
PROTECTION AND SAFE TREATMENT OF MINORS

I. Purpose and Scope:

Under New Jersey law (N.J.S.A. 6-8.21), an abused or neglected child is anyone “under the age of 18 who is caused harm by a parent, guardian or other person having custody or control of that minor.” A child who is under the age of eighteen (18) is considered to be abused or neglected when a parent, caregiver, another child or another adult does one of more of the following:

1. Inflicts or allows to be inflicted physical injury by other than accidental means that creates substantial harm or risk of substantial harm, and/or
2. Fails to provide proper supervision or adequate food, clothing, shelter, education or medical care although financially able or assisted to do so, and/or
3. Commits or allows to be committed an act of sexual abuse against a child.

Child abuse can have long-term effects on victims. A lack of trust and difficulty with healthy relationships is common, as is a core feeling of worthlessness and low self-esteem. There may even be long-term trouble with regulating emotions that can lead to destructive behaviors.

There are typically four common types of abuse:

- The failure to meet a child’s basic needs, physically or emotionally, which is called ***neglect***.
- The intentional use of physical force that results in injury, which is called ***physical abuse***.
- The practice of any behaviors that harm a child’s feelings of self-worth or emotional well-being, which is ***emotional abuse***.
- Engaging in sexual acts with a child including pornography, which is ***sexual abuse***.

Unfortunately, statistics reflect that abuse is all too common in any form.

- In New Jersey, abuse reports involving 80,000 children are filed each year. 50,000 of those children receive prevention and post-response services.
- 75% of the cases involve neglect, 18% of the cases involve physical abuse, and psychological abuse accounts for 7% of the cases.
- 55% of the perpetrators are female, while males account for 45%.
- Sadly, child abuse is a vicious cycle, in that 30% of abused children will later abuse their own children.

The statistics and characteristics pertaining to ***sexual abuse*** are sobering and equally as disheartening:

- ✓ “***Peer-to-Peer***” abuse is by far the most common, where one or more children or adolescent(s) sexually abuses or inappropriately touches another. Legally, the abuser must be at least 4 years older to trigger the statute. The *American Psychological Association* reports this type of abuse is driven by power and dominance, the same factors that drive

bullying within this age group. In fact, bullying can be a precursor to sexual abuse, especially when there is a lack of supervision.

- ✓ In contrast, “**adult-to-child**” abuse is typically thought out and planned in advance, demanding access and privacy and control. These three factors demand a specific type of relationship and setting, meaning that 90% of juvenile sexual abuse victims know their abuser. The scope of the problem is massive: by the age of 18, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys have experienced sexual abuse. From those figures, 88% of those molestations are attributed to individuals with pedophilia. ***Pedophilia is a psychotic disorder in which an adult or adolescent demonstrates a primary sexual attraction to prepubescent children.*** It is important, however, not to confuse pedophilia with actual child molestation, as many pedophiles never act on their attractions.
- ✓ Child sexual abusers are not always easy to spot. Though 7 out of every 8 molesters are male, they match the general population in ethnicity, religion, education, and marital status. So there is no stereotype, especially since abusers go to great lengths to blend in. However, only 10% of them abuse children that they don’t know, and 68% look no further than their own families for victims.
- ✓ 40% of abusers first begin molesting children before they themselves reach the age of 15, and the vast majority before the age of 20.
- ✓ Adolescent abusers generally begin their acts of abuse on younger siblings.
- ✓ Most sexual abuse occurs within the family. However, molesters can gain access to children outside of their own families through employment or volunteer work with an organization that works primarily with children. This allows them both time alone with potential victims and the ability to build trust and credibility. In fact, child abusers are often known and respected in their communities for dedication to children.
- ✓ In terms of a victim profile, it is important to remember that, although there are characteristics that make some children more vulnerable, every child is in danger. Passive, lonely or troubled children, especially those who live with step-parents or single parents may be targeted. Children between the ages of 7 and 13 years old are most at risk, and children from low socioeconomic backgrounds or rural areas are more likely to be victimized.
- ✓ Molesters have behavioral patterns that can be identified as “**grooming**” their victims. Sexual abuse is rarely violent. The molester’s goal is to solicit compliance by beginning to win the victim’s trust. There might be pet names, gifts to foster exclusivity and encouragement to “keep secrets.” The molester might begin to spend time with the victim outside of the regular program or schedule, contacting parents to become involved in a child’s life in some capacity, like babysitting. For this reason, many parents are shocked after abuse comes to light simply because the abuser seemed trustworthy. Inevitably, the

favoritism is not enough to keep the victim silent any more, and the abuser resorts to threats—threats that play off of a child's guilt over the sexual contact.

