

# Pennsbury School District

## School Board Policy

Effective Date	Supersedes Index No.	Index No.
<b>06/11/15</b>	<b>806.1 &amp; 806.2</b> of 7/1/96	<b>806.1R1</b>

**Title:** Child/Student Abuse Policy

**Purpose:** The Pennsbury School District is concerned with the physical and mental well-being of School District pupils and has determined that the School District will cooperate in the identification and reporting of suspected student abuse in accordance with applicable law.

This document, Index No. 806.1R1, Child/Student Abuse Policy, replaces the previous Board Policies Index No. 806.1 titled Student Abuse Policy, and Index. No. 806.2 titled Child Abuse Policy.

**Policy:** The Board requires District employees, independent contractors, and volunteers to comply with identification and reporting requirements for possible child abuse, as well as the victimization of students. In addition, the Board sets forth those individuals required to participate in ongoing child abuse recognition and reporting training, as well as procedures for reporting child abuse in compliance with the Child Protective Services Law of 1990 and its amendments. The Superintendent shall promulgate regulations and/or procedures in accordance with this law.

### Definitions

The following definitions are for the purpose of this policy:

**Bodily injury** - impairment of physical condition or substantial pain.

**Child** - an individual under eighteen (18) years of age.

**Child abuse** - intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following:

1. Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.

2. Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.
3. Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act.
4. Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act.
5. Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
6. Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act.
7. Causing serious physical neglect of a child.
8. Engaging in any of the following recent acts:
  - a) Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
  - b) Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.
  - c) Forcefully shaking a child under one (1) year of age.
  - d) Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one (1) year of age.
  - e) Interfering with the breathing of a child.
  - f) Causing a child to be present at a location while a violation of 18 Pa. C.S. § 7508.2 (relating to operation of methamphetamine laboratory) is occurring, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.
  - g) Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the actor knows or reasonably should have known: Is required to register as a Tier II or Tier III sexual offender under 42 Pa. C.S.

Ch. 97 Subch. H (relating to registration of sexual offenders), where the victim of the sexual offense was under eighteen (18) years of age when the crime was committed; has been determined to be a sexually violent predator under 42 Pa. C.S. § 9799.24 (relating to assessments) or any of its predecessors; or has been determined to be a sexually violent delinquent child as defined in 42 Pa. C.S. § 9799.12 (relating to definitions).

9. Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act.

The term **child abuse** does not include physical contact with a child that is involved in normal participation in physical education, athletic, extracurricular or recreational activities. Also excluded from the meaning of the term **child abuse** is the use of reasonable force by a person responsible for the welfare of a child for purposes of supervision, control or safety, provided that the use of force:

1. Constitutes incidental, minor or reasonable physical contact in order to maintain order and control;
2. Is necessary to quell a disturbance or remove a child from the scene of a disturbance that threatens property damage or injury to persons;
3. Is necessary for self-defense or defense of another;
4. Is necessary to prevent the child from self-inflicted physical harm; or
5. Is necessary to gain possession of weapons, controlled substances or other dangerous objects that are on the person of the child or in the child's control.

**Direct contact with children** - the possibility of care, supervision, guidance, or control of children or routine interaction with children.

**Independent contractor** – a non-District employee who is contracted to provide a program, activity, or service who is otherwise responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or control of children. This includes non-District employees who are contracted to provide such services as before- and after-school care and food service. The term does not include an individual who has no direct contact with children.

**Perpetrator** - a person who has committed child abuse and is a parent/guardian of the child, a spouse or former spouse of the child's parent/guardian, a paramour or former paramour of the child's parent/guardian, a person responsible for the child's welfare, an individual residing in the same home as the child, an individual fourteen

(14) years of age or older who is responsible for the child's welfare or who resides in the same home as the child, or an individual eighteen (18) years of age or older who does not reside in the same home as the child but is related within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity by birth or adoption to the child.

**Person responsible for the child's welfare** - a person who provides permanent or temporary care, supervision, mental health diagnosis or treatment, training or control of a child in lieu of parental care, supervision and control. The term includes any such person who has direct or regular contact with a child through any program, activity or service sponsored by a school, for-profit organization or religious or other not-for-profit organization.

**Program, activity or service** - a public or private educational, athletic or other pursuit in which children participate. The term includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. A youth camp or program.
2. A recreational camp or program.
3. A sports or athletic program.
4. An outreach program.
5. An enrichment program.
6. A troop, club or similar organization.

**Recent act or failure to act** - any act or failure to act committed within two (2) years of the date of the report to the Department of Human Services of the Commonwealth or county agency.

**School employee** - an individual who is employed by a school or who provides a program, activity or service sponsored by a school. The term excludes an individual who has no direct contact with children.

**Serious mental injury** - a psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate treatment, that:

1. Renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened.
2. Seriously interferes with a child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.

**Serious physical neglect** - any of the following when committed by a perpetrator that endangers a child's life or health, threatens a child's well-being, causes bodily injury or impairs a child's health, development or functioning:

1. A repeated, prolonged or egregious failure to supervise a child in a manner that is appropriate considering the child's developmental age and abilities.
2. The failure to provide a child with adequate essentials of life, including food, shelter or medical care.

