Regional School Unit 5
Durham · Freeport · Pownal

"To inspire and support every learner by challenging minds, building character, sparking creativity, and nurturing passions."

Jean Skorapa, Superintendent of Schools
Kelly Wentworth, Director of Finance & Human Resources
Cynthia Alexander, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Elisha Morris, Director of Instructional Support

TO: Colin Cheney, Candy deCsipkes, Kara Kaikini, Danielle George

CC: Trevor Bean, Jen Gulko, Jean Skorapa

FROM: Cynthia Alexander

DATE: January 27, 2025

RE: Policy Meeting – February 7, 2025

The Policy Committee is scheduled to meet on February 7, 2025 at 8:45 a.m. via Zoom at the following link: https://networkmaine.zoom.us/j/88179232220 Meeting ID: 881 7923 2220 or join by telephone at 1-646-876-9923

Agenda:

1. Policy Review Cycle:
   IJOA - Field Trips and Other Student Travel
   IJOC - School Volunteers

2. At Board/Superintendent Request:
   None

3. Required Changes Based on Law:
   JLF - Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

FIELD TRIPS AND OTHER STUDENT TRAVEL

The Board recognizes the educational value of school-sponsored trips as a means of extending the curriculum and as a vehicle for encouraging and supporting student participation in academic, artistic, and athletic activities, performances and competitions. In addition, some school-sponsored trips may provide social experiences and contribute to the development of a positive school culture.

This policy provides guidance for the various kinds of trips that may be sponsored by the RSU No. 5 schools.

Field Trips

"Field trip" means a trip that takes place during the school day and is organized and conducted by one or more RSU No. 5 employees as a means of accomplishing particular curriculum objectives. All students within the class or grade, or curriculum related subgroup within a class, will be eligible to participate.

Field trips must be approved in advance by the building principal.

Teachers and principals will be expected to consider the following factors in planning and approval of field trips:

A. Objectives of the proposed trip and the anticipated learning outcomes;

B. Specific learning activities to be experienced during the trip;

C. Suitability of the activity and distance traveled to the age of students;

D. Mode and availability of transportation, with school bus transportation arranged so as not to disrupt school bus schedules;

E. Arrangements for meals (if applicable);

F. Availability of funding for all necessary expenses through the school budget or other appropriate sources; and

G. Plans for communicating information to parents.

In addition the Board requires that:

A. Parents/guardians give written permission for field trip participation;

B. Adequate supervision be provided to maintain discipline and safety and to respond to emergencies;

C. Students participating in field trips conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Board policies and school rules; and

D. Any overnight curriculum-related trip must be approved by the Superintendent.

Competition Trips

"Competition trip" means any trip related to an academic, artistic, athletic, or other student competition or performance that involves individual students or teams. Any competition trip that is outside of those scheduled for the year must be approved in advance by the Superintendent. Approval may be contingent upon availability of funding through the school budget or other sources.

Other School-Sponsored Trips

Other school-sponsored trips are those that are organized and conducted by one or more employees of RSU No. 5 as a supplement to the curriculum, as a class social activity, or as an activity planned by a student club or organization. Such trips may include overnight, long-distance in-state or out-of-state travel, or foreign travel. To be school-sponsored, the trip must relate directly to the curriculum or to activities for which the student club is organized.

Participation in such trips is entirely voluntary. There shall be no extra credit awarded for participation and no loss of credit for not taking a trip.

Participation may be limited to students taking courses related to the purpose of the trip or to students who are affiliated with the student club or organization planning the trip.

The Superintendent must approve, in advance, any trips involving out-of-state travel and all overnight and foreign trips. Approval may be contingent upon availability of funding from the school budget and other sources, including student fundraising.

