

Update on the Implementation of Board of Education Policy JHC, Child Abuse and Neglect for Fiscal Year 2022

Policy Management Committee
October 20, 2022

Annual Update

The policy outlines principles and goals grounded in federal, state, and local law with the desired outcomes as follows:

- 1) A safe, engaging, and supportive environment will be provided for all students through vigilant efforts by all members of the MCPS community to recognize, report, and prevent abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults.
- 2) MCPS and county partner agencies will efficiently and effectively collaborate to investigate reports of suspected abuse and neglect and to support children who are the subject of reports of suspected abuse and/or neglect.

POLICY BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

JHC

Related Entries: ACF, ACF-RA, COB-RA, IOH-RA, IJA-RA, IRB-RA, JHC-RA, JHF, JHF-RA, JOA-RA
Responsible Office: School Support and Improvement
Human Resources and Development
Special Education and Student Services
Related Sources: *Annotated Code of Maryland:* Education Article §6-113, Family Law Article, §§5-560, 5-561, 5-701, 5-702, 5-705.2, 5-704, 5-705, 5-708, and Human Services Article, §1-202;
Code of Maryland Regulations 07.02.07.04-.05, 13A.12.05.02, and 13A.08.01.03

Child Abuse and Neglect

A. PURPOSE¹

The Montgomery County Board of Education (Board) reaffirms its commitment to the safety and physical, mental, and emotional well-being of all students. It is the Board's expectation that all children and vulnerable adults have the right to be protected from abuse and neglect. The Board embraces a comprehensive approach to recognizing, reporting, and preventing abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults. In addition, the Board recognizes the unique role that Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) may play in raising awareness for issues of child abuse and neglect among parents/guardians and the broader community. To this end, the Board emphasizes the importance of developing and implementing a systemic plan for—

1. ensuring that all employees understand and are held accountable for the highest ethical standards in their conduct, as well as adhering to legal mandates and the moral imperative to recognize, report, and prevent suspected child abuse and neglect;
2. cooperating fully with investigations of suspected abuse and/or neglect by Montgomery County (County) partner agencies, including the Montgomery

¹ Regulation JHC-RA, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, contains definitions of the following terms that are utilized in this Policy: abuse; neglect; school-based child abuse liaisons; child; vulnerable adult; MCPS employees; MCPS contractors; MCPS volunteers; and MCPS property.

Implementation of Policy JHC

Staff Training

- 11-module Districtwide mandatory compliance training
- Enhanced look at the BOE Policy ACA: *Nondiscrimination, Equity and Cultural Proficiency*, BOE Policy ACF: *Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment of Students* and new BOE Policy ACI: *Sexual Harassment of MCPS Employees* with applications and implications involving Title IX/sexual harassment and incidents of hate-bias for all mental health professionals, including school-based student welfare liaisons, school counselors, pupil personnel workers, school psychologists, social workers and behavioral specialists.
- Human trafficking was inserted into the Gangs and Gang Behavior module

Implementation of Policy JHC

Training and Screening for Volunteers and Contractors

All volunteers and contractors were required to complete the online Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect training module and the COVID-19 Vaccination Attestation module. The COVID-19 Vaccination Attestation module required volunteers and contractors to attest to being fully vaccinated, upload their Certificate of COVID-19 Vaccination from the State of Maryland Department of Health, and agree to specific expectations of masking and social distancing while in MCPS facilities.

Since the inception of the volunteer training in January 2016, 124,102 volunteers have completed the online training (as of August 1, 2022).

| School Year | # of Volunteer Child Abuse and Neglect Module Completers |
|-------------|--|
| FY 2022 | 16,021 |
| FY 2021 | 3,320 |
| FY 2020 | 16,946 |

Implementation of Policy JHC

Staff Learning Continuum in the Areas of Student Welfare

- Collaborative efforts with the University of Maryland Support, Advocacy, Freedom and Empowerment (SAFE) Center led to enhanced human trafficking awareness training for our health educators in our secondary schools. The district will be expanding training in this area for school-based administrators and counselors.
- MCPS is a participant in the Montgomery County Human Trafficking Prevention Committee to help combat human trafficking and keep current on federal and local policies, as well as the Montgomery County Committee Against Hate and Violence (CAHV).