- ✓ During the grooming process and abuse, victims often begin to show signs such as sexual behaviors or strong sexual language that is too adult for their age. Many children feel at fault after the abuse and begin to suffer guilt and depression, even resorting to self-harm. They may begin to display cuts and scratches or other self-inflicted injuries. However, some children are naïve and unaware of the gravity of the abusive nature of their experience. Research shows that children often delay reporting sexual abuse. They should not be disbelieved just because they waited a long time to seek help.

In the State of New Jersey every level of government has a role in protecting minors.

- At the State level:
 - State law is enforced through the NJ Family Division of the State court system. The court has broad powers including the ability to remove children from dangerous situations
 - The Department of Children and Families, specifically the Division of Child Protection and Permanency, combines all state operations intended to safeguard children into a single, coordinated program working closely with the Courts, legal advocates and law enforcement.
 - The Department of Corrections operates adult prisons and youth correctional centers to deal with perpetrators, while individual counties operate youth detention centers and special purpose schools.
- At the local level:
 - Educational professionals have the most contact with children, meaning they are often the first to detect issues.
 - Housing Authority employees may also frequently come into contact with children.
 - Municipalities and counties operate or sponsor a variety of programs that involve children including but not limited to:
 - Recreation programs
 - Before and After Care programs
 - Youth sports leagues
 - Youth centers
 - Youth in Government programs
 - Junior law enforcement training programs
 - The role of **Police and law enforcement agencies** is especially important. Police officers assist in resolving reported situations, often acting as first identifiers. In New

Jersey, police are given broad authority to protect children, including the authority to remove them from their parents or caregivers without a court order if necessary to prevent imminent danger to a child. Under the **Prevention of Domestic Violence Act**, a law enforcement officer must make an arrest when the officer finds “probable cause” that domestic violence has occurred. This holds even if the victim refuses to make a complaint. The Act is invoked in situations where the victim exhibits signs of injury caused by domestic violence, when a warrant is in effect, or when there is probable cause to believe that a weapon has been involved in an act of domestic violence. Abusers often use psychological tactics or coercive control over their partners, such as making threats to prevent a victim from leaving or contacting friends, family or police. But even if these conditions are not met, an officer may still make an arrest or sign a criminal complaint if there is probable cause to believe acts of domestic violence have been committed. Now if there is no visible sign of injury but the victim states that an injury did, in fact, occur, the officer must take other factors into consideration in determining probable cause.

The Employer is committed to the safety of all individuals in its community, however, the Employer has particular concern for those who are potentially vulnerable, including minor children. The Employer regards the abuse of children as abhorrent in all its forms and pledges to hold its officials, employees and volunteers to the highest standards of conduct in interacting with children. Statistics show that 93% of victims under the age of 18 know the abuser. Further, a perpetrator does not have to be an adult to harm a child but are typically in a caregiver role. They can have any relationship to the child including a playmate, family member, a teacher, a coach, or instructor.

The Employer is fully committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of minors who interact with officials, employees, and volunteers of the Employer to the maximum extent possible. These Policy and Procedures establish the guidelines for officials, employees, and volunteers who set policy for the Employer or may work with or interact with individuals under 18 years of age, and those who supervise employees, and volunteers who may work with or interact with individuals under 18 years of age, with the goal of promoting the safety and wellbeing of minors.

This Model Policy provides guidelines that apply broadly to interactions between minors and officials, employees, and volunteers in programs operated by the Employer or affiliated programs or activities. All officials, employees, and volunteers are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy.

II. **Definitions:**

- **Authorized Adult** - Individuals, age 18 and older, paid or unpaid, who interact with, supervise, chaperone, or otherwise oversee and/or interact with minors in program activities, recreational, and/or residential facilities. The Authorized Adults’ roles may include positions as counselors, chaperones, coaches, instructors, etc.

