

# Greenburgh-North Castle Union Free School District

## ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

**SUBJECT: N.Y.S. PROTECTION OF PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ACT - MANDATED REPORTERS**

This Administrative Regulation based on Policy #5725 (Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect) provides Mandated Reporters in the Greenburgh North Castle Union Free School District with an overview of their legal duties under the New York State Protection of People with Special Needs Act (the Act) to report Abuse, Neglect and Significant Incidents involving vulnerable persons to the Vulnerable Persons' Central Register (VPCR), a 24/7 hotline operated by the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs (Justice Center). The effective date of this new reporting requirement is June 30, 2013.

### **ALL MANDATED REPORTERS ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT THE FOLLOWING:**

- Report to the Justice Center, by calling the VPCR at 1-855-373-2122, if they have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of a Vulnerable Person, including a child receiving residential services in a facility or provider listed below. Certain Mandated Reporters may also submit reports by completing a form available on the Justice Center website.
- Report all Significant Incidents to the Justice Center by calling the VPCR at 1-855-373-2122 or by completing the form on the Justice Center website.
- Call the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment if they have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or maltreatment of children in family and foster homes, and day care settings. Suspicion of child abuse or neglect in a day care setting, foster care, or within a family home must continue to be reported to the Statewide Center Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment at 1-800-635-1522.

### **MANDATED REPORTERS ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

Mandated Reporters are (1) Custodians and (2) Human Service Professionals.

#### **1. Custodians:**

- Employees, volunteers, directors and operators of covered facilities and programs (please see list on Page 3), and
- External staff who have regular and substantial contact with the people being served.

#### **2. Human Service Professionals:**

Child Care or Foster Care Worker; Chiropractor; Christian Science Practitioner; Coroner; Dental Hygienist; Dentist; District Attorney or Assistant District Attorney; Emergency Medical Technician; Hospital Personnel engaged in the admission, examination, care, or treatment of persons; Intern; Investigator employed in the office of the district attorney; any other Law Enforcement Official; Licensed Creative Arts Therapist; Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist; Licensed Mental Health Counselor; Licensed Occupational Therapist; Licensed Physical Therapist; Licensed Practical Nurse;

Licensed Psychoanalyst; Licensed Speech/Language Pathologist/Audiologist; Medical Examiner; Mental Health Professional; Nurse Practitioner; NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse - all persons credentialed by OASAS; Optometrist; Osteopath; Peace Officer; Physician; Podiatrist; Police Officer; Psychologist; Registered Nurse; Registered Physician's Assistant; Resident (medical); Social Services Worker; Social Worker; Surgeon, and School Official, including but not limited to: School Teacher, School Guidance Counselor; School Psychologist; School Social Worker; School Nurse; School Administrator; or other school personnel required to hold teaching or administrative license or certificate.

### **INFORMATION MANDATED REPORTERS MUST PROVIDE TO THE JUSTICE CENTER:**

- Details regarding the victim(s), suspect(s) and witnesses(s).
- Details of the incident, including the date and time, location, description of incident and injury/impact to the victim.
- State agency responsible for oversight of the agency, facility and/or program.
- Name and address of the agency, facility and/or program.
- Confirmation that immediate protections are in place for the victim(s), if applicable.
- Any other information that may assist with the investigation or review of the incident.

Note: Mandated Reporters are required to report to the VPCR even if they may not have all the information outlined above.

### **REPORTING IS REQUIRED AS FOLLOWS:**

Whenever a Mandated Reporter has reasonable cause to suspect a Reportable Incident involving a vulnerable person, he or she is required to make a report to the VPCR immediately upon discovery.

- Reasonable Cause means that, based on your observations, training and experience, you have a suspicion that a vulnerable person has been subject to abuse or neglect as described below. Significant incidents that may place a vulnerable person at risk of harm must also be reported. Reasonable cause can be as simple as doubting the explanation given for an injury.
- Immediately means “*right-away*,” however reporting may be delayed to prevent harm (e.g., for as long as it takes to call emergency responders and/or address the need to maintain supervision.) Staff “going off-duty” does not justify a reporting delay. In any event, reports must be made to the VPCR within 24 hours.
- Discovery comes from witnessing the situation or when the vulnerable person or another individual comes to you and the available information indicates reasonable cause.