**Sexual abuse or exploitation** - any of the following:

1. The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in or assist another individual to engage in sexually explicit conduct, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Looking at the sexual or other intimate parts of a child or another individual for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire in any individual.
  - b. Participating in sexually explicit conversation either in person, by telephone, by computer or by a computer-aided device for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
  - c. Actual or simulated sexual activity or nudity for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
  - d. Actual or simulated sexual activity for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming.

Paragraph 1. does not include consensual activities between a child who is fourteen (14) years of age or older and another person who is fourteen (14) years of age or older and whose age is within four (4) years of the child's age.

2. Any of the following offenses committed against a child: rape; statutory sexual assault; involuntary deviate sexual intercourse; sexual assault; institutional sexual assault; aggravated indecent assault; indecent assault; indecent exposure; incest; prostitution; sexual abuse; unlawful contact with a minor; or sexual exploitation.

**Sexual misconduct** – any act, including, but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or physical activity, directed toward or with a child or student that is designed to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the child or student. Such acts

include, but are not limited to: sexual or romantic invitation; dating or soliciting dates; engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog; making sexually suggestive comments; self-disclosure or physical exposure of a sexual, romantic, or erotic nature; any sexual, indecent, romantic, or erotic contact with the child or student.

**Student** - an individual enrolled in a district school under eighteen (18) years of age.

**Volunteer** - an individual in an unpaid position with a program, activity or service who is individually responsible for the welfare of one or more children or has direct contact with children.

The following are exclusions from child abuse:

1. Environmental factors—No child shall be deemed to be physically or mentally abused based on injuries that result solely from environmental factors such as inadequate housing, furnishings, income, clothing and medical care, that are beyond the control of the parent or person responsible for the child’s welfare with whom the child resides.
2. Practice of religious beliefs—If, upon investigation, the county agency determines that a child has not been provided needed medical or surgical care because of sincerely held religious beliefs of the child’s parents or relative within the third degree of consanguinity and with whom the child resides, which beliefs are consistent with those of a bona fide religion, the child shall not be deemed to be physically or mentally abused.
3. Use of force for supervision, control and safety purposes—the use of reasonable force on or against a child by the child’s own parent or person responsible for the child’s welfare shall not be considered child abuse if any of the following conditions apply:
  - (i) the use of reasonable force constitutes incidental, minor or reasonable physical contact with the child or other actions that are designed to maintain order and control.
  - (ii) the use of reasonable force is necessary:
    - A. to quell a disturbance or remove the child from the scene of a disturbance that threatens physical injury to personal or damage to property

- B. to prevent the child from self-inflicted physical harm;
  - C. for self-defense or the defense of another individual; or
  - D. to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects or controlled substances or paraphernalia that are on the child or within the control of the child.
4. Rights of Parents—Nothing in this definition shall be construed to restrict the generally recognized existing rights of parents to use reasonable force on or against their children for the purposes of supervision, control and discipline of their children. Such reasonable force shall not constitute child abuse.
5. Participation in events that involve physical contact with child—An individual participating in a practice or competition in an interscholastic sport, physical education, a recreational activity or an extracurricular activity that involves physical contact with a child does not, in itself, constitute contact that is subject to the reporting requirement.
6. Child-on-child contact—harm or injury to a child that results from the act of another child shall not constitute child abuse unless the child who caused the harm or injury is a perpetrator. No child shall be deemed to be a perpetrator of child abuse based solely on physical or mental injuries caused to another child in the course of a dispute, fight or scuffle entered into by mutual consent.

The following child-on-child acts constitute crimes against a child which are subject to reporting requirements of this regulation:

- (i) rape as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3121 (relating to rape);
- (ii) involuntary deviate sexual intercourse as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse);
- (iii) sexual assault as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault);
- (iv) aggravated indecent assault as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault);
- (v) indecent assault, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3126 (relating to indecent assault);
- (vi) indecent exposure, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3127 (relating to indecent exposure).

7. Defensive force—Reasonable force for self-defense or the defense of another individual, consistent with the provisions of with 18 Pa.C.S. §§ 505 (relating to use of force for self-protection) and 506 (relating to use of force for the protection of other persons), shall not be considered child abuse.

### Delegation of Responsibility

In accordance with Board policy, the Superintendent or designee shall:

1. Require each candidate for employment to submit an official child abuse clearance statement and other background checks as required by law.
2. Require each applicant for transfer or reassignment to ensure his/her official child abuse clearance statement and other clearances are current.
3. Require each volunteer to submit an official child abuse clearance statement and other background checks as required by law.

School employees, independent contractors and volunteers shall obtain and submit new background checks and clearances every thirty-six (36) months.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually inform students, parents/guardians, independent contractors, volunteers and staff regarding the contents of this Board policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually notify district staff, independent contractors, and volunteers of their responsibility for reporting child abuse in accordance with Board policy and administrative regulations.

