



# Child Abuse, Neglect, and Mental Injury...Know Your Responsibility

## Reporting Requirements

The Maryland Child Abuse, Neglect, and Mental Injury Law requires that all persons, including all MCPS employees, be mandated to report as soon as possible when they SUSPECT a child has been or is being maltreated. In Montgomery County reports are made orally and in writing to the Department of Health and Human Services/Child Welfare Services (DHHS/CWS). In cases of child abuse, a report may be made to DHHS/CWS or the Montgomery County Police Department. In cases of child neglect, a report may be made to DHHS/CWS.

**IF IT IS AN EMERGENCY, CALL 911.** Any professional who knowingly fails to make a report of maltreatment may be subjected to professional sanctions.

- A. MCPS personnel are MANDATED to make an oral report to a social worker in DHHS/CWS AND notify the school principal/designee or immediate supervisor. Do not delay to make a report and notify the school administrator regarding any suspicion of abuse, neglect, and/or mental injury.
- B. An individual shall notify DHHS/CWS or law enforcement if the individual believes that a child lives with or is in the regular presence of a person, other than the child's parent or guardian, who is a registered child sexual offender and poses a substantial risk of sexual abuse to the child.
- C. The oral report must be followed by a written report within 48 HOURS to the DHHS/CWS. Use MCPS Form 335-44: *Report of Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect, and Mental Injury*. Address and distribution procedures are indicated on the form. There are no exceptions to this requirement.
- D. All written reports must be sent in a plain envelope, sealed, addressed, and marked **CONFIDENTIAL**.
- E. The administrator shall not keep any copies of the report but shall keep a log of all

reported cases that include a) name of child, b) date and hour of oral report, c) name/agency reported to, and d) date form was mailed.

- E. For reference, see MCPS Policy—Child Abuse and Neglect (JHC), MCPS Regulation—Child Abuse and Neglect (JHC-RA), and MCPS Exhibit—Child Abuse and Neglect (State Law) (JHC-EA).
- G. The DHHS/CWS ombudsperson is available at 240-777-3596 to assist school personnel in clarifying concerns about child maltreatment cases.
- H. Suspected abuse, neglect, or self-neglect of students 18 years of age or older who are unable to provide for their own needs must be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services Information and Assistance Unit. Staff is available at 240-777-3333 to assist school personnel in clarifying concerns about these cases.

### To Report Child Abuse

240-777-4417 (24 hours) Department of Health and Human Services/Child Welfare Services, OR

240-773-5400 (24 hours) Family Crimes Division, Montgomery County Police Department

### To Report Child Neglect and Mental Injury

240-777-4417 (24 hours) Department of Health and Human Services/Child Welfare Services

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# *What are Child Abuse, Neglect, and Mental Injury?*

**Physical Abuse:** Any nonaccidental injury to a child under 18 by a parent, caretaker, or household or family member under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed.

## **Physical Indicators**

- Bruises in various stages of healing
- Unexplained burns
- Welts, cuts, abrasions, fractures, internal injuries

## **Behavioral Indicators**

- Behavioral extremes (aggressive vs. withdrawn)
- Avoiding physical contact
- Fearful of parents

**Sexual Abuse:** The molestation or exploitation of a child or adolescent under the age of 18 for the sexual gratification of a parent, caretaker, or household or family member. Included is behavior such as intercourse, sodomy, exhibitionism, fondling, voyeurism, incest, rape, sexual offense in any degree, and the involvement of a child in prostitution or the production of pornography.

## **Physical Indicators**

- Bruises, bleeding, pain, or itching of the genitals, anal, or oral regions
- Sleep disturbances
- Sexually transmitted diseases diagnosed in young children

## **Behavioral Indicators**

- Persistent and inappropriate sexual behavior with peers, toys, or with self
- Overly aggressive or compliant behavior
- Detailed and age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behavior, especially by young children

**Neglect:** The leaving of a child unattended or other failure of a parent, caretaker, or household or family member to provide a child under 18 with the basic needs of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, attention to hygiene, protection, and supervision under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed.

## **Physical Indicators**

- Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress
- Inadequate supervision
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs

## **Behavioral Indicators**

- Constant fatigue
- Assumption of adult responsibility
- Inappropriate seeking of affection

**Mental Injury:** Any observable, identifiable, and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function that is a direct result of an act or omission by a parent, caretaker, or household or family member under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed.

## **Child's Behavioral Indicators**

- Difficult family and/or social relationships
- Sleeping and eating disorders
- Need for specific mental health intervention

## **Parent's Behavioral Indicators**

- Frequently threatening to harm or kill the child
  - Constantly denigrating the child
  - Subjecting the child to extensive emotional or physical isolation or confinement
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