Staff or administrators seeking approval for school-sponsored trips must furnish the following information:

A. Objectives of the trip and anticipated outcomes;

B. Specific experiences to be provided;

C. Number and grade(s) of students;

D. Criteria for student participation;

E. Maximum number of students who may participate;

F. Cost per student, including funds requested from RSU No. 5 and from individual students;

G. Fundraising plans (if applicable);

H. Transportation arrangements;

I. Itinerary;

J. Arrangements for meals and lodging;

K. Arrangements for adult supervision/chaperones;

L. Plans for safety and emergencies;

M. Plans for communicating information to parents and obtaining parental permission; and

N. Accountability for student conduct.

Adequate supervision must be provided to maintain discipline and safety and to respond to emergencies.

Students participating in field trips and other school-sponsored trips must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Board policies and school rules. Students who violate Board policy or school rules will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Non-School-Sponsored Travel

Travel organized by RSU No. 5 employees, parents or others that is not an extension of the instructional program or school-sponsored activities and has not been approved as a school-sponsored trip in compliance with this policy will be considered a non-school-sponsored trip.

All responsibility for non-school-sponsored trips lies with the individual(s) or group(s) organizing them. The Board accepts no responsibility for non-school-sponsored trips, and organizers should be aware that such trips or excursions are not covered by the school unit's liability insurance.

To minimize the impact of these trips on the instructional program and operation of the schools, the Board strongly encourages organizers/sponsors to schedule non-school-sponsored trips during weekends and/or vacation periods. Staff members planning or participating in non-school-sponsored travel must notify the building principal of such plans. Student absences due to participation in non-school sponsored travel will be considered unexcused absences.

Instructional time may not be used to promote the trip or distribute materials. Individuals or groups who wish to use the schools for the purpose of publicizing trips or recruiting participants and parents/chaperones may do so in accordance with the Board's facilities use policy. Individuals or groups wishing to distribute promotional materials may do so only in accordance with Board policy. Non-school-sponsored trips must not be represented as school functions or as related to, or an extension of, the District's school unit's instructional, co-curricular or extracurricular programs.

It is the responsibility of any staff engaging in such trips or activities to notify the parents of prospective and participating students that this is not a school activity, but an independent

voluntary trip organized or led by that teacher or staff member. To minimize any risk of misunderstanding, the following statement must be made in any informational meetings or materials promoting the trip:

"This trip is not approved or sponsored by the RSU No. 5 Board. It has not been reviewed, approved or endorsed by authorized RSU No. 5 administrators and it is not covered by any of RSU No.5's insurance policies."

Cross Reference: EE~~AG~~BB- Use of Private Vehicles ~~or~~on School Buses~~iness~~
KHB – Advertising in the Schools
~~KHC - Distribution/Posting of Non-School Materials~~
JEA – Compulsory Attendance
~~JEAA – Student Attendance~~
GBEBB Staff Conduct with Students

Adopted: February 24, 2010
Revised: April 27, 2011
Revised: January 25, 2017

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

The Board of Directors recognizes that community members can provide valuable services to the schools by sharing their time, talents and experience. An effective volunteer program allows students to benefit from individual attention, provides enrichment opportunities that supplement the regular educational program, allows teachers to focus on teaching and learning by relieving them of non-teaching tasks, provides interested community members an opportunity to become directly involved with education, and strengthens the relationship between school and community.

The Board approves the use of volunteers to support the school system's instructional programs and extracurricular activities. The Board adopts this policy to provide direction for the school system's volunteer program.

For the purpose of this policy, a volunteer is a person who provides services, without compensation or benefits of any kind or amount, on an occasional or regular basis in the schools or in school activities.

All volunteers shall be at least 18 years of age unless their volunteer work is part of a class, is done to fulfill a service learning or community service requirement for graduation, or is done by a recognized student organization.