- **Child or Minor** - A person under the age of eighteen (18).
- **Department Heads** - Appointed department heads of the Employer, including the Administrator, and any assistants.
- **Direct Contact** - Positions with the possibility of care, supervision, guidance or control of children or routine interaction with children.
- **Dual Reporting** – Reporting possible abuse to both the NJ Department of Children and Families and law enforcement at the same time by the individual designated by the Employer to report all possible cases of abuse.
- **Employees, Staff, or Counselors** – persons working for the Employer on a full-time or part-time basis, and compensated by the Employer.
- **Facilities** - Facilities owned by, under the control of, or rented or leased to the Employer.
- **Grooming** - is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Refer to Appendix B for more detailed information on grooming.
- **NJMEL JIF** - New Jersey Municipal Excess Liability Fund Joint Insurance fund.
- **Officials** – Elected officials of the Employer, appointed Board members, and Authority Commissioners.
- **One-On-One Contact** - Personal, unsupervised interaction between any Authorized Adult and a participant without at least one other Authorized Adult, parent or legal guardian being present.
- **Programs** - Programs and activities offered or sponsored by the Employer.
- **Volunteers** - Individuals volunteering their time to provide services to the Employer who are not on the payroll and receive no compensation.

III. Policy:

The Employer is charged with protecting the health, safety, and welfare of all its citizens, including children under the age of 18. To that end, the Employer is firmly committed to protecting children under the care and supervision of the Employer from all forms of physical, mental, sexual and emotional abuse. The Employer is committed to establishing and implementing safeguards to eliminate opportunities for abuse of children entrusted to the care of the Employer. The procedures outlined below shall apply to all officials, employees, and volunteers of the Employer.

IV. Recruitment and Hiring of Employees and Vetting of Individuals Volunteering Their Time:

- i. All prospective employees and volunteers shall undergo a thorough and complete background check, including but not limited to a fingerprint identification check, credit check, motor vehicle record check, reference check (personal and professional), and a check of the Megan's Law directory for New Jersey and any other State where the applicant previously resided. ***Written documentation of the background check shall be maintained by the Employer in perpetuity.***
- ii. Background checks that disclose any negative or questionable results must be reviewed and approved by the Employer **prior to** the individual being hired and/or working with minors. **Provisional hiring is not permitted.**
- iii. All prospective employees and volunteers must complete the training adopted by the Employer **PRIOR TO** starting employment or volunteer service. **In addition to completing the training course adopted by the Employer,** all volunteer coaches shall complete the Rutgers SAFETY Clinic course (*Sports Awareness for Educating Today's Youth* TM) which is a three-hour program that meets the "Minimum Standards for Volunteer Coaches Safety Orientation and Training Skills Programs" under (N.J.A.C. 5:52) and provides partial civil immunity protection to volunteer coaches under the "Little League Law" (2A:62A-6 et. seq.)
- iv. The Employer shall **annually** re-check and document the Megan's Law directory for New Jersey to make certain that current employees are not listed.
- v. Once employed, authorized Adults who are employed are required to notify the appropriate Human Resources representative of an arrest (charged with a misdemeanor or felony) or conviction for an offense within 72 hours of knowledge of the arrest or conviction.

V. Procedures and Responsibilities of Officials:

Under New Jersey Law, an official may be held liable for the abuse or neglect of a child if he or she fails to implement appropriate safeguards to protect the child while the minor has been entrusted to the care of the Employer. Most importantly, recent changes in the law in New Jersey extended the statute of limitations for child abuse and neglect cases substantially, thus placing local officials and employees at a far greater risk.

A valid cause of action can be filed by an alleged victim well after the official has left office. It is, therefore, critically important for officials to establish and monitor policies and procedures designed to safeguard minors entrusted to the care of the Employer.

