

**POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES**

***CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT***

When an administrator, teacher, counselor, psychologist, nurse or social worker of the Wachusett Regional School District who, in her/his professional capacity, has reasonable cause to believe that a student under the age of eighteen is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse, including sexual abuse, or from neglect, including malnutrition, as defined by M.G.L. Chapter 119, s/he becomes a mandated reporter and must implement the following:

- 1) If the mandated reporter is not a principal, the mandated reporter suspecting a case of child abuse and/or neglect shall notify the building principal or her/his designee of the suspected abuse and/or neglect.
- 2) The mandated reporter and the building principal, in consultation with any other appropriate members of the school staff the principal wishes to include in such matters, shall make a determination whether or not the case in question is a reportable case. It is to be expected that the confidentiality of such matters be strictly maintained.
  - (a) If it is determined that the case is reportable, the person reporting the abuse or neglect or the principal or her/his designee must make a report to the Department of Social Services (DSS).
  - (b) In instances where a difference of opinion exists and the principal determines that the case is not reportable, s/he must send a report to the superintendent or designee within 4 hours of that decision, stating the reasons why a report is not being filed. In this case, however, any staff member may report the case to DDS on her/his own. In this instance, the staff member must notify the principal or designee that s/he has reported the case.

The District shall not discharge or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against any person who in good faith makes such a report as provided for in this policy, testifies or is about to testify in any proceeding involving child abuse or neglect.

- 3) Once a determination is made to report a case of child abuse or neglect, an oral report must be made to DDS. If the principal or designee wishes to report the case as the mandated reporter instead of the staff member, the staff member should be present when the principal or designee makes the oral report to DDS.

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***CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT (continued)***

- 4) Within 48 hours of making the oral report, Form 51A must be completed and signed by the person making the oral report and sent to DDS.
- 5) If the suspected abuser is an employee of the District, the mandated reporter or the principal shall notify the superintendent or designee immediately.

First Reading: 06/16/98  
Second Reading: 07/20/98

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