Volunteers may provide assistance by:

A. Tutoring students on a one-to-one or small group basis, or assisting with classroom projects under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher;

B. Using their special musical, artistic or other talents to provide enrichment experiences and extend student learning;

C. Reading to children;

D. Playing instructional games;

E. Providing services in libraries, lunchrooms and playgrounds;

F. Accompanying students in field work;

G. Assisting teachers in assembling instructional materials; and

H. Assisting in school plays, music programs and other extracurricular activities.

Volunteers serve under the direction and supervision of the designated administrator. When volunteers work with children, their activities will be under the direct and immediate supervision of the classroom teacher, coach, activity adviser, or other designated employee.

Approval, assignment, continuation, or termination of volunteers shall be at the discretion of the designated administrator.

Staff must have their use of volunteers approved in advance by the designated administrator. Volunteers will only be assigned to staff who request them.

Volunteers are expected to abide by all Board policies, procedures and school rules when performing their assigned responsibilities. The designated administrator shall make volunteers aware of applicable policies, procedures, and rules before they undertake their first assignment through a volunteer orientation, volunteer handbook, or other means.

Volunteers should perform only those tasks that have been assigned.

Volunteers will not have access to confidential information in student records except as allowed by federal or state law or regulations and will be responsible for maintaining confidentiality regarding information seen or heard while working as a volunteer.

Persons interested in volunteering time or services should contact the designated administrator. Prospective volunteers will be required to complete a written application with approval at the discretion of the designated administrator. The Superintendent will be responsible for developing a screening protocol for use by the designated administrator prior to approving volunteers.

Volunteers may not transport students in private vehicles except as allowed by Board policy.

The school unit will provide liability insurance protection for volunteers while performing assigned services.

~~The Superintendent will be responsible for devising a method for evaluating the effectiveness of the volunteer program on an on-going basis.~~

~~The Board will recognize volunteer service on an annual basis. The designated administrator will be responsible for appropriate school recognition of volunteers.~~

Legal Reference: 20-A M.R.S.A. § 1002

Cross Reference: ~~EEAG - Student Transportation in Private Vehicles~~
EEBB Use of Private Vehicles on School Business
IJOA - Field ~~Study and Expeditions~~ Trips and Other Student Travel

Adopted: February 24, 2010
Reviewed: December 12, 2012
Reviewed: September 27, 2017

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE REPORTING, PREVENTION AND EDUCATION ~~NEGLECT~~

I. DEFINITIONS

A. Child abuse or neglect. Child abuse or neglect is defined by Maine law as:

i. "a threat to a child's health or welfare by physical, mental or emotional injury or impairment, sexual abuse or exploitation...[statutory references omitted] or deprivation of essential needs or lack of protection from these by a person responsible for the child."

ii. Truancy (for a child who is either 1) age 5 and under age 6 and who has been voluntarily enrolled in school; or 2) six years of age and has not completed grade six, if a child described in 1) or 2) has the equivalent of seven full days of unexcused absences or five consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year) when the absence is the result of the neglect by a personal responsible for the child.

iii. "a threat to a child's health or welfare caused by child sex trafficking by any person, regardless of whether or not the person is responsible for the child."

~~Child abuse or neglect. Child abuse or neglect is defined by Maine law as "a threat to a child's health or welfare by physical, mental or emotional injury or impairment, sexual abuse or exploitation, deprivation of essential needs or lack of protection from these, or failure to ensure compliance with school attendance requirements under Title 20-A (specifically when a child who is at least seven years of age and has not completed grade six, has the equivalent of seven full days of unexcused absences or five consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year).~~

B. Person responsible for the child. A "person responsible for the child" means a person with responsibility for a child's health or welfare, whether in the child's home or another home or a facility which, as part of its function, provides for the care of the child. It includes the child's parent, guardian or other custodian.

C. Child Sex Trafficking. Child sex trafficking means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a child for the purposes of a commercial sex act.

II. EMPLOYEES' DUTY TO REPORT

A. Any employee of the school unit (hereinafter referred to as the "notifying employee") who has reason to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be

abused or neglected must immediately notify the building administrator ~~or other designated agent~~.

