

Rutland Windsor Supervisory Union Ludlow Elementary School District Mount Holly Elementary School District Plymouth School District Union #39 School District	REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT	Policy: F8
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POLICY

It is the policy of the Rutland Windsor Supervisory Union, Ludlow Elementary School District, Mount Holly Elementary School District, Plymouth School District and Union #39 School District (hereinafter "District") to ensure that all District employees report suspected child abuse and/or neglect as outlined in 33 V.S.A. §4911 et seq.

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect children whose health and welfare may be jeopardized by abuse or neglect. It is further the purpose of this policy to make clear to all District employees and officials that it is not their role to be investigator, judge and jury in cases of suspected abuse or neglect. Rather, it is the role of District employees to be faithful and timely reporters of suspected abuse or neglect so that allegations can be brought to the attention of objective, trained and experienced investigators.

II. Definitions

- A. Immediately:** means as soon as the abuse or neglect is suspected but in no case later than 24 hours after such abuse or neglect is suspected.
- B. Suspected:** means the District employee has reasonable cause to believe such abuse or neglect occurred. This does not mean that the employee must be convinced the abuse or neglect occurred. Doubts the employee may have shall be resolved in favor of reporting the suspicion. Further, the employee shall not refrain from making a report under this policy for the reason that there may be retaliation against the child because the employee has a confidential relationship with the child, or for any other reason no matter how well-intentioned.
- C. Report:** means an oral or written description of the suspected abuse or neglect. If the report is made orally, the reporter should note in writing the person to whom the report was made and when the report was made. A report made to Department of Children and Families (DCF) shall contain the following:
1. The name and address of the reporter.
 2. The name and address, if known, of the child and the child's parents or other persons responsible for the child's care.
 3. The age of the child.
 4. The nature and extent of the child's injuries together with any evidence of previous abuse or neglect of the child or the child's siblings.
 5. Any other information the reporter believes might be helpful.
- D. Abused or Neglected Child:** By Vermont law (33 V.S.A. 49, § 4912) defines an abused or neglected child as one whose physical health, psychological growth and development or welfare is harmed or is at substantial risk of harm by the acts or omissions of his or her parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare. An abused or neglected child also means a child who is sexually abused or at substantial risk of sexual abuse by any person.
- Harm can occur by:
1. **Abandonment of the child:** (child) has been abandoned or abused by the child's parent, guardian, or custodian. A person is considered to have abandoned a child if the person is: unwilling to have physical custody of the child; unable, unwilling, or has failed to make appropriate arrangements for the child's care; unable to have physical custody of the child and has not arranged or cannot arrange for the safe and appropriate care of the child; or has left the child with a care provider and the care provider is unwilling or unable to provide care or support for the child, the whereabouts of the person are unknown, and reasonable efforts to locate the person have been unsuccessful.

2. **Emotional maltreatment:** a pattern of malicious behavior, which results in impaired psychological growth and development.
3. **Neglect:** failure to supply a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter or health care, or
4. **Physical injury:** death, permanent or temporary disfigurement, or impairment of any bodily organ or function other than by accidental means.

E. Sexual Abuse: any act or acts by an person involving sexual molestation or exploitation of a child including but not limited to incest, prostitution, rape, sodomy, or any lewd and lascivious conduct involving a child. Sexual abuse also includes the aiding, abetting, counseling, hiring or procuring of a child to perform or participate in any photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation , or other presentation which, in whole or in part, depicts a sexual conduct, sexual excitement or sadomasochistic abuse involving a child.

F. Risk of Harm: a significant danger a child will suffer serious harm other than by accidental means, which would be likely to cause physical injury, neglect, emotional maltreatment, or sexual abuse.

III. Implementation

Any District employee or official, regardless of whether he or she is a "mandated reporter," under Vermont law (33 V.S.A. §4913), shall report suspected child abuse or neglect to the building Principal or his /her designee. If the building Principal or designee is the person suspected of child abuse or the person who suspects the abuse or neglect, the report shall be made to the Superintendent of Schools.

A. Mandated Reporters: State Statutes have defined the following school employees as mandated reporters:

1. Registered Nurse
2. Mental Health Professional
3. School Guidance Counselor
4. Librarian
5. Principal
6. Superintendent
7. Teacher
8. Or any other individual regularly employed by a school district, or contracted and paid by a school district to provide student services for five or more hours a week during the school year.

As a mandated reporter, you alone are legally responsible for making sure a report is made in 24 hours. Upon receiving a report, the Principal, Principal's designee or the Superintendent, as the case may be, shall report the incident immediately to the Department for Children and Families.

B. Training: All staff shall receive training once each District year in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. Such training shall include assistance in recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.

C. Availability of Policy: This policy shall be provided each year to the parents of students in attendance and to each employee of the District including substitute teachers. Further, this policy shall be posted in at least three prominent places within the District's buildings

Legal Reference(s): 33 V.S.A, Chapter 51. §§4911 et seq. Reporting Abuse of Children

Cross Reference(s): F33 Harassment of Students, F34 Hazing, F35 Bullying

District:	Review only	Warned	Adopted	Replaces Policy
Rutland Windsor Supervisory Union		April 15, 2011	April 27, 2011	same
Ludlow Elementary School District		December 23, 2010	January 5, 2011	JJ
Mount Holly School District		December 23, 2010	January 5, 2011	JJ
Plymouth School District		December 23, 2010	December 15, 2010	JJ
Union #39 School District		December 23, 2010	January 5, 2011	JJ