

Passaic Family Head Start, Inc.

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PFHS Incident / Accident Policy & Procedure

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear and consistent procedures for responding to, documenting, and reporting incidents and accidents involving children at Passaic Family Head Start (PFHS). Its goal is to ensure safety, timely response, clear communication, and compliance with Head Start Performance Standards, state licensing regulations, and agency policies. This policy applies to all PFHS program locations, including classrooms, playgrounds, hallways, and all activities conducted on- or off-site. An *incident* is defined as any unexpected event that does not result in physical injury but impacts the well-being, behavior, or safety of a child, such as behavioral outbursts, property damage, a child leaving supervision or attempting to do so, or verbal altercations. An *accident* refers to any unexpected event that results in physical injury requiring first aid, medical attention, or emergency care, including serious falls, head injuries, medical emergencies, severe allergic reactions, incidents requiring emergency treatment, suspected child abuse or neglect, or any situation involving a missing child or elopement.

Certain incidents and accidents are considered reportable and must be reported to external oversight entities in addition to internal documentation. PFHS complies with all reporting requirements established by the Office of Head Start (OHS), the New Jersey Office of Licensing (OOL), and applicable school district partners.

PFHS must report any significant incident affecting the health or safety of a child that occurs in a setting where Head Start services are provided. Reportable incidents include, but are not limited to, injuries or accidents requiring emergency medical treatment, hospitalization, serious head injuries, fractures, or severe allergic reactions. For a detailed list of reportable accidents, please refer to [reportable accidents](#) on [Headstart.gov](#). Reportable incidents/accidents must be submitted to the Office of Head Start no later than seven (7) calendar days after the incident occurs, in

accordance with Head Start Performance Standards and OHS guidance. PFHS must also notify the New Jersey Office of Licensing (OOL) and the school district, when applicable. The Director or Executive Director is responsible for ensuring all required external notifications are completed accurately and within required timelines. Internal incident and accident reports must be completed promptly to support required external reporting.

During any incident or accident, staff must prioritize the safety of all children and staff, provide immediate first aid and emergency response, maintain clear communication and documentation, and notify families and administration as required. When responding to an event, staff must first ensure the safety of the environment by removing children from danger and securing the area while assigning another staff member to supervise the remaining children. Staff should then calmly assess the situation, administer first aid according to PFHS training, and call 911 if needed. Children must never be left unsupervised. Administration, including Directors, Managers, or Family Workers when applicable, must be notified promptly.

For accident reports, the staff member who witnessed the event must complete the PFHS Incident/Accident Report as soon as safely possible and contact the parent. If an accident or incident was not witnessed by staff, the staff member who arrives on the scene and assumes responsibility must complete the Incident/Accident Report. The report must clearly indicate that the event was not directly witnessed by the reporting staff member and that the information documented is based on accounts provided by others and observations made after the incident. After completion, the report must be reviewed and signed by the Director or Executive Director; if they are unavailable, a Manager may review it for accuracy and completeness before parent signature. Parents must review and sign the report the same day—preferably at pickup—or no later than the next school day, acknowledging receipt. Final signatures must include the reporting staff member, the parent/guardian, and the Director or Executive Director. After all signatures are obtained, the report must be submitted to the Administrative Assistant, who will enter it into ChildPlus and file it according to PFHS procedures.

For internal incident reports, the witnessing staff member must complete the Internal Incident Report promptly. The Education Manager, Health & Social Service Manager, and Director must review and sign the report in any order based on availability. Once all signatures

are secured, the completed report must be submitted to the Administrative Assistant for data entry and filing in accordance with PFHS procedures. All information in both types of reports is confidential and must be handled according to PFHS confidentiality policies.

All PFHS staff receive annual training on incident and accident procedures, First Aid and CPR, emergency response, mandated reporting requirements, and proper documentation practices. PFHS retains all records in alignment with Head Start Performance Standards, New Jersey licensing requirements, and the PFHS Record Retention Policy. This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if major incidents occur, to ensure accuracy, compliance, and continuous program improvement.