### Training

The school district, and independent contractors of the school district, shall provide their employees with mandatory training on child abuse recognition and reporting. The training shall include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

1. Recognition of the signs of abuse and sexual misconduct and reporting requirements for suspected abuse and sexual misconduct.
2. Provisions of the Educator Discipline Act, including mandatory reporting requirements.



3. District policy related to reporting of suspected abuse and sexual misconduct.
4. Maintenance of professional and appropriate relationships with students.

Employees are required to complete a minimum of three (3) hours of training every five (5) years.

#### Mandated Reporters

1. Definition: *Mandated Reporters* – The following adults shall make a report of suspected child abuse below, if the person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse:

- A. A person licensed or certified to practice in any health-related field under the jurisdiction of the Department of State.
- B. A medical examiner, coroner or funeral director.
- C. An employee of a health care facility or provider licensed by the Department of Health, who is engaged in the admission, examination, care or treatment of individuals.
- D. A school employee.
- E. An employee of a child-care service who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- F. A clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization.
- G. An individual paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child.
- H. An employee of a social services agency who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- I. A peace officer or law enforcement official.
- J. An emergency medical services provider certified by the Department of Health.
- K. An employee of a public library who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.

- L. An independent contractor.
- M. An attorney affiliated with an agency, institution, organization or other entity, including a school or regularly established religious organization that is responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or control of children.
- N. An individual supervised or managed by a person listed under paragraphs A-M above who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.

### Duty To Report

School employees, independent contractors and volunteers shall make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:

1. The school employee, independent contractor or volunteer comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and the practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.
2. The school employee, independent contractor or volunteer is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.
3. A person makes a specific disclosure to a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.
4. An individual fourteen (14) years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer that s/he has committed child abuse.

A child is not required to come before the school employee, independent contractor or volunteer in order for that individual to make a report of suspected child abuse.

A report of suspected child abuse does not require the identification of the person responsible for the child abuse.

Any person who, in good faith, makes a report of suspected child abuse, regardless of whether the report is required, cooperates with an investigation, testifies in a proceeding, or engages in other action

authorized by law shall have immunity from civil and criminal liability related to those actions.

Any person required to report child abuse who willfully fails to do so may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

Any person who intentionally or knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or intentionally or knowingly induces a child to make a false claim of child abuse may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

Any person who engages in intimidation, retaliation, or obstruction in the making of a child abuse report or the conducting of an investigation into suspected child abuse may be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution.

The District shall not discriminate or retaliate against any person for making, in good faith, a report of suspected child abuse.

#### Reporting Procedures

School employees, independent contractors or volunteers who suspect child abuse shall immediately make a written report of suspected child abuse using electronic technologies or an oral report via the statewide toll-free telephone number. A person making an initial oral report of suspected child abuse must also submit a written electronic report within forty-eight (48) hours after the oral report. Upon receipt of an electronic report, the electronic reporting system will automatically respond with a confirmation, providing the district with a written record of the report.

A school employee, independent contractor or volunteer who makes a report of suspected child abuse shall immediately, after making the initial report, notify the school principal and if the initial report was made electronically, also provide the principal with a copy of the report confirmation. The school principal shall then immediately notify the Superintendent or designee that a child abuse report has been made and if the initial report was made electronically also provide a copy of the report confirmation. The anonymity of the reporting individual will remain protected, with his/her identity to be released only to those who need it for specific law enforcement or similar reasons.

When a report of suspected child abuse is made by a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer as required by law, the school district is not required to make more than one report. An individual otherwise required to make a report who is aware that an initial report has already been made by a school employee, independent contractor or volunteer is not required to make an additional report. The person making an initial

oral report is responsible for making the follow-up written electronic report within forty-eight (48) hours, and shall provide the school principal with a copy of the report confirmation promptly after the written electronic report has been filed. The principal shall in turn provide a copy of the report confirmation to the Superintendent or designee.

When necessary to preserve potential evidence of suspected child abuse, a school employee may, after the initial report is made and in the presence of the building principal or a District administrator, take or cause to be taken photographs of the child who is the subject of the report. Any such photographs shall be sent to the county agency at the time the written report is sent or within forty-eight hours after a report is made by electronic technologies or as soon thereafter as possible. The school principal shall be notified whenever such photographs are taken.

If the Superintendent or designee reasonably suspects that conduct being reported involves an incident required to be reported under the Safe Schools Act, the Superintendent or designee shall inform local law enforcement, in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

#### Investigation

The school principal shall facilitate the cooperation with the Department of Human Services of the Commonwealth or the county agency investigating a report of suspected child abuse, including permitting authorized personnel to interview the child while in attendance at school.

Upon notification that an investigation involves suspected child abuse by a school employee, the principal shall immediately implement a plan of supervision or alternative arrangement for the school employee under investigation. The plan of supervision or alternative arrangement shall be submitted to the county agency for approval.

**Responsible  
Administrator:** Director of Human Resources