- Officials of the Employer are required to:

- i. Complete the initial training course adopted by the Employer, and any updated/refresher course, in order to better understand their legal duties and responsibilities under Federal and NJ State Law. The training program will include the following concepts:
 - Recognizing the signs of abuse and neglect of minors.
 - Establishing guidelines for protecting minors from emotional and physical abuse and neglect.
 - Understanding and being prepared to implement the procedures necessary to eliminate opportunities for abuse.
 - Becoming familiar with the legal requirements to report suspected cases of abuse.
 - Fully understanding the legal consequences for not being diligent in making certain that employees of the Employer adhere to all policies and procedures as adopted.
- ii. Meet ***annually*** with all Department Heads to review the “Policy Addressing Sexual Abuse of Minors”, and to verify that the administration is adhering to this policy which includes all of the following provisions. *If the policy is not being adhered to, it is the legal obligation of the officials of the Employer to implement whatever changes are necessary as soon as possible to make certain the policy is followed.*
- iii. Conduct ***random and unannounced*** visits to program sites to observe the setup of the programs and conduct of the employees and volunteers of the Employer.

VI. Program Procedures:

All Employer programs operated by, sponsored by, or affiliated with the Employer shall comply with the following procedures. All officials, employees, and volunteers who interact with or could possibly interact with minors, and those employees who supervise employees who interact with or could possibly interact with minors, shall adhere to the following policy.

VII. Specific Program Procedures:

The following policies shall apply to ***all programs*** offered by, sponsored by or affiliated with the Employer. As an essential element of compliance with the overall objective of protecting and addressing the safe treatment of minors, the Employer shall:

- a. Establish a written procedure for the notification of the minor's parent/legal guardian in case of an emergency, including medical or behavioral problem, natural disasters, or other significant program disruptions. Authorized Adults with the program, as well as participants and their parents/legal guardians, must be advised of this procedure in writing prior to the participation of the minors in the program. In addition, the Employer shall provide information to parents or legal guardians detailing the manner in which the participant can be contacted during the program.

- b. Make certain that all program participants provide a ***Medical Treatment Authorization form*** to the Employer.
- c. Implement and adopt a ***“Code of Conduct”*** for volunteer and paid staff members which, ***at a minimum***, will include the following:

<i>Code of Conduct</i>

- Staff members will, at all times, respect the rights of program participants and use positive techniques of guidance including positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- Staff members will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
- Staff members shall not transport children in their own vehicles, unless written authorization from the child's parent or guardian has been received.
- Members of the staff shall not be alone with children they meet in the programs outside of the camp. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting children to their home.
- Staff members shall, at all times, be visible to other staff members while supervising minors. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and approval of the Program Director.
- Staff members will appear neat, clean, and appropriately attired.
- Staff members will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents and staff.
- Staff members are required to refrain from texting, and posting or checking any of the social media outlets while they are working or volunteering. The only exception is for texting for the purposes of communicating with another staff member or parent regarding a programmatic issue pertaining to a child.
- Staff members are prohibited from buying gifts for program participants.

In addition to the Code of Conduct, the following shall be a part of the specific program provisions:

- The possession or use of alcohol and other drugs, fireworks, guns and other weapons is prohibited.
- The Employer shall set forth rules and procedures governing when and under what circumstances participants may leave the Employer property during the program.

- No violence, including sexual abuse or harassment, will be tolerated.
- Hazing of any kind is prohibited. Bullying including verbal, physical, and cyber bullying are prohibited and will be addressed immediately.
- No theft of property will be tolerated.
- No use of tobacco products will be tolerated.
- Misuse or damage of Employer property is prohibited. Charges will be assessed against those participants who are responsible for damage or misuse of property.
- The inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, and digital devices is prohibited including use of such devices in showers, restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected by participants.
- Under no circumstances are any images of any child taken during any of the activities conducted or sponsored by the Employer to be shared on any social media platform without the expressed written consent of a parent or legal guardian.
- The Employer shall assign a staff member who is at least 21 years of age to be accessible to participants. Additional Authorized Adults will be assigned to ensure one-on-one contact with minors does not occur and that appropriate levels of supervision are implemented.
- Take appropriate steps to make certain that children are not released to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written authorization on file in advance.)
- Develop and made available to participants and their parents or guardians, the rules and discipline measures applicable to the program. Program participants and staff must abide by all regulations and may be removed from the program for non-compliance with rules.
- The recommended ratio of counselors to program participants should reflect the gender distribution of the participants, and should meet the following:
 1. One staff member for every six participants ages 4 and 5
 2. One staff member for every eight participants ages 6 to 8
 3. One staff member for every ten participants ages 9 to 14
 4. One staff member for every twelve participants ages 15 to 17
- Responsibilities of the counselors must include, at a minimum, informing program participants about safety and security procedures, rules established by the program, and behavioral expectations. Counselors are responsible for following and enforcing all

rules and must be able to provide information included herein to program participants and be able to respond to emergencies.