Collaboration with County Partner Agencies and the Greater Community

- Department of Health & Human Services (Child Welfare Services) held a 2022 Stakeholder's Meeting to provide county partner agencies updates on assessment data on calls screened, accepted reports and in-home and out-of-home services for families.
- Collaborative efforts with the University of Maryland Support, Advocacy, Freedom and Empowerment (SAFE) Center led to enhanced human trafficking awareness training for our health educators in our secondary schools. The district will be expanding training in this area for school-based administrators and counselors.
- MCPS is a participant in the Montgomery County Human Trafficking Prevention Committee to help combat human trafficking and keep current on federal and local policies, as well as the Montgomery County Committee Against Hate and Violence (CAHV).
- *MCPS Pride ALLiance* for students, staff, parents and county LGBTQ+ partner agencies was established to promote inclusivity in curriculum, create a safe atmosphere in schools, expand professional development for staff and strengthen partnerships in the community.

Total Number of Suspected Cases

During FY22, 3,750 suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect were reported by MCPS staff, volunteers or contractors to CPS or Adult Protective Services (APS).

Of the 3,750 suspected incidents reported, 3,607 were online reports and 143 were written reports.

| Reports of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| FY22 | FY21 | FY20 | FY19 | FY18 |
| 3,750 | 1,784 | 2,720 | 3,133 | 3,087 |

Outcomes of CPS Reports involving MCPS Employees, Contractors, or Volunteers

| Type | Number of Reports | CPS Outcomes | | | | |
|------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|---------|
| | | Screened Out | Ruled Out | Unsubstantiated | Indicated | Ongoing |
| Employee | 75 | 55 | 11 | 1 | 7 | 1 |
| Volunteer | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Contractor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

MCPS Actions Based on Internal Follow-up Investigations

| Type | No action warranted | Conference or Memo for the Record | Reprimand or other disciplinary letter | Suspension without pay | Removal from employment | Pending (as of August 3, 2020) |
|------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Employee | 21 | 36 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| Volunteers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Contractor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Cases where MCPS Sought Suspension or Revocation of Certification

| Incident | Requested Action by MCPS Superintendent |
|---|---|
| Employee dismissed for sexual misconduct involving a student. | Revocation Requested |
| Employee dismissed for sexual misconduct involving a student. | Revocation Requested |
| Employee dismissed after criminal charges of alleged child sex abuse. | Revocation Requested |
| Employee resigned after notice of misconduct involving students. | Suspension Requested |
| Employee dismissed for sexual misconduct involving students. | Revocation Requested |
| Employee dismissed after criminal charges of alleged sexual misconduct. | Revocation Requested |
| Employee dismissed for misconduct involving a student. | Suspension Requested |

Lawsuits Related to Child Abuse and Neglect

Doe, John and Jane, Et. Al. v. Montgomery County Board of Education

Plaintiffs claim injuries and damages inflicted on their minor daughter resulting from alleged sex assault by a school bus driver. A summary of the case has been reported by the media. There is a settlement in progress on this matter. This case was filed on 5/27/2021 and more details are found in the docket: Case # 485884-V.

FY 2023 Considerations

In addition to maintaining a high level of fidelity in the ongoing work described above, MCPS is exploring a number of initiatives and enhancement for the FY 2023 school year. These include the following:

- Continue to collaborate with the Montgomery County Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB) to establish and enact safety measures and procedures that are aligned to MCPS expectations for ICB contracted users in the building.
- Revise the Culture of Respect Student Training Module to elevate student awareness regarding signs of neglect, abuse, and harassment.
- Monitor online reporting process for suspected online child abuse and neglect cases and expanding the implementation procedures countywide.
- Enhance the training plan for our Student Welfare Liaisons and school-based critical staff, providing staff development-training plans for refresher training for staff in schools.
- Monitor the implementation of revised Personal Body Safety Lessons (PBSLs) at all levels, based on student feedback and input.

Questions and Comments