

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

What School Personnel Need To Do

Module # 1

Policy Requirements

REFER TO HANDOUTS 1-3



New Jersey Department of Education

N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-11(a)1 requires...

...each district board of education to develop and adopt policies and procedures for school district employees, volunteers or interns to provide for the early detection of missing, abused or neglected children through notification of, reporting to and cooperation with the appropriate law enforcement and child welfare authorities pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-25 and 9:6-8.10.



The School District Liaison to Child Welfare Authorities

- N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11 requires that a person be identified “to act as the primary contact person between the schools in the school district and child welfare authorities with regard to general information sharing, the development of mutual training and other cooperative efforts.”
- In my district, the contact person to DYFS is _____.



A look at training requirements...

- “Provisions for training school district employees, volunteers and interns on the district’s policies and procedures for reporting allegations of missing, abused or neglected child situations.”
N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-11 (a) 8
- “All new school district employees, volunteers and interns shall receive the required information and training as part of their orientation.”
N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-11 (a) 8 i.



What are my obligations to report child abuse/neglect?

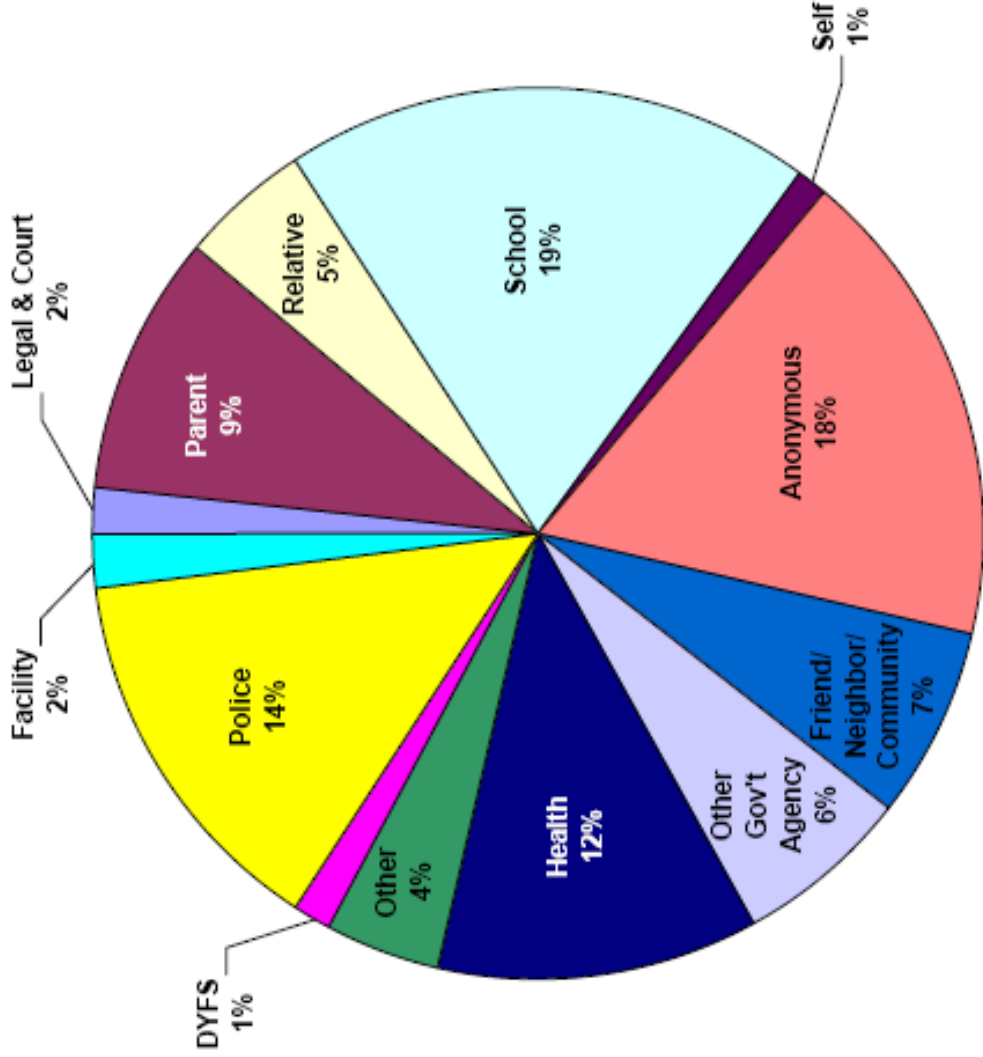
- State law (N.J.S.A.9:6-8.10), requires “Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or acts of child abuse shall report the same **immediately** to the Division of Youth and Family Services by telephone or otherwise...”
L. 1971, c.437, s.3; amended by L. 1987, c.341, s.4.
- New Jersey Department of Education administrative code N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11(a) 2 requires, that district policies include “Provisions requiring school district employees, volunteers or interns, to **immediately** notify designated child welfare authorities of incidents of alleged missing, abused and neglected children.”
- Also, the “confirmation” of another person is not required: “Under no condition shall the school district’s policy require confirmation by another person to report the suspected missing, abused or neglected child situation.” pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11 (a) 4.
- School includes: on school grounds, on school buses, in the school or at school-sponsored functions pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.3.