Specific Policy and Procedures for Use of Restrooms by Children/Minors:

- All restrooms shall be checked in advance by staff persons before minor children enter to make certain that no other individuals are present.
- Staff members (of the same sex) are to stand guard at the doorway to make certain that no one else enters the restroom while a child is there. Children should not be permitted enter restrooms in pairs or in groups, unless it is absolutely necessary.

VIII. Procedures for Law Enforcement Officers:

Law enforcement officers of the Employer frequently interact with minors in a variety of ways. It is important to establish guidelines to assist law enforcement officers in being aware of how to act and react in these circumstances. To that end, the Chief of Police or his or her designee of the Employer shall formulate a written policy addressing the safe treatment of minors for consideration and approval by the governing body for law enforcement officers who interact with minors.

The policy shall, at a minimum, incorporate and address the following:

- a. **Transporting minors in a police vehicle.** Whenever possible, victims or alleged victims of sexual assault or other crimes, or minors removed from a situation for protective purposes, shall be transported by two officers (at least one of whom shall be of the same sex as the victim) in unmarked vehicles that does not have a prisoner compartment/partition. Officers transporting a minor for whatever reason shall document starting and stopping mileage through radio contact.
- b. Directives issued by the NJ State Attorney General pertaining to interaction with minors shall be incorporated into the policy.
- c. The following provisions from the “***Code of Conduct***” for counselors shall be included in the policy for officers assigned to work in school settings (i.e. Class 3 officers):
 - i. Officers will, at all times, respect the rights of students and use positive techniques of guidance including positive reinforcement and encouragement.
 - ii. Officers will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.
 - iii. Officers shall not transport children in their own vehicles. Officers shall not arrange to see students outside of school and this includes babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting

children to their home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and approval of the Chief.

- iv. Officers shall make certain that they are neat, clean, and appropriately attired.
- v. Officers will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of children, parents and staff. Officers shall not buy gifts for students at any time.
- vi. All officers are required to complete the initial training course offered by the NJMEL JIF, and any refresher courses as well.

IX. Training Requirements:

Individual training courses have been designed for each of the following categories and all officials, employees, and volunteers of the Employer are required to complete training (and refresher course training) adopted by the Employer. ALL employees of the Employer shall complete the training course whether they interact with children/minors or not. Although training records will be maintained, it is recommended that each Employer and individual trainees also keep copies of their own training records.

a. Officials

Complete the initial training course adopted by the Employer, and any updated/refresher course, in order to better understand their legal duties and responsibilities under Federal and NJ State Law. The training program will include the following concepts.

- Recognizing the signs of abuse and neglect of minors.
- Establishing guidelines for protecting minors from emotional and physical abuse and neglect.
- Understanding and being prepared to implement the procedures necessary to eliminate opportunities for abuse.
- Becoming familiar with the legal requirements to report suspected cases of abuse.
- Fully understanding the legal consequences for not being diligent in making certain that employees of the Employer adhere to all policies and procedures as adopted.

b. Department Heads

- i. Content of course shall include:

1. Current State NJ State Law pertaining to Sexual Abuse of Minors
2. Recognizing the signs of abuse and neglect
3. Different types of abuse (i.e. Peer to Peer, Adult to Child, etc...)
4. Your legal responsibility for implementing and monitoring procedures and employees

5. Reporting cases of abuse

c. **Volunteers and Employees of the Employer**

i. Content of course shall include:

1. Current State NJ State Law pertaining to Sexual Abuse of Minors
2. Recognizing the signs of abuse and neglect
3. Different types of abuse (i.e. Peer to Peer, Adult to Child, etc...)
4. Your legal responsibility for implementing and monitoring procedures and employees
5. Reporting cases of abuse

d. **Law Enforcement Officers**

i. Content of course shall include:

1. Current Status of NJ Law and Directives from the Attorney General for Law Enforcement personnel
2. Your responsibilities
3. Officers in Schools
4. Reporting Abuse

X. Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect:

In light of the importance and priority placed on safeguarding the health and safety of minors, it is critically important that suspected cases of child abuse and neglect are reported as soon as possible. **As a government official, employee or volunteer, you are legally required to report suspected child abuse. This requirement includes all governmental officials, employees and volunteers.**

The following procedures shall be utilized in reporting suspected cases of abuse. The Employer shall also train officials, department heads, employees and volunteers in the concept of “**dual reporting**” as listed and defined below and shall encourage all staff and volunteers to utilize this process as much as possible in reporting suspected cases of abuse.

