Teachers and Child Care Providers

Teachers, child day care center operators, mental health professionals and others who have children in their care for long periods of time or in counseling situations are in a strategic position to observe behavioral indicators or have children reveal to them reports of abuse or neglect. As Mandatory Reporters, these individuals are not only vital to the reporting process, but can also be very helpful in the follow-up services to address the damage suffered due to abuse/neglect. These professionals can play a role in the safety plan which enables the child to remain in his or her own home. Reporting abuse to a supervisor does not relieve the Mandatory Reporters legal responsibility to personally file a CAN report of abuse or neglect. The report must be made to DHR, law enforcement or the District Attorney.

Alabama Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention

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Prevent Child Abuse Alabama

children's trust fund of alabama
preventing child abuse and neglect

Alabama Mandatory Reporting Law

Alabama Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention

Who are mandatory reporters?

According to Alabama Law, any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected or who observes any child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse shall be required to report orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, followed by a written report, to DHR, law enforcement, or the District Attorney.

Mandatory reporters are:

- Employees of hospitals/clinics/sanitariums
- Doctors/physicians/surgeons
- Medical examiners/coroners
- Dentists
- Osteopaths
- Optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, physical therapists, nurses
- Public and private K-12 employees
- School teachers and officials
- Peace officers/law enforcement officials, pharmacists
- Social Workers and mental health professionals
- Child care workers or employees
- Employees of public and private institutions of postsecondary and higher education

Clergy

A member of the clergy shall not be required to report information gained solely in a confidential communication privileged pursuant to Rule 505 of the Alabama Rules of Evidence which communication shall continue to be privileged as provided by law.

Protection of Reporters

"Any employer, public or private, who discharges, suspends, disciplines, or penalizes an employee solely for making a report of child abuse or neglect is guilty of a Class C misdemeanor."

Penalties for not reporting

Failure to make a required report is a misdemeanor punishable by six months in jail or a $500 fine (or both); additional civil liabilities may be pursued.

When must a report be made?

Reports must be made immediately after suspicion that child abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred. A report can be made by either telephone or direct contact. Mandatory reporters must followed up with a written report to the Department of Human Resources. Reports may also be made to law enforcement officials, for example, local police departments, the District Attorney, or sheriffs' offices.

Methods of reporting

- U. S. mail
- Faxed information
- Telephone
- Walk-ins

Important Information to Include

- The name of the child
- Current location of the child
- County of residence
- Extent of injuries or information that led to knowledge of or suspicious event that led to report
- Age of child
- Address of child and parents or guardian if known

The Department of Human Resources provides forms: Written Report of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (DHR-FCS-1593) for making reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect (CAN). Individuals considered Mandatory Reporters are required to make written reports and should use CAN forms. Forms are available through the county and state offices of the Department of Human Resources.

(This form is available at the Alabama Department of Human Resources, (334) 242-9500 or also available for completion and www.dhr.alabama.gov).

Ref: **Alabama Code 26-14-3—Mandatory Reporting in Alabama**