B. In addition to notifying the building administrator or other designated agent, the employee may also make a report directly to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or the District Attorney if required (~~See also~~ Section III.B ~~which~~ provides further information about reporting to DHHS and~~/or the~~ District Attorney).

~~B~~.C. If the ~~reporting~~ notifying employee does not receive written confirmation from the building administrator/Superintendent ~~or other designated agent~~ within 24 hours of ~~his/her~~ their ~~report~~ notification that a report has been made to DHHS (and~~/or~~ the District Attorney if required) the employee shall make an immediate report directly to DHHS and, if the person suspected is not a person responsible for the child, to the District Attorney. In such cases, the employee shall then complete a copy of the Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect ~~Reporting~~ Form (JLF-E) in consultation with the building administrator or Superintendent.

~~C~~.D. If the ~~reporting~~ notifying employee does receive written confirmation from the building administrator/Superintendent within 24 hours of ~~his/her~~ their ~~report~~ notification as described in section III.D ~~which is a copy of~~ on the Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect ~~Reporting~~ Form (JLF-E), ~~he/she~~ they shall sign the form as acknowledgement that the report was made and return it to the building administrator/Superintendent.

E. Any volunteer who has reason to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected is also expected to make a report to the building administrator, and may also make a report directly to DHHS, and the District Attorney if required (see Section III.B).

F. Electronic reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect through the DHHS-approved reporting portal is permitted.

III. ADMINISTRATOR REPORTING AND CONFIRMATION DUTIES

All building administrators, ~~other building designee,~~ and the Superintendents are designated agents to make child abuse and neglect reports.

A. If a building administrator~~/other building designee~~ receives the report, ~~he/she~~ they shall notify the Superintendent immediately.

B. The Superintendent or building administrator/other building designee shall then make ~~a verbal and written report(s)~~ an immediate report by telephone of suspected abuse or neglect to DHHS. In addition, if the person suspected is not the parent, guardian or other custodian of the child, the Superintendent/building

administrator~~/other building designee~~ shall also make a verbal report to the District Attorney.

C. The law requires the ~~reporting~~ notifying employee to make ~~his/her~~ their own report to DHHS and~~/or~~ the District Attorney if required, if ~~he/she has~~ they have not received confirmation within 24 hours that such a report has been made by the Superintendent or building administrator~~/other building designee~~.

D. The person making the report to DHHS and/or the District Attorney shall complete the Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Form (JLF-E) in consultation with the notifying employee.

E. The Superintendent or building administrator~~/other building designee~~ shall provide a copy of the Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Form to the ~~reporting~~ notifying employee within 24 hours of the employee's initial report. The ~~reporting~~ notifying employee shall sign the report and return it to the Superintendent or building administrator.

F. The form will be forwarded to DHHS and~~/or~~ to the District Attorney if required, and shall be retained by the school unit for ten years, as specified in the Maine Archives Rules, along with any other information relevant to the case.

IV. INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

A. Employees. If the person suspected of abuse or neglect is an employee, the Superintendent/designee shall investigate and take appropriate action, in accordance with applicable Board policies, collective bargaining contracts, and federal and state laws.

B. Students. If the person suspected of abuse or neglect is a student, and the abuse or neglect occurred on school premises, during a school activity, or is otherwise related to the school, the Superintendent/designee shall investigate and take appropriate action, in accordance with applicable Board policies and federal and state laws.

C. School officials should attempt to coordinate investigations with DHHS and law enforcement to the extent possible, in light of the school's obligation to protect the safety and security of the school environment. When reasonably possible, any internal interviews of a child who may have been abused or neglected will be conducted by a person who has knowledge of appropriate techniques for interviewing alleged victims of abuse or neglect.

