

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE PROCEDURE (HUM-P014)

Clarksville-Montgomery County School System

1.0 SCOPE:

- 1.1 This procedure outlines the process for Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (CMCSS) employees to report any suspicions of child abuse as required by district policy per Tennessee Code TCA 37-1-403(b).

The online version of this policy is official. Therefore, all printed versions of this document are unofficial copies.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY:

- 2.1 All CMCSS Employees

3.0 APPROVAL AUTHORITY:

- 3.1 Chief Human Resources Officer

4.0 DEFINITIONS:

- 4.1 Child Abuse or neglect: Exists when any person under the age of 18 has sustained an injury or is in immediate danger of being injured by the actions or inaction of a parent, relative, guardian or caretaker.
- 4.2 Injury: Significant physical trauma to the child including, but not limited to, broken bones, eye socket injuries, brain or spinal cord injury, puncture wounds, abrasions, auditory damage, any type of burn, any bruising on any part of a child age two or younger that is not the result of an accident, normal developmental activity, or developmentally appropriate discipline, deep penetrating contusions elsewhere on the body of a child over two years of age, any sexual contact, use of life threatening weapons against any child, or any other willful or knowing behavior which may cause any of the injuries.
- 4.3 Injury: Also includes any repeated and continuous failure to provide minimally adequate food, medical care, shelter or supervision. It may also include psychological abuse such as constant belittling, violent acts directed toward the child's possessions, or any other acts which are likely to cause profound and long-term emotional damage.

5.0 PROCEDURE:

- 5.1 Any CMCSS employee who suspects child abuse by a parent, relative, guardian, or caretaker who is someone other than a CMCSS employee and if the suspected abuse **is not** considered to be **severe physical** or **sexual in nature** must relate their suspicions immediately by telephone or via fax to Central Intake, DCS, Child Protective Services.
 - 5.1.1 **Telephonic referrals** - call **Central Intake** at **1-877-237-0004**. This line is manned 24-hours a day by Central Intake personnel. The referring party should document the nature of the referral, who they spoke with and other pertinent information related to the referral. [HUM-F050](#), Telephonic Referral Form, is an available tool to assist in documenting telephonic referrals.
 - 5.1.2 **Faxed referrals** – fax completed [HUM-F048](#), Child Protective Services Intake Report Faxed Referral, to **Central Intake Fax** at **1-615-361-7041, 7189, 7221, 7261, 7461** record of receipt of the fax must be received by the sender of the fax.

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- 5.2 If the person who suspects child abuse does not have access to a telephone, he or she will contact the highest authority in the building or area who will make a telephone available so that the employee can report the suspected child abuse.
- 5.3 *After Central Intake has been notified, the employee or his or her supervisor will notify the Department of Human Resources via telephone or email.*
- 5.4 School personnel will take no action to verify or investigate the complaint.
- 5.5 Building Principals and Department Directors must maintain a record of all referrals/supporting documentation (Telephonic and Faxed Referral, Verification of Fax Receipt, etc.) and maintain these in a secure location at the building/site level. Record of referrals should include who made the call, the purpose of the call, and the name of the DCS staff member contacted. Due to the sensitive nature of this information, it must be maintained in a secure manner.
- 5.6 The employee making the report should provide as much of the following information as possible to DCS, *if known*:
 - 5.6.1 Name, address and age of the child as well as the nature of the harm or specific incident(s) that precipitated the report such as specific allegation(s), date(s) and description(s) of the injuries or danger.
 - 5.6.2 Name address and person responsible for the care of the child.
 - 5.6.3 Identities of alleged perpetrator(s) and their relationship to the victim.
 - 5.6.4 Witnesses to the incident(s) and how to reach those witnesses.
 - 5.6.5 Details of any physical evidence available.
 - 5.6.6 Perpetrator's current access to the child, present condition of the child (alone, in need of medical attention, etc.).
 - 5.6.7 The location of the child and directions to get there.
 - 5.6.8 Facts that led to the report, how the referent came to know the information.
 - 5.6.9 School's past experience with the family and any other agencies known to be working with the family.
 - 5.6.10 Reporter's thoughts at the likelihood of further harm to the child(ren).
- 5.7 Under normal circumstances, DCS will send the person reporting the suspected abuse a letter to tell them whether or not they have accepted the referral. After DCS completes its investigation, they will follow up with a second letter indicating whether or not abuse was indicated or unfounded. This letter does not include information regarding how DCS arrived at its decision.

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- 5.8 Any CMCSS employee who suspects child abuse that is of a **severe physical** or **sexual nature OR if an allegation of abuse is made against a CMCSS employee, volunteer, or Kelly Educational Staffing Services employee (Substitute Teacher), or who suspects that the abuse occurred on school grounds or while the child was under the supervision or care of the school**, must report their suspicions directly to the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee, providing the same information listed in # 5.6 above, if known. The Chief Human Resources Officer or designee will notify the Clarksville Police Department or Montgomery County Sheriff's Office as appropriate. The Chief Human Resources Officer or designee will also notify Kelly Educational Staffing Services when a report of suspected child abuse is made regarding a substitute teacher.
- 5.9 Follow-up by DCS under normal circumstances is as follows:
- 5.9.1 DCS sends the person reporting suspected child abuse a letter telling them whether or not they have accepted the referral.
- 5.9.2 DCS sends a second letter when the investigation is completed indicating whether or not abuse was indicated or unfounded,
- 5.9.2.1 The letter does not include information regarding how DCS arrived at its decision.
- 5.10 Employee advises the Principal and Chief Human Resource Officer or designee of feedback received from DCS or any other entity involved in the investigation.

6.0 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:

- 6.1 Tennessee Code Annotated 37-1-4-1 and 37-1-611, 612
- 6.2 Federal law (20 United States Code 1232g(b)(1) and 34 Code of Federal Regulations 99.31(5) and 9.36
- 6.3 State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services, Applicable Administrative Policies and Procedures
- 6.4 Reporting Suspected Child Abuse ([HUM-A009](#))
- 6.5 Accommodating DCS Investigations ([HUM-A010](#))
- 6.6 Accommodating DCS Investigations Procedure ([HUM-P015](#))
- 6.7 Child Protective Services Intake Report – Faxed Referral ([HUM-F048](#))
- 6.8 Department of Children's Services Referral ([HUM-F050](#))
- 6.9 Training Guidelines for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Accommodating DCS Investigations ([HUM-G001](#))
- 6.10 E-mails
- 6.11 Referral Records

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7.0 RECORD RETENTION TABLE:

<u>Identification</u>	<u>Storage</u>	<u>Retention</u>	<u>Disposition</u>	<u>Protection</u>
E-mails	HR Computer	Two school years	Shred	Locked offices/building
Referral Record	On Site	Two school years	Shred	Secured file/office

8.0 REVISION HISTORY:

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Rev.</u>	<u>Description of Revision:</u>
7/15/08		Initial Release
7/27/09	A	Insert additional information in section 5.8 and update flowchart

9.0 A flowchart this process can be found in Exhibit "A" of this procedure.

***** End of Procedure *****

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

