

HANDLE WITH CARE DIRECTIVE



Creating Connections to Support New Jersey's Youth

Attorney General Directive 2020-09, known as the *“Handle With Care Directive,”* is designed to promote partnerships between law enforcement and schools to help provide a safe and supportive academic environment for children recently exposed to traumatic events known as “adverse childhood experiences” (ACEs). ACEs are broad and sweeping events that may include experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect, or witnessing violence in the home.

THE GOAL:

To provide schools with notice of children experiencing ACEs so the school may handle them with care and mitigate the negative impact of trauma on them. This simple notice can help ensure a child's well-being and academic success.

THE PROCESS:

When a law enforcement officer responds to, or encounters, an incident involving a traumatic event where a child is present, the officer will complete a simple Handle With Care Notice (HWC Notice) and provide it to the child's school, advising educators in general terms that the child has experienced an ACE event.

THE PROTECTIONS:

The HWC Notice reports a child's name, age, grade, school of enrollment, and the date and time of the incident, but shares no details of the incident. While teachers are not to discuss the traumatic event with the child, they are encouraged to take steps to provide additional support to the child, such as re-teaching lessons, providing extra help, or sending the student to the school nurse or counselor.

Traumatic
Event (ACE)

Law
Enforcement
Response

Law Enforcement
Notice to the
Child's School

School
Handles the
Child with Care