

# Chester County District Attorney's Office

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## NEWS RELEASE

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Dec. 7, 2021

### **DIRECTOR OF WESTTOWN MALVERN SCHOOL ARRESTED FOR FAILING TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE**

The Chester County District Attorney's Office and Westtown-East Goshen Regional Police (WEGO) announce the arrest of Tiffany Nichols, 39, of Kennett Square, on Dec. 7, 2021, for failing to report multiple incidents of child abuse perpetrated by another employee at The Malvern School in Westtown, where she was the executive director. The defendant was charged with endangering the welfare of children and failure to report child abuse, both felonies. She was released on \$35,000 bail.

In October 2021, Victoria Aronson, a teacher at The Malvern School, was arrested and charged with several counts of aggravated assault, endangering the welfare of children, and related offenses for physically abusing children who were approximately one and a half years old. Eyewitnesses told the defendant about the abuse, but she failed to immediately contact Childline, law enforcement, and the parents of the alleged victims. As a result of her failure to report or remove Aronson from her access to children, the abuse continued, and law enforcement was unable to engage in a timely investigation.

DA Deb Ryan said, "As the executive director and a mandated reporter, it was the legal and moral duty of Tiffany Nichols to ensure the safety and care of all children at The Malvern School. It is unconscionable that the defendant failed to protect these innocent, nonverbal, and defenseless young children. By not

immediately notifying Childline, authorities, and the parents about her employee's actions, she allowed abuse to continue. This astonishing criminal behavior will never be tolerated."

The allegations in the complaint are the following<sup>1</sup>:

On Oct. 7, 2021, WEGO Police became aware of several child abuse complaints that took place at The Malvern School on E. Pleasant Grove Road in West Chester. The complaints, observed by eyewitnesses, occurred between Sept. 29-30, and involved three victims between 14 and 16 months.

Victoria Aronson, who worked as a caretaker in a class for ages 12-18 months, was arrested on Oct. 25, 2021, and charged with multiple counts of aggravated assault, endangering the welfare of children, and related offenses. Aronson used unreasonable force on the three victims by slamming them onto changing tables or onto the ground, screaming at them, and other criminal behavior.

Investigators learned that eyewitnesses had reported their concerns, as well as the abuse they had observed, to Tiffany Nichols on three occasions.

- **Sept. 28, 2021:** An eyewitness expressed concern about Aronson's lack of attentiveness to the children under her care. Nichols failed to investigate these concerns.
- **Sept. 29, 2021:** An eyewitness reported that Aronson had used unreasonable force on two children earlier that day. Nichols failed to contact Childline to make an official report of child abuse. She also failed to notify the parents and continued to give Aronson access to children in the school.
- **Sept. 30, 2021:** An eyewitness sent an email to Nichols describing Aronson's physical abuse of three children on Sept. 28 and 29. Nichols met with the eyewitness shortly after receiving the email but failed to make an

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<sup>1</sup> A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

official report to Childline or notify the parents. She also failed to remove Aronson from the classroom until late in the afternoon, and still gave Aronson limited access to children the morning of Oct. 1.

Nichols discussed Aronson's abuse with an eyewitness on Oct. 1 but failed to contact Childline until 9:34 p.m. and did not give an accurate report of the abuse. Because of this failure, Childline did not send the report to the proper authorities, resulting in a further 6-day delay in the investigation. The delay also prevented parents from seeking medical evaluations for their children.

Chester County Detectives and WEGO Police are investigating. Zachary Yurick is the assigned prosecutor.

Call Childline if you suspect child abuse: 1-800-932-0313.

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Approved for release by Deborah Ryan, District Attorney