New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services

Referral Sources for All Reports and Requests January - December 2008

Total = 60,223⁽¹⁾



Schools are the largest reporters of child abuse to DYFS.



Suspected Abuse and Absenteeism

- N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-25.2(1) requires that if the district superintendent has reasonable cause to believe that a child who has an unexcused absence from school for five consecutive school days has been abused or neglected, the district superintendent shall notify the DYFS.
- Any investigation of a child whose parent or guardian has withdrawn them from school and has not enrolled them in another school within five days which-based upon the investigation- is a suspected abuse or neglect situation shall be reported to DYFS. (N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-25.2(b))



SCENARIO on Absenteeism

- A student has confided with a school counselor that her parents have separated...that the father has been threatening to take her with him...that she is afraid of this because he has said he will leave the State with her...Now, a few days later, this student who has had excellent attendance, is suddenly absent...a call to the home is unanswered.
- What may possibly be happening here? Has there been any information sharing internally in the school between the counselor and others? What do you think should be done? Who should take action?



The “dual reporting” requirement:

- N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-25: All school districts shall be required to establish policies designed to provide for the early detection of missing and abused children. These policies shall include provisions for the notification of the appropriate law enforcement and child welfare authorities when a potential missing or abused child situation is detected. This provision shall be complied with no later than March 1, 1985.
- In my district, the liaison to law enforcement is _____.



What if I am not sure if a child has been abused?


- Err on the side of caution! Call the Hotline and they will help determine if the situation is considered child abuse or neglect.
- By law (N.J.S.A.9:6-8.13), you are protected from civil or criminal liability, discharge from employment, and discrimination, if you make a report “in good faith.”
- N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-11 (a) 10. also includes this requirement for school district policies: “A statement that prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who, in good faith, reports or causes a report to be made of a potential missing, abused or neglected child situation pursuant to N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.13.”



Module I At-A-Glance

- Each district board of education is required to develop and adopt policies and procedures for school district employees, volunteers or interns to provide for the early detection of missing, abused or neglected children through notification of, reporting to and cooperation with the appropriate child welfare and law enforcement authorities.
- School districts must identify a liaison to both child welfare and law enforcement authorities.
- Student absenteeism could be an indicator of potential abuse/neglect.
- School districts are required to provide training to all school staff, volunteers and interns.
- Educational entities have a dual reporting requirement to both child welfare and law enforcement authorities.
- You are protected from any liability as long as you make the call “in good faith.”





**Child Abuse
doesn't
report itself.**

Make The Call, Help A Child

1-877 NJ ABUSE
1-877-652-2873

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