V. INTERVIEWS OF CHILD AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL

DHHS personnel shall be permitted to meet with and interview the child named in the report when the child is present at the school as provided in this section. The building administrator or designee shall:

A. Require the DHHS employee requesting to interview the child to provide written certification that in the Department's judgment, the interview is necessary to carry out its duties;

B. Require the DHHS caseworker to discuss the circumstances of the interview and any relevant information regarding the alleged abuse or neglect with the child's teacher or ~~guidance~~ school counselor or the school nurse, social worker or building administrator, as the caseworker determines is necessary to provide needed emotional support to the child prior to and following the interview;

C. Not place conditions on how the interview is conducted, including, but not necessarily limited to requiring that certain persons be present during the interview; prohibiting certain persons from being present during the interview; and requiring notice to or consent from a parent or guardian.

D. Provide an appropriate, quiet and private place for the interview; and

E. Not disclose any information about DHHS's intention to interview the child except to school officials or the school's attorney who need the information to comply with the interview request.

VI. CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION AND RECORDS

All records, reports and information concerning alleged cases of child abuse and neglect shall be kept confidential to the extent required by Board policies and applicable law.

The building administrator/designee is permitted to release a child's school records without prior consent of the parent/guardian to DHHS or law enforcement officials as necessary to protect the health or safety of the child or other individuals. ~~under federal law.~~

VII. GOOD FAITH IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY; RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Any person who in good faith reports, assists DHHS in making the child available for an interview, or participates in the investigation or proceedings of a child protection investigation is immune from any criminal or civil liability for the act of reporting or participating in the investigation or proceeding. Good faith does not include instances when a false report is made and the person knows the report is false.

The school unit prohibits any retaliation against an employee who makes a good faith report of child abuse and neglect in accordance with this policy.

VIII. CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION TRAINING FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

A. All school employees shall receive training on child abuse/neglect and reporting procedures every four years and within six months of hire as required by law.

B. The training about child sexual abuse awareness and prevention shall be delivered by a qualified instructor(s) and be "evidence-informed."

C. The training about sexual abuse awareness and prevention is intended to:
   i. Increase awareness of developmentally appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviors in children;
   ii. Increase ability to identify indicators of sexual abuse, including physical and psychosocial indicators on a spectrum (including lower to higher probability);
   iii. Increase ability to effectively respond to sexual behavior or disclosures or suspicions of child sexual abuse; and
   iv. Include local child sexual abuse and sexual assault resources.

IX. CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS

Students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5 will receive child sexual abuse prevention education curriculum programs delivered by qualified instructors as part of the health education curriculum aligned with the Learning Results Health Education Standards and follow an appropriate scope and sequence. The curriculum will be consistent with evidence-informed, age-appropriate child sexual abuse prevention education for students, and include:

A. Age-appropriate education regarding physical and personal boundaries, including biologically accurate body terminology;

B. Help children identify unsafe or uncomfortable situations including a range of feelings, touches or violations of physical boundaries;

C. Help children identify safe adults with whom they could discuss unsafe or uncomfortable situations; and

D. Helps children identify and develop skills to support a friend who may be experiencing unsafe or uncomfortable situations.

~~Any RSU No. 5 employee who is required to make a report shall, at least once every four years, complete mandated training approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The Superintendent/designee will be responsible for documenting employee training.~~

Legal Reference:	~~L.D. 622, P.L. Ch.407, "An Act to Require Training of Mandated Reporters under the Child Abuse Laws"~~ 22 MRSA Chap. 1071, Child and Family Services and Child Protection Act 20 USC § 1232g, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act 20-A M.R.S.A. §§ 5050<u>1</u>-A<u>(3); ~~(1)(C)~~</u>; 5051-A<u>~~(2)(C)~~ (1-D)</u>
Cross Reference:	ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students GBEBB - Staff Conduct with Students JEA - Compulsory Student Attendance JHB - Truancy JLF-E – Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Report Form JRA – Student Records

Adopted:	March 24, 2010
Reviewed:	March 27, 2013
Revised:	November 18, 2015
Revised:	November 30, 2016