

Policies

Westerly Public Schools Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

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In order to comply with Rhode Island General Laws, Chapter 40-11, as amended, the Westerly Public Schools hereby enacts the following procedure:

Westerly Public Schools is dedicated to the goal of protecting our students from child abuse and neglect and to responding effectively to incidents of child abused and neglect. The Westerly Public School Department recognizes that schools can play an important role in preventing child abuse and neglect. Creating an environment in which student safety, health and welfare are protected not only ensures the well-being of our students, but also helps in removing obstacles to their learning and achieving at high levels. Our schools will work cooperatively with all agencies with responsibility for addressing child abuse and neglect, most especially with the Division of Child Protective Services of RI's Department for Children, Youth and Families and local law enforcement.

Rhode Island General Laws 40-11-3 requires that any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that any child has been abused or neglected (or who has been a victim of sexual abuse by another child) shall, within twenty-four (24) hours, transfer that information to the Department of Child, Youth and Families.

All employees of the Westerly District are mandated reporters and are required to follow the law and the Protocol for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect established for each school in the district.

PROTOCOL:

1. Any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that any child who attends the Westerly Public Schools has been abused or neglected has the duty to report. In a school setting, this means teachers, aides, principals, custodians, school bus drivers, substitute teachers, secretaries, etc. (40-11-3). Reasonable cause may result from any personal observation, admission or response from a child or any communication (even if secondhand or hearsay) which would suggest to a reasonable person that a child has been abused.
 - When to Report: The report must be made within twenty-four hours after reasonable knowledge or suspicion (40-11-3)
 - How to Report: Any person shall report within twenty-four hours to the Rhode Island Department for Children, Youth and Families or its agent. Reports are taken at the Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-742-4553 (1-800-R.I.CHILD) twenty four hours per day, seven days per week.

The reporter must notify the building principal or his/her direct supervisor (Depending on building procedure) that he/she will be making the call. The reporter should know the following laws:

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- Immunity: Any person making a good faith report shall have immunity from any civil or criminal liability (40-11-4)
 - Penalty for Failure to Report: Any person who knowingly fails to report or prevents any person from making a reasonable report is subject to a fine of \$500.00 or imprisonment up to one year or both. (40-11-6.1)
2. Contents of Report: All reports made to the Child Abuse Hotline at DCYF should contain
 - a) Name, address, age, and sex of child;
 - b) Name, address of child's parents or person responsible;
 - c) Name and telephone number of person making the report
 - d) School name, address and telephone number
 - e) Name of siblings who may be in danger, if known;
 - f) Nature and extent of injury or a description of the injury.
 3. The report shall record the incident on the "Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Form", attachment 1, and submit a copy of this report to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.
 4. All Westerly Public Schools personnel shall familiarize themselves with the Rhode Island General Laws pertaining to child abuse and neglect. A copy of the legislation in its entirety is available for review at the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, at 15 Highland Avenue, Westerly, Rhode Island or online at www.rilin.state.ri.us.

Adopted: June 1, 2005
Revised: January 3, 2007
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Westerly Public Schools
Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Form
1-800-RICHILD

Date:

Name of Child

Age

Birth Date

Address of Child

Sex

School Child Attends

Name of parent or person responsible for care of the child

Relationship to child

Telephone

Address

Known Siblings

Date and Time

Reported by

Specific Observations

Date

Signature of Reporter

Report to Department for Children and their Families

Date

Time

Title and name of person accepting report

Comments