Child Abuse is hard thing to talk about, especially with victims. The most important thing to remember is to **show calm reassurance and unconditional support**. Avoid interrogation and leading questions. Understand that denial and embarrassment are common reactions. Don’t display disbelief, shock, or disgust. Instead, be reassuring. Make sure the child knows that they did nothing wrong. Reassure them that this is not their fault and make sure they know that you take it seriously.

Interviewing children to investigate sexual abuse requires highly technical expertise. ***Do not “investigate” an abuse situation. Do not interrogate the child.*** Rather report it immediately as shown below. And finally, keep safety as the priority. If there is the possibility of violence against yourself or the child, get the appropriate professionals or agencies involved as soon as possible.

It is recommended that, whenever possible, officials, employees and volunteers report the suspected abuse to both the NJ Department of Children and Families and law enforcement at the same time, which is known as “dual reporting.”

For employees or volunteers of programs conducted by the Employer:

- Immediately report suspected cases to the Program Director in charge.
- The Program Director shall immediately investigate the alleged incident. The Director shall document the alleged abuse in writing including the following information, as recommended by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families:
 - a. **Who:** The child and parent/caregiver’s name, age and address and the name of the alleged perpetrator and that person’s relationship to the child.
 - b. **What:** Type and frequency of alleged abuse/neglect, current or previous injuries to the child and what caused you to become concerned.
 - c. **When:** When the alleged abuse/neglect occurred and when you learned of it.
 - d. **Where:** Where the incident occurred, where the child is now and whether the alleged perpetrator has access to the child.
 - e. **How:** How urgent the need is for intervention and whether there is a likelihood of imminent danger for the child.
- After documenting all of the facts surrounding the alleged abuse, the Program Director shall call the Hotline established by the NJ Department of Children and Families @ 1-877-652-2873. It is not the supervisor’s role to make a decision on whether a case should be reported. All cases shall be reported.

For Volunteer coaches or other volunteers in charge of programs sponsored by or affiliated with the Employer.

1. The Volunteer shall immediately document the alleged abuse in writing including the following information, as recommended by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families:
 - a. **Who:** The child and parent/caregiver’s name, age and address and the name of the alleged perpetrator and that person’s relationship to the child.
 - b. **What:** Type and frequency of alleged abuse/neglect, current or previous injuries to the child and what caused you to become concerned.
 - c. **When:** When the alleged abuse/neglect occurred and when you learned of it.

- d. **Where:** Where the incident occurred, where the child is now and whether the alleged perpetrator has access to the child.
- e. **How:** How urgent the need is for intervention and whether there is a likelihood of imminent danger for the child.

2. After documenting all of the facts surrounding the alleged abuse, the Volunteer shall call the Hotline established by the NJ Department of Children and Families @ 1-877-652-2873.

For Officials and Department Heads who witness or become aware of alleged cases of abuse or neglect:

- 1. The Officials and Department Heads shall immediately document the alleged abuse in writing including the following information, as recommended by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families:
 - a. **Who:** The child and parent/caregiver's name, age and address and the name of the alleged perpetrator and that person's relationship to the child.
 - b. **What:** Type and frequency of alleged abuse/neglect, current or previous injuries to the child and what caused you to become concerned.
 - c. **When:** When the alleged abuse/neglect occurred and when you learned of it.
 - d. **Where:** Where the incident occurred, where the child is now and whether the alleged perpetrator has access to the child.
 - e. **How:** How urgent the need is for intervention and whether there is a likelihood of imminent danger for the child.
- After documenting all of the facts surrounding the alleged abuse, the Officials or Department Heads shall call the Hotline established by the NJ Department of Children and Families @ 1-877-652-2873.

For Law Enforcement Officers:

- Immediately report any suspected or alleged cases of abuse or neglect to the County Prosecutor.

