

# **51A Training**

## **Southbridge Public Schools**



**2018-2019**

The information shared in this PowerPoint is adapted from Lowell, Hull & Westford Public School Districts

# 51A MANDATED REPORTER



- A 51A is an allegation of neglect or abuse regarding a child.
- All Southbridge Public School Staff members are mandated reporters. It is not our responsibility to investigate the allegation, just to report it.
- If a staff member becomes aware of an allegation of neglect or abuse, that staff member must notify the Principal and file a 51A report with DCF, unless your school has a designated person who files such reports. If the designated person declines to file, the staff member can choose to file.
- Even if your school has a designated person who files the 51A, the staff member who becomes aware of the allegation of neglect or abuse **must** write a report documenting what he/she heard, was told and/or what was observed.

# 51A MANDATED REPORTER



- Staff members must fully cooperate with a 51A investigation and provide whatever information regarding the student that is requested.
- Parent(s) and/or third parties should not be notified that a 51A is being investigated without first asking DCF, if it is appropriate or not. Deference must be given to DCF, however, staff members should ask DCF if the parent/legal guardian should be notified and DCF's response should be documented.
- Staff members should document any information and/or documentation provided to DCF.
- When in doubt, the staff member should contact the Principal or Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services for guidance.

# Care & Protection



- If an allegation of abuse or neglect is substantiated it can result in Care & Protection proceedings.
- A care and protection case begins when someone, usually DCF, claims a petition to the court, that a child is at risk of abuse or neglect while in guardian's care.
- A care and protection case can be open for 12-15 months & can result in the termination of parental rights.

# 51A Training Link



- <http://51a.middlesexcac.org/>