

MISTREATMENT, NEGLECT AND CHILD ABUSE

Rock Brook School adheres to the tenets of NJAC 6A:16-10.2. All staff, consultants and volunteers shall report all suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS), and cooperate fully with any investigations by that agency. The person reporting the incident shall do so immediately to DYFS at (800) 792-8610. The person should then inform the principal and his/her designee of the report after the referral has been made to DYFS, unless such report might endanger the referrer or child/children involved, or the referrer, if possible, shall provide the child's name, age and grade, the name and address of the child's parent/guardian, a description of child's condition, current or prior injuries, abuse or mistreatment, as well as any other relevant information.

Early identification of abuse or neglect is essential to the welfare of the child. No employee or consultant shall be discriminated against or penalized in any way for the good faith reporting or causing the report of an allegation of child abuse. Rock Brook and its employees shall cooperate with any DYFS investigation within or outside the school or during school related functions.

In instances of a report, Rock Brook shall designate a liaison between DYFS and the school, to facilitate communication and cooperation, act as primary contact person. The Case Manager from the Child Study Team will be informed.

Rock Brook shall annually provide all staff with information and in-service training regarding child abuse and neglect. All new school personnel shall receive required information as part of their orientation.

RBS policy shall provide for the DYFS interviewing of the child (or children) in the presence of the school principal or designee. Policy further allows the child to designate another staff member to sit in on interviews if that makes the child feel more comfortable. The purpose of the designee is to provide comfort and support to the child, not to participate in the interview. RBS shall cooperate with DYFS by providing an opportunity for all relevant staff to be interviewed, and also release any student records deemed relevant to the assessment or treatment of child abuse. The school shall maintain, secure and release all confidential information about child abuse and neglect cases.

Information regarding allegations of child abuse or neglect reported to, investigated and reported upon by DYFS about a school employee shall be considered confidential, and may be disclosed only as required in order to cooperate with DYFS investigations or by virtue of a court order. Records pertaining to such information shall be maintained in a secure location separate from other employee personnel records and accessible only by the Executive Director or his or her designee.

If a situation arises in which mistreatment, neglect or abuse of a child at Rock Brook is alleged or observed, it will immediately be reported to the Director and/or Board of Trustees. The Director and/or Board will contact the child's parent/guardians or guardians as soon as the alleged incident is reported.

The Director and/or Board of Trustees will investigate the situation (including the child's parent/guardians and/or guardians in the investigation), document the investigation in writing, and within forty-eight (48) hours submit a report to the Board of Trustees. The Director and/or Board may ask the staff member to absent herself from class while the allegation is being investigated. The Board will meet within five (5) days of receipt of the report to consider it and interview the staff member. The staff member has the right to submit his/her own written report to the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees has the right to issue a warning, suspend or dismiss the staff member, should an investigation indicate that he/she indeed did mistreat, neglect or abuse a Rock Brook student. Such dismissal notice will be sent in writing within ten (10) days of the Board meeting. The staff member has the right to appeal in writing the dismissal decision within five (5) working days of receipt of the notice. The Board of Trustees will respond in writing within thirty (30) days.

Rock Brook shall permit DYFS to physically remove pupils from school during the course of a school day when it is necessary to protect the child or take the child to a service provider. Such removal shall take place once the principal or his or her designee has been provided, either in advance or at the time removal is sought, with appropriate authorization.

Rock Brook shall cooperate with DYFS when it is necessary to remove the child or children from his or her home for proper care and protection and when such removal results in the transfer of the child to another school.

Rock Brook shall provide due process rights to school personnel who have been reassigned or suspended. Temporary reassignment or suspension of school personnel alleged to have committed an act of child abuse shall occur if there is reasonable cause to believe that the life or health of the alleged victim or other children is in imminent danger due to continued contact between the school personnel and a child.

Rock Brook shall remove from the employee's records all references to a report to DYFS and/or the official notice from DYFS of child abuse or neglect regarding a school district employee, immediately following the receipt of an official notice from DYFS that the allegation was unfounded. Such DYFS reports regarding a school employee shall not be used against the employee for any purpose relating to employment, including but not limited to, discipline, salary, promotion, transfer, demotion, retention or continuance of employment, termination of employment or any right or privilege related thereto.