

CHILD PROTECTION
(K-8)

A. Rationale

School staff members are in excellent positions to identify abused and neglected children and to refer them for treatment and protection.

B. Legal Obligation

In order to comply with Vermont Law, Chapter 14, Title 23, any school nurse, school teacher, school librarian, school principal, or school guidance counselor who has reasonable cause to believe that any child has been abused or neglected shall report or cause a report to be made in accordance with the provision of Section 684 of this title. "Any person enumerated in subsection (a) or (b) who in good faith makes a report shall be immune from liability for libel or slander which might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result of making a report."

C. Definitions

Employees should consult the school principal or VSA 33, Chapter 14, for the definitions of abuse and neglect.

D. Professional Obligations

1. It is the policy of the Town School District that any school employee who suspects a case of child abuse or neglect be required to report to the principal who shall be responsible for contacting the State of Vermont Social Rehabilitation Services. The principal shall also report to the Superintendent of Schools. Failure to report a suspected instance of abuse or neglect may result in disciplinary action against the employee. The following information should be included:

- a. name, address, age, sex of subject
- b. nature of injuries or neglect
- c. name and address of parent/guardian
- d. source of report (name/address of reporter)
- e. reason for suspecting abuse or neglect
- f. any other helpful information

The principal shall discuss the situation with a team consisting of the school nurse, guidance counselor, and the child's teacher(s). This team meeting will occur either before the report to SRS is made or - in cases where time and concern for the student prevents this - as soon as possible after the report is made.

2. School personnel shall not be required to contact the child's family or any other person to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect. It is not the responsibility of the school to prove that the child has been abused or neglected or is in need of protection.

3. Any personal interview or inspection of the child by SRS and/or law enforcement officers shall be conducted in a professional manner and in the presence of two designated school employees and shall be conducted on school premises. All records concerning cases of suspected abuse or neglect shall be confidential.

4. An oral report will be made to SRS as quickly as possible, in person or by telephone, and may be followed by a written report. Such reports are not to be included in the student's educational record.

APPROVED: April 27, 1993

Orwell Town School Board