

Safeguards for Children

Ensuring the safety of the children in our care is Green Chimneys' most important priority. In addition to the guidelines set forth by the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of Vulnerable Persons, Green Chimneys has developed our own practices and procedures to ensure the safety of all our children.

The following are Green Chimneys' practices:

1. An allegation of maltreatment may be made by any child, staff member, family member, or any other individual at any time.
2. If a staff member becomes aware of any allegation of maltreatment, the staff member is responsible for completing a **Child Complaint to Staff** form and forwarding this form to administrative staff members for review and follow up.
3. Family members or any other individual may make a complaint to any staff member or they may contact the Justice Center directly.
4. The Quality Assurance Department is responsible for the coordination of and follow-up on any complaint, regardless of whether or not the complaint is also reported to the Justice Center. Not every complaint, or concern, will warrant a report to the Justice Center. The justice center sets strict guidelines for which complaints and/or allegations are reportable and subject to investigation.
5. All staff members are required to have annual training in reporting practices. All staff in a direct care role at Green Chimneys are "mandated reporters" and must report to the Justice Center any observations or allegations of abuse, neglect, or "significant incidents," (suicidal attempts, self-harm with injury, absences without leave, etc.).

What parents or guardians need to know about the Justice Center:

VISION: People with special needs shall be protected from abuse, neglect, and mistreatment. This will be accomplished by assuring that the state maintains the nation's highest standards of health, safety and dignity; and by supporting the dedicated men and women who provide services.

MISSION: The Justice Center is committed to supporting and protecting the health, safety, and dignity of all people with special needs and disabilities through advocacy of their civil rights, prevention of mistreatment, and investigation of all allegations of abuse and neglect so that appropriate actions are taken.

Who can report an allegation of abuse or neglect?

Anyone – including a parent, advocate, or guardian – can make a report to the Vulnerable Persons Central Register (VPCR) hotline and is encouraged to make a report when they have the knowledge or have reason to believe that a person with special needs has been abused, neglected or mistreated. All staff within agencies that serve this population are mandated to report allegations of abuse, neglect and significant incidents.

The "**Vulnerable Persons Central Register (VPCR)**" is a toll-free hotline and incident reporting system for allegations of abuse and neglect available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **1-855-373-2122**

Student interviews:

Routinely, investigators, program advisors and regulators from the Office of Children and Families (OCFS), NY State Education Department (State Ed) and the NYS Justice Center request to speak to students about the program and/or staff members to ensure the safety of the students and to assess agency adherence to regulatory requirements. Your child may be interviewed by one of the above mentioned oversight agencies while enrolled in our program.

Further questions can be directed to Quality Assurance at x324 or justicecenter.ny.gov