

# REPORTING Child Abuse & Neglect

As members of the University of Maryland community it is important to protect children from abuse or neglect. For this reason, Maryland state law and University policy require all adults to report suspected child abuse or neglect. This information card is intended to provide a brief overview of the child abuse law, signs, and reporting requirements.

## What is Child Abuse & Neglect?

Child **ABUSE** is *physical or mental injury or any act of sexual molestation or exploitation of a child under age 18*. Child **NEGLECT** is *failure to give proper care and attention to a child under age 18, including leaving a child unattended*.

### A child may be abused or neglected by any

- Parent,
- Person who cares for, has custody of, or responsible for supervising a child, or,
- Household or family member.

### Child abuse or neglect exists when circumstances indicate

- That a child's physical or mental health or welfare is being harmed,
- At substantial risk of being harmed or,
- There is sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not.

## What Are Signs of Child Abuse or Neglect?

### Signs of Physical Abuse Include

- Unexplained bruises: or a pattern of bruises.
- Cuts and burns to the body
- Rope marks or burns
- Fractures/broken bones
- Welts, abrasions
- Bite marks or puncture wounds

### Signs of Sexual Abuse Include

- Injury/reported pain/ itching in genital area
- Sexual knowledge or behavior inappropriate for child's age.
- Verbalization of sexual involvement or victimization
- Sexually inappropriate and/or suggestive behavior
- Difficulty sitting or walking

### Signs of Neglect Include

- Pattern of poor hygiene
- Untreated serious medical problems
- Obvious malnourishment
- Child left unattended or without supervision
- Inadequate clothing for weather
- Child has a pattern of exhibiting withdrawn, shy, sad, fatigued behavior in addition to one or more of the indicators noted above.

# When Do I Report?

You are required to report child abuse or neglect when

- You observe acts of child abuse or neglect,
- You observe signs of child abuse or neglect even if you did not witness the acts,
- You are told of child abuse or neglect by another person who has direct knowledge,
- You are told directly by a victim of child abuse or neglect, regardless of age, or
- You are told of past abuse by an adult survivor.

Immediately contact University Police (911 or 301.405.3333) if you observe any person physically or sexually abusing a child. You must report other non-emergency situations within 48 hours of learning of the abuse or neglect. You are not required or encouraged to gather more information or investigate – just report the information when you become aware of it.

# How Do I Report?

1. Immediately notify your supervisor
2. In consultation with your supervisor,
  - a) **Notify University's Chief of Police** 301.405.3555
  - b) **Contact Child Protective Services (CPS)** - Prince George's County Child Protective Services 301.909.2450; after hours 301.699.8605
  - c) **Prepare a written report** to be sent to the Chief of Police and Child Protective Services within 48 hours (report form available at [www.president.umd.edu/policies/VI-150\(A\).doc](http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/VI-150(A).doc)) that includes, if known:
    - Name and age of the victim when the incident occurred,
    - Identity (name) of the alleged abuser and the relationship to the child, and
    - Details related to the alleged abuse or maltreatment.

Information contained in reports and records are of a highly sensitive nature and are considered private and confidential. Do your best to protect the privacy of individuals involved and limit information to those who have a need to know.

Any individual who in good faith makes or participates in making a report of suspected child abuse or neglect is immune from civil liability or criminal prosecution and is protected from any institutional reprisal that might otherwise result from compliance with the reporting laws or policies. Any employee who fails to report suspected child may be subject to disciplinary action.

# Resources:

## Department of Public Safety

*Emergency:* 911 or 301.405.3333

*Non-Emergency:* 301.405.3555

**Counseling Center:** 301.314.7651

**Health Center:** 301.314.8180



DIVISION OF  
STUDENT AFFAIRS