XI. Important Information Regarding Reporting Suspected Abuse Under NJ Law:

The following guidelines have been established under New Jersey law, for those reporting suspected or alleged cases of abuse or neglect. The Employer encourages all officials, employees, and volunteers in programs operated by the Employer or affiliated programs or activities to report suspected cases of abuse with the following in mind.

- i. *Any person who, in good faith, makes a report of child abuse or neglect or testifies in a child abuse hearing resulting from such a report is immune from any criminal or civil liability as a result of such action. Calls can be placed to the hotline anonymously.*

- ii. However, any person who knowingly fails to report suspected abuse or neglect according to the law or to comply with the provisions of the law is a disorderly person.*
 - iii. When a report indicates that a child may be at risk, an investigator from the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (formerly Youth and Family Services) will promptly investigate the allegations of child abuse and neglect within 24 hours of receipt of the report.*

XII. Acknowledgement of Receipt and Review of Policy:

All officials, employees/counselors, and volunteers shall sign and date an acknowledgement form that confirms they have received and reviewed the Policy Addressing the Protection and Safe Treatment of Minors, issued to them by the Employer. The same process shall be used for any revised policy issued in the future.

Indicators of Child Abuse/Neglect

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families issued the following guidelines to assist in recognizing the indicators of child abuse/neglect.

Indicators of Child Abuse / Neglect

Different types of abuse and neglect have different physical and behavioral indicators.

Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Unexplained bruises and welts: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On face, lips, mouth• On torso, back, buttocks, thighs• In various stages of healing• Cluster, forming regular patterns• Reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle)• On several different surface areas• Regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation	Wary of adult contacts Apprehensive when other children cry Behavioral extremes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aggressiveness• Withdrawal Frightened of parents Afraid to go home Reports injury by parents
Unexplained burns: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks• Immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like doughnut shaped on buttocks or genitalia)• Patterned like electric burner, iron, etc.• Rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso	
Unexplained fractures: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To skull, nose, facial structure• In various stages of healing• Multiple or spiral fractures	
Unexplained laceration or abrasions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To mouth, lips, gums, eyes• To external genitalia	

Physical Neglect

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<p>Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress</p> <p>Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or long periods</p> <p>Constant fatigue or listlessness</p> <p>Unattended physical problems or medical needs</p> <p>Abandonment</p>	<p>Begging, stealing food</p> <p>Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departure)</p> <p>Constantly falling asleep in class</p> <p>Alcohol or drug abuse</p> <p>Delinquency (e.g. thefts)</p> <p>States there is no caregiver</p>

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<p>Difficulty in walking or sitting</p> <p>Torn, stained or bloody underclothing</p> <p>Pain or itching in genital area</p> <p>Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas</p> <p>Venereal disease, especially in pre-teens</p> <p>Pregnancy</p>	<p>Unwilling to change for gym or participate in PE</p> <p>Withdrawn, fantasy or infantile behavior</p> <p>Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge</p> <p>Poor peer relationships</p> <p>Delinquent or run away</p> <p>Reports sexual assault by caregiver</p>

Emotional Maltreatment

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<p>Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.)</p> <p>Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructive, etc.)</p> <p>Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, speech disorders, inhibition of play)</p>	<p>Behavior extremes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliant, passive • Aggressive, demanding <p>Overly adoptive behavior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriately adult • Inappropriately infant

Grooming Behavior

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

Here are some common characteristics of someone attempting to “groom” a child.

- Molesters often refer to their intended victims by pet names and use gifts to foster exclusivity and build a relationship while starting the practice of keeping secrets.
- The molester might begin to spend time with the victim outside of the regular program or schedule, contacting parents to become involved in a child’s life in some capacity, like babysitting. For this reason, many parents are shocked after abuse comes to light simply because the abuser seemed so good – too good to be true, in fact.
- Inevitably, the favoritism is not enough to keep the victim, and the abuser resorts to threats—threats that play off of a child’s guilt over the sexual contact.
- During the grooming process and abuse itself, victims often begin to show tell-tale signs including:
 - Sexual behaviors or strong sexual language that is too adult for their age.
 - Many children feel at fault after the abuse and begin to suffer guilt and depression, even resorting to self-harm.
 - Also look for cuts and scratches or other self-inflicted injuries.