In addition to Mandated Reporters, anyone who has reasonable cause to suspect a Reportable Incident involving a Vulnerable Person should immediately call the VPCR.

If a Mandated Reporter or any other person has doubts about whether the available information indicates such reasonable cause, he or she should call the VPCR.

Reporting to the VPCR is an additional reporting requirement and does not relieve the Mandated

Reporter of any other reporting requirements or duties that may be required by law, regulation or policy.

**VULNERABLE PERSONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

The Act defines a Vulnerable Person as a person who due to physical or cognitive disabilities or the need for services or placement is receiving care from a facility or provider within the systems of the State Oversight Agencies (SOA).

**AS A MANDATED REPORTER, THE FOLLOWING ARE OUR OBLIGATIONS RELATED TO NOTIFYING LAW ENFORCEMENT:**

Possible crimes should be immediately reported to law enforcement. When a report is received by the VPCR, staff can consult with supervisors to decide if local police should be contacted, if such a call has not already been made.

**THE FOLLOWING CONSTITUTES ABUSE OR NEGLECT:**

The Act defines Abuse and Neglect of Vulnerable Persons in broad terms, including both actual harm and the risk of harm:

Terms	Examples of Custodian Behaviors
Physical Abuse	Intentional contact (hitting, kicking, shoving, etc.) corporal punishment, injury which cannot be explained and is suspicious due to extent or location, the number of injuries at one time, or the frequency over time
Psychological Abuse	Taunting, name calling, using threatening words or gestures
Sexual Abuse	Inappropriate touching, indecent exposure, sexual assault, taking or distributing sexually explicit pictures, voyeurism or other sexual exploitation. All sexual contact between a Custodian and a service recipient is sexual abuse, unless the Custodian is also a person receiving services
Neglect	Failure to provide supervision, or adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care; or access to an educational entitlement
Deliberate misuse of restraint or seclusion	Use of these interventions with excessive force, as a punishment or for the convenience of staff
Controlled Substances	Using, administering or providing any controlled substance contrary to law
Aversive conditioning	Unpleasant physical stimulus used to modify behavior without person specific legal authorization
Obstruction	Interfering with the discovery, reporting or investigation of abuse / neglect, falsifying records or intentionally making false statements

## **THE FOLLOWING CONSTITUTES A SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT:**

New York State law also recognizes that Vulnerable Persons can be harmed or put at risk in many types of circumstances. The Act defines a Significant Incident as an incident that is not abuse or neglect, but has the potential to result in harm to the health, safety or welfare of a person receiving services. Examples may include, but are not limited to the following:

- The use of restraint when it is avoidable, involves a banned technique, or is used by inadequately trained staff;
- Unauthorized seclusion or time-out;
- Harmful interactions between Vulnerable Persons that could reasonably have been prevented; and
- Administration of a medication contrary to a medical order resulting in an adverse impact.
- Any other conduct identified in regulations of the State Oversight Agency, according to guidelines or standards established by the Justice Center.

## **THE FOLLOWING OCCURS WHEN A REPORT IS MADE TO THE VPCR:**

Trained VPCR staff will take a full report over the phone or via a web form and, based upon the information provided, categorize the reportable incident (abuse, neglect, significant incident) and notify the appropriate SOA. In addition, the Justice Center will be responsible for ensuring that the reportable incident is investigated or reviewed by the appropriate entity.

## **PROTECTIONS AND LIABILITIES FOR MANDATED REPORTERS ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

- **Immunity from Liability** - The law grants immunity to Mandated Reporters and other reporters from any legal claims which may arise from a good faith act of providing information to the VPCR.
- **Protection from Retaliatory Personnel Action** - The law prohibits an employer or agency from taking any retaliatory personnel action against a person as a result of a good faith act of providing information to the VPCR.
- **Confidentiality** - The law provides protections against the disclosure of the reporter's identity, subject to limited exceptions (e.g., the reporter's consent, a court order).
- **Failure to Report** - Failure by a Mandated Reporter to report suspected Abuse or Neglect to the VPCR is a serious matter and possible consequences include administrative discipline, termination, civil liability and criminal prosecution.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Please contact the Justice Center at: 1-518-549-0200.