

**COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATION PROTOCOL OF  
ABUSE AND NEGLECT INVESTIGATIONS OR STANDARDS VIOLATIONS**

Between the  
Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/  
Governor Baxter School for the Deaf  
Department of Human Services,  
Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and  
Substance Abuse Services  
Licensing Service Center  
and  
Department of Education

**Purpose:** This document is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of parties involved in the reporting and investigation of alleged child abuse and neglect and violation of standards developed by the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (MECDHH/GBSD) for the health and safety of children.

The Out of Home Abuse and Neglect Investigations Unit (IAU) will be responsible for investigations of complaints regarding MECDHH/GBSD. Complaints will be received by the IAU Supervisor and screened for assignment. Notification will be provided to those individuals who have a need to know, such as those designated to receive the complaints at the Department of Education and the Executive Director of MECDHH/GBSD or designee. If appropriate, parents/guardians will be notified by the Executive Director or designee. If the Executive Director is allegedly involved, the Chair of the School Board will be notified.

**The following describes the handling of complaints:**

All reports of alleged abuse and neglect will be made to Child Protective Services Intake Unit at DHS. This is the 24 hour hotline 1-800-452-1999 or 297-2983. The Intake Unit will enter the information on Maine Automated Child Welfare System (MACWIS) and the report will be forwarded to the IAU Supervisor. Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect from the Deaf Community can be made to the Intake Unit at TTY 1-800-963-9490 or TTY 287-3492. Fax messages can also be forwarded to the Intake Unit at fax 287-5065.

Parents, students and staff of MECDHH/GBSD shall be made aware of how to report abuse and neglect and also the TTY, phone and fax numbers to access the DHS Intake Unit. The information shall be contained in the Student

Handbook and posted on bulletin boards at the school. Staff shall all be made aware of their responsibilities as mandated reporters under 22 MRSA, § 4011 and § 4012 and should follow protocols that are established by MECDHH/GBSD. If a staff member believes that MECDHH/GBSD has failed to report as mandated, the individual staff member must make a report directly to the Child Protective Services Unit at DHS.

Once a report is received by Child Protective Service Intake Unit, it will be forwarded to the Supervisor of the Out of Home Abuse Investigations Unit for screening and assignment. If the report involves possible criminal action a copy of the report will be forwarded to the District Attorney for Cumberland County or to the District Attorney of the county where the alleged crime may have occurred. The Executive Director of MECDHH/GBSD will then be notified so that appropriate action can be taken to ensure the safety of the children pending the investigation.

As soon as the Executive Director of MECDHH/GBSD or designee is informed of a complaint, MECDHH/GBSD administration will be responsible to take immediate action to ensure the safety of children at MECDHH/GBSD. The Executive Director of MECDHH/GBSD will furthermore take appropriate action towards any employee involved according to personnel rules, Board policies, collective bargaining agreements, and Federal and State laws.

Notification will also be made to those individuals designated by the Commissioner, Department of Education, to receive reports.

The assigned investigator will then plan and coordinate the investigation with law enforcement personnel, certified non-staff interpreters and others such as therapists and counselors relevant to the investigation. Permission to interview the children involved will be obtained from the parents and/or legal guardians. The Executive Director of MECDHH/GBSD will assist in facilitating the investigation by providing appropriate space for interviews and making staff and students available. Investigators will also have access to all relevant records; this includes student records, personnel records, and other records that may be relevant to the investigation.

Once the investigation is completed, a report will be prepared and presented to the Supervisor of the Out of Home Abuse Investigation Unit. The Supervisor will review the report and give preliminary approval. The Supervisor will then present the report to the Review Committee that will give final approval to the report. The Review Committee, prior to giving final approval, will review actions taken by MECDHH/GBSD such as discipline, support for victims, policy changes, communication and staff training. The Review Committee may also request further investigation and may also make recommendations to the School Board and the Executive Director of MECDHH/GBSD. The final report and recommendations will then be forwarded to the Executive Director of

MECDHH/GBSD and the Chair of the School Board for their review and appropriate action.

**The Review Committee will consist of the following members:**

MECDHH/GBSD Executive Director, MECDHH/GBSD Director of Special Projects, Director Community Services Center, DHS, Representative Dept. of Education, Assistant Attorney General, Director of Investigation and Representative, Criminal Investigations Division, Public Safety.

The Review Committee will periodically meet to review the findings and recommendations resulting from the investigations and what actions were taken by MECDHH/GBSD. The Review Committee will also look at potential trends and problem areas that may need to be addressed.

**Adopted: June 21, 2001**

**Edited for school name and administrator title: January 2014**