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R 8464 MISSING CHILDREN

The following procedures implement Policy No. 8464 directing the identification and reporting of children missing from the educational system, whether by abduction by persons other than the child's primary caretaker or by parental neglect of the responsibility to ensure the child's attendance at school.

A. Notification of Pupil Absences and Transfers

1. Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are requested to notify the school office whenever a child will be absent from a school session, prior to the deadlines established by Regulation No. 5200, ¶B1 and ¶B2.
2. A parent(s) or legal guardian(s) who anticipates a child's future absence or anticipates that an absence will be prolonged is requested to notify the school in accordance with Regulation No. 5200, ¶B3.
3. A parent(s) or legal guardian(s) who intends to withdraw a child from school shall be asked to designate the school or school district to which the child will be transferred, in accordance with Regulation No. 5130, ¶B2.

B. Identification of Potentially Missing, Lost or Abducted Children

1. Teachers shall record and report attendance in accordance with Regulation No. 5200, ¶H.
2. The Confidential Secretary in charge of attendance shall daily compile a list of absent pupils and compare that list to the pupils for whom parental notification of absence has been received.
3. The Confidential Secretary in charge of attendance shall attempt to reach by telephone the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of an absent pupil for whom notification of absence has not been received. Telephone calls will be made to the pupil's home and to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) place of work as indicated on the emergency notification form submitted by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
4. If a parent(s) or legal guardian(s) cannot be reached by telephone, the Confidential Secretary in charge of attendance shall promptly take reasonable, appropriate steps to locate the absent pupil in accordance with Policy and Regulation 5200. Such steps may include but shall not be limited to,



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- a. Interviewing other pupils, staff members, and neighbors of the pupil, and
 - b. Visiting the pupil's home.
 - c. In no way does this mean that the employee must receive confirmation that the child is a missing child from the principal or anyone else before reporting to Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) in accordance with the provisions herein.
 - 5. When a child has been formally withdrawn from the school district but an official request for the child's records has not been received within five days of the anticipated date of enrollment in the new district, the Building Principal or Confidential Secretary in charge of attendance shall report to the Superintendent who shall investigate and report in accordance with the procedures set forth herein.
 - 6. When making a determination as to whether a child is potentially missing, lost or abducted, an individual who considers reporting shall consider the pupil's age, maturity, attendance record, and disciplinary history, academic record, and medical history.
- C. Report to CP&P
- 1. All employee, volunteer or intern who has reason to believe that a child may be missing shall immediately notify 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, from the principal or anyone else, that the child is a potentially missing, lost or abducted, before reporting to CP&P. 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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D. Report to Law Enforcement Officials

1. In addition, once an individual has reasonable cause to believe that a child is potentially missing, abducted or lost, and a report has been made to CP&P, the school principal or designee shall report promptly to the Stafford Township Police Department.
2. The report to the Stafford Township Police Department of an unaccountably absent child or a withdrawn child who has not entered another school system may include:
 - a. The child's name, age, gender, and physical description,
 - b. The child and parent(s) or legal guardian(s) last known home address, and
 - c. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) name and work place, if known.
3. The Superintendent shall record in the child's permanent record in this district the date on which a child was reported in accordance with this regulation and the information released to the Stafford Township Police Department or to CP&P.
4. In the event a child believed to be missing is located, the Superintendent shall notify the police and CP&P immediately.

E. Report by Law Enforcement Officials

1. Stafford Township Police Department pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:17B-9.8b, shall notify the Superintendent of the school district where a missing child is currently or was most recently enrolled, 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.
2. When 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 denotation 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.



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3. If a copy of a “marked” school record is requested the Superintendent, or designee, will supply a copy of the record to the requestor, in accordance with Board Policy No. 8330, without alerting the requestor to the fact that the record has been “marked” in accordance with the provisions governing access to pupil records.
 4. 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.
- F. Cooperation with CP&P and the Stafford Township Police Department
1. The Board of Education and all district personnel will fully cooperate with agents of CP&P and the Stafford Township Police Department in an investigation of a potentially missing child. (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.2(a)4.i and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1)
 2. The CP&P investigator and the Stafford Township Police Department will be permitted to interview the child in the presence of the Principal or a person designated by the Principal. If the child is intimidated by the Principal or his/her designee, the child may be accompanied during the interview by a staff member whom he/she feels will be supportive. The accompanying staff member will give comfort to the child but will not participate in the investigation. (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.2(a)7.i and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1)
 3. School administrators will cooperate with CP&P and the Stafford Township Police Department in scheduling interviews with school personnel who may have information relevant to the investigation. (N.J.A.C. 6:29-9.2(a)7ii and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1)
 4. The custodian of school records shall release, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:36-19 and N.J.A.C. 6:3-6, all pupil records of the child(ren) under investigation that are deemed to be relevant to the identification and location of potentially missing children.
 5. The Board of Education shall maintain, secure, and release all confidential information about potentially missing children cases in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:36-25 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1.
 - a. Information regarding potentially missing children reported to, investigated and reported upon by CP&P about a school employee shall be considered confidential



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and may be disclosed only as required in order to cooperate with CP&P investigations, law enforcement investigations or by court order.

- b. Records pertaining to such information shall be maintained in a secure location separate from other employee personnel records and accessible only to the district chief school administrator or his/her designee.
6. School employees shall regard as confidential all information about a potentially missing child investigation remediation.
7. School Principals will permit agents of CP&P and the Stafford Township Police Department to remove pupils from school during the school day when removal is necessary to protect the child or to take the child to a service provider, on presentation of appropriate authorization. (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.2(a)7.v and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1)
8. School Principals will cooperate with CP&P when that agency deems that it is necessary to remove the child from his/her home for proper care and protection and when such removal results in the transfer of the child to a school other than the one in which he/she was enrolled. (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.2(a)7.vi and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1)
9. The 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 will be the Principal or designee. 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.



G. Employee Protection

1. The Board of Education will provide due process rights to school personnel who have been reassigned or suspended in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:6-10 et seq., 18A:25-1, 18A:25-6, and N.J.S.A. 9:6-3-1. Temporary reassignment or suspension of school personnel shall occur if there is reasonable cause to believe that the life or the health of the alleged victim or other children is in imminent danger due to continued contact between the school personnel and a child. (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.2(a)7.vii.).
2. The Board of Education will remove from the employee's personnel records all references to a report to CP&P or the Stafford Township Police Department regarding misconduct surrounding a potentially missing child a school district employee, immediately following the receipt of notice from CP&P and the Stafford Township Police Department that the allegation was unfounded. Such unfounded report by CP&P/Stafford Township Police Department shall not be used against the employee for any purpose relating to their employment in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6:29-9.2(a)7viii and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1.

H. Prohibition Against Reprisal or Retaliation

There shall be no reprisal or retaliation against any individual who, in good faith, reports or causes a report to be made of a potentially missing, abducted or lost child pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-25 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1.

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