavior (sucking, rocking, enuresis)
- Sleep disorders
- Adult behaviors (parenting siblings)
- Antisocial behaviors
- Emotional or cognitive developmental delay
- Extremes in behavior – overly aggressive compliant
- Depression
- Suicide ideation/attempt

Indicators of Neglect

HISTORICAL

- High rate of school absenteeism
- Frequent visits to school nurse with nonspecific complaints
- Inadequate supervision, especially for long periods and for dangerous activities
- Child frequently unattended; locked out of house
- Parental inattention to recommended medical care
- No food intake for 24 hours
- Home substandard (no windows, doors, heat); dirty, infested, obvious hazards
- Family member addicted to drugs/alcohol

PHYSICAL

- Hunger, dehydration
- Poor personal hygiene, unkempt, dirty
- Dental caries/poor oral hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing for weather/size of child, clothing dirty; wears same clothes day after day
- Constant fatigue or listlessness
- Unattended physical or health care needs
- Infestations
- Multiple skin lesions/sores from infection

BEHAVIORAL

- Comes to school early, leaves late
- Frequent sleeping in class
- Begging for/stealing food
- Adult behavior/maturity (parenting siblings)
- Delinquent behaviors
- Drug/alcohol use/abuse

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Capitol Region Education Council
Reporting Suspected Abuse/Neglect
Flow Chart Addendum

- I. All CREC employees are required to review the back of the DCF 136 form for detailed definitions of **abuse and neglect**. It is important that a suspicion of abuse/neglect is all that is necessary for the report to be generated.
- II. **Mandated reporters** are clearly defined and delineated on the back of the DCF 136 form. In general, all CREC employees are mandated reporters.
- III. When **gathering basic information** from students, program participants or residents, the following guidelines should be followed:
 - › Keep the number of staff conducting the interview to a minimum. (Students should not be subjected to retelling their story to many different people.)
 - › Interviews should be brief, held in a private location and consist of only a few non-leading questions (where, when, how the event occurred, who the suspected perpetrator is, whether anyone else is aware that this event occurred, and whether the youth is afraid to go home or back to the residence, etc.).
 - › If the report consists of physical abuse, the youth needs to be seen by the nurse on-site for a check as part of this interview.
- IV. Mandated reporters must phone all reports of suspected abuse or neglect into the **DCF Careline at 1-800-842-2288** not later than 12 clock hours of hearing of the incident. Prior to phoning in a report, please ensure that appropriate members of your building-based team are aware of the situation. Be prepared to wait on hold from 5 to 20 minutes before a DCF worker can take your report. State that you are a mandated reporter and that you need to make a referral. Have a copy of your notes, the youth's emergency card and the life card when you call. Always make a note of the person you spoke to at Careline. You will be asked to summarize your interview with the youth and then will be asked a series of questions. Answer the questions honestly and succinctly. If you do not know, say so.

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- V. **Other contact information**
- › If there is a mark or bruise possibly indicating physical abuse or if the youth is disclosing sexual abuse, the appropriate police department should additionally be contacted.
 - › DCF will provide direction regarding parental contact.
 - › The youth's LEA must be notified that a DCF referral has been made.
 - › If the suspected perpetrator is a CREC employee, the appropriate CREC administrators must be contacted. (Please reference flow chart for specific information.)
- VI. A **DCF 136** form must be completed and submitted no later than 48 hours following an oral report to Careline. Reference the bottom of the 136 for address information. A copy of the report must be submitted to the Director of Special Education and Pupil Services at CREC Central, to be kept in a confidential file.
- VII. **Investigations** are conducted by various individuals depending up the situation. CREC Human Resources will conduct an internal investigation if appropriate; the police will conduct a criminal investigation; and DCF will conduct its own investigation. It is the responsibility of CREC employees to assist those conducting the investigation in any appropriate way while supporting the reporting youth.
- VIII. **If the suspected perpetrator is a CREC employee**, the Department of Human Resources will determine the appropriate course of action for the investigation period. This may include reassignment, relief of duties and/or paid leave. The Director of Human Resources will contact the Assistant and Executive Directors of CREC regarding the allegation. If the employment contract of a certified CREC employee is terminated as a result of an investigation which reveals that child abuse has occurred, the Executive Director will notify the Commissioner of Education and the CREC Board of Directors within 72 hours of the termination.

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