

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

**POLICY**

There shall be no corporal punishment of children. No child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse, including but not limited to the denial of food.

**DEFINITION**

Child Abuse is the non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker, which causes or creates a substantial risk of harm to a child's physical and emotional well-being, including sexual abuse.

Child Neglect is the failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimal adequate food, safety, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, or other essential care.

**PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

1. Any teacher or other school department employee who suspects that a child is being abused or neglected will immediately notify the Supervisor.
2. The Supervisor will, in cases where physical abuse and/or physical neglect are suspected, refer the child to the school nurse who will examine and document the child's condition as soon as is reasonably possible.
3. The Supervisor will gather as much information as possible regarding the case in question and involve those staff members most likely to have knowledge about the child, the child's parent(s), home life or any other factors that would assist in making a decision whether or not to report the case to the Department of Social Services.

Basic documentation is expected of all cases brought to the Supervisor's attention.

Once a decision is made to file a report with the Department of Social Services, the following steps should be taken:

- a. The Supervisor is to call the Social Worker, 781-388-7100, (Monday-Friday 8:45- 5:00) or 24 hour hotline nights and weekends 1-800-792-5200, Eastern Middlesex Area Office of the Department of Social Services to make an oral report and obtain a case file number to be used on all correspondence.

The Supervisor should have ready the following information to tell the social worker when he/she calls:

- (1) Name of student  
Address  
Age  
Gender  
Name of parent or caretaker  
Nature and extent of the child's injuries or description of neglect.

Any other information that might help establish the cause of the injuries or condition, including other people involved with the family, the circumstances under which the person required to report first became aware of the child's injuries, abuse, maltreatment or neglect; and his/her own name.

- (2) The Supervisor will file a written report (Abuse/Neglect Report-3 attached) within forty-eight (48) hours of the oral report to:

Eastern Middlesex Area Office  
Department of Social Services  
22 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148

Report to be mailed: RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

- (3) A copy of the completed report will be filed with:

Office of the Executive Director of SEEM  
SEEM Collaborative  
92 Montvale Ave, Suite 3500  
Stoneham, MA 02180

It is expected that under most circumstances that the Supervisor filing the report will inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) that a report has been filed.

If the Supervisor makes a decision not to file a report with the Department of Social Services after a thorough investigation, such a decision should be recorded with the Office of the Executive Director of SEEM and with the person who brought the original concern to the supervisor.

Irrespective of the Supervisor's decision, any school employee must let his/her own conscience guide him/.her in whether to call the Department of Social Services to report a case of child abuse or neglect.

Whoever has reasonable cause to believe that a staff member or day care provider may have been abusive or neglectful toward a child(ren) shall immediately notify their Supervisor and/or Program Director.

The suspected or alleged employee or day care provider shall immediately be removed from working directly with children until a written investigation has been completed.

The Executive Director must be immediately notified by the Program Director and/or Supervisor. The Executive Director or designee will assess the situation and if warranted, report the suspected or alleged incident to the Department of Social Services.

The Program Director will prepare within twenty-four (24) hours, but no later than thirty-six (36) hours, a written report of the situation. That report shall include dates, times, names of all parties (adults and children), place and description of the incidents(s).

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE POLICY AND UNDERSTAND MY RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO IT.

Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_