

POLICY

STAFFORD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Missing Children

8464 MISSING CHILDREN

The Board of Education is concerned with the physical and mental well-being of the children of this district and recognizes the importance of early detection in identifying and finding potentially missing children. The Board of Education directs the establishment and implementation of a program for the identification and reporting of children missing from the educational system

Used in this policy, "parent" means the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) having legal custody and control of a minor child.

The Superintendent shall develop and implement procedures to identify children who have been withdrawn from this district without enrollment in another school or school district or pupils who have been willfully or neglectfully removed from school by protracted absences without good cause. Children so identified shall be reported promptly to the Stafford Township Police Department by the school principal or designee. The Board authorizes the release of the child's name, age, gender, last known home address, and physical description and the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) name and work place, if known, to the Stafford Township Police Department. Reasonable attempts shall be made to determine the cause of a child's unauthorized absence and to remediate the cause to the extent possible within the school setting. The Superintendent shall report periodically to the Board the results of the program for the identification of children missing from the educational program.

Any employee, volunteer or intern who has reason to believe that a child may be missing shall immediately notify Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1 and Regulation 8464. The individual having reason to believe a child may be missing may, prior to notifying CP&P, inform the school principal or designee, if such action will not delay immediate notification. In no way does this mean that the reporting individual must receive confirmation that the child is a missing child from the principal or anyone else before reporting to CP&P and in no way does this mean that the individual may pass the reporting responsibility on to the principal through notification. If the reporting individual has not informed the principal prior to notifying CP&P, then he/she shall notify the principal immediately thereafter. However, notice to the principal or designee need not be given when the reporting individual believes that such notification would likely endanger the reporting individual or student involved or when the individual believes that such disclosure would likely result in retaliation against the student or in discrimination against the reporting individual with respect to his/her employment.



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The Stafford Township Police Department, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:17B-9.8b, must notify the Superintendent of a missing child, who is currently or was most recently enrolled in the school district, of the disappearance and provide the Superintendent with information concerning the identity of the missing child. The Stafford Township Police Department shall also notify the Superintendent if the child is located.

If the Superintendent is notified of a missing child by the Stafford Township Police Department, the Superintendent shall mark the child's school record. The mark will be a clearly, identifiable and removable marking so in the event a copy or information regarding the record is requested, the school district will be aware the record is that of a missing child. Once the Stafford Township Police Department notifies the Superintendent that the child has been located, the Superintendent, or designee, will remove the mark from the child's school record. If a copy of a school record is requested that has been "marked" in accordance with this Policy, the Superintendent, or designee, will remove the marking from only the copy of the school record to be provided to the requestor in accordance with Board Policy No. 8330, and without alerting the requestor to the fact that the record has been "marked". After supplying a copy of or information regarding the "marked" record, the Superintendent will immediately report the inquiry or any knowledge as to the whereabouts of the missing child to the Stafford Township Police Department.

The Board of Education will provide for a district liaison with CP&P and the Stafford Township Police Department in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.2(a)5.i who will facilitate communication and cooperation between the district and CP&P/Stafford Township Police Department and act as primary contact person between the schools and CP&P/Stafford Township Police Department with regard to general information sharing and development of mutual training and other cooperative efforts. The district liaison will assist the Board and administration in developing new employee orientation programs and annual in-service programs to all school staff concerning potentially missing children. The district liaison will receive CP&P and Stafford Township Police Department findings at each stage of the investigation and will recommend to the Superintendent such action that may be necessary and appropriate.

The Board of Education and administration assure all school personnel there will be no employment discrimination in regards to compensation, hire, tenure or terms, conditions or privileges of employment upon making a good faith report or causing such report.



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Information regarding allegations of potentially missing, abducted or lost children reported to, investigated and reported upon by CP&P about a school employee, volunteer or intern shall be confidential and may be disclosed only as required in order to cooperate with CP&P investigations or by court order. These records shall be maintained in a secure place and be accessible to the Superintendent and/or his/her designee.

The Board will provide due process rights to school personnel who have been reassigned or suspended in accordance with statutes. Temporary reassignment or suspension of school personnel named as suspects in the notification that a child is missing, abducted or lost shall occur if there is reasonable cause to believe the life or health of the alleged victim or other children is in imminent danger due to continued contact between the personnel and the child(ren). All records shall be removed from the school staff's personnel file if the school district receives official notice from CP&P that the allegation was unfounded. An unfounded allegation shall not be used against the employee for any purpose relating to employment.

The Superintendent shall develop regulations for the reporting of a missing, abducted or lost child and for cooperation with CP&P in investigations of missing, abducted or lost children.

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-24; 18A:36-25
N.J.S.A. 52A:17B-9.8b
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1

Adopted: 22 July 2004
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