



## **REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE PROCEDURE (HUM-P014)**

Clarksville-Montgomery County School System

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### **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
- 3.2 Legal Counsel- This procedure will be reviewed and approved by legal counsel every two (2) years or upon any changes to the procedure content. Approval signatures kept on file.

### **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, fax, or online 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



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related to the referral. [HUM-F050](#), Telephonic Referral Form, is an available tool to assist in documenting telephonic referrals.

- 5.1.2 **Faxed and Online referrals** – For faxes, fax completed [HUM-F048](#), Child Protective Services Intake Report Faxed Referral, to **Central Intake Fax** at **1-615-254-6018** and a record of receipt of the fax must be received by the sender of the fax. For online referral, complete the online report at <https://apps.tn.gov/carat/> and keep a record of the online report.

**Online and fax referrals are for non-emergency situations only as per DCS. If the child is at risk in the home, the central-intake hotline should be called.**

- 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 Building Principals and Department Directors must maintain a record of all referrals/supporting documentation (Telephonic and Faxed Referral, Verification of Fax Receipt, Online Reports, 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.
- 5.4 After Central Intake has been notified, the employee or his or her supervisor will notify the Department of Human Resources via telephone or email. Schools will forward a copy of the record of referral to either the Chief Human Resource Office or designee as soon as possible after Central Intake has been notified.
- 5.5 The employee making the report should provide as much of the following information as possible to DCS, *if known*:
- 5.5.1 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.
  - 5.5.2 Name address and person responsible for the care of the child.
  - 5.5.3 Identities of alleged perpetrator(s) and their relationship to the victim.
  - 5.5.4 Witnesses to the incident(s) and how to reach those witnesses.
  - 5.5.5 Details of any physical evidence available.
  - 5.5.6 Perpetrator's current access to the child, present condition of the child (alone, in need of medical attention, etc.).
  - 5.5.7 The location of the child and directions to get there.
  - 5.5.8 Facts that led to the report, how the referent came to know the information.



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- 5.5.9 School's past experience with the family and any other agencies known to be working with the family.
- 5.5.10 Reporter's thoughts at the likelihood of further harm to the child(ren).
- 5.6 School personnel will take no action to verify or investigate the complaint.
- 5.7 Under normal circumstances, DCS will send the person reporting the suspected abuse a letter to tell them whether they have accepted the referral. After DCS completes its investigation, they will follow up with a second letter indicating whether abuse was indicated or unfounded. This letter does not include information regarding how DCS arrived at its decision.
- 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 contractor, or that the abuse occurred on school grounds or while the child was under the supervision or care of the school**, the CMCSS employee must report their suspicions directly to the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee, providing the same information listed in # 5.5 above, if known.
  - 5.8.1 If warranted, the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee will instruct the staff member to call "911" to report suspicions of abuse. After placing the "911" call, the employee will contact DCS directly and request a case "Reference Number" from DCS to provide to law enforcement personnel who respond to the "911" call.
  - 5.8.2 Only if the alleged abuse is made against a CMCSS employee, volunteer, or contractor, or that the abuse occurred on school grounds or while the child was under the supervision or care of the school, the administrator will notify parent/guardian of the student.
- 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 or email telling them whether they have accepted the referral.
  - 5.9.2 DCS sends a second letter or email when the investigation is completed indicating whether or not abuse was indicated or unfounded,
    - 5.9.2.1 The letter/email 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 and 37-1-611, 612, 37-1-403



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- 6.2 Federal law (20 United States Code 1232g(b)(1)I 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

**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
1/27/11	B	Updated Flowchart Regarding Parent/Guardian Notifications of Abuse if Warranted by Circumstances of Alleged Abuse
4/26/11	C	Added requirement for schools to provide copy of DCS referral to Human Resources (5.4 above) Added requirement for schools to call “911” if instructed by Human Resources and to obtain a case Reference Number from DCS to provide to law enforcement personnel responding to the “911” call
5/11/12	D	In flowchart, regarding change made above in revision C- switched to ‘...contact DCS, then call 911...’. Changed DCS # to : 1-855-209-4226 per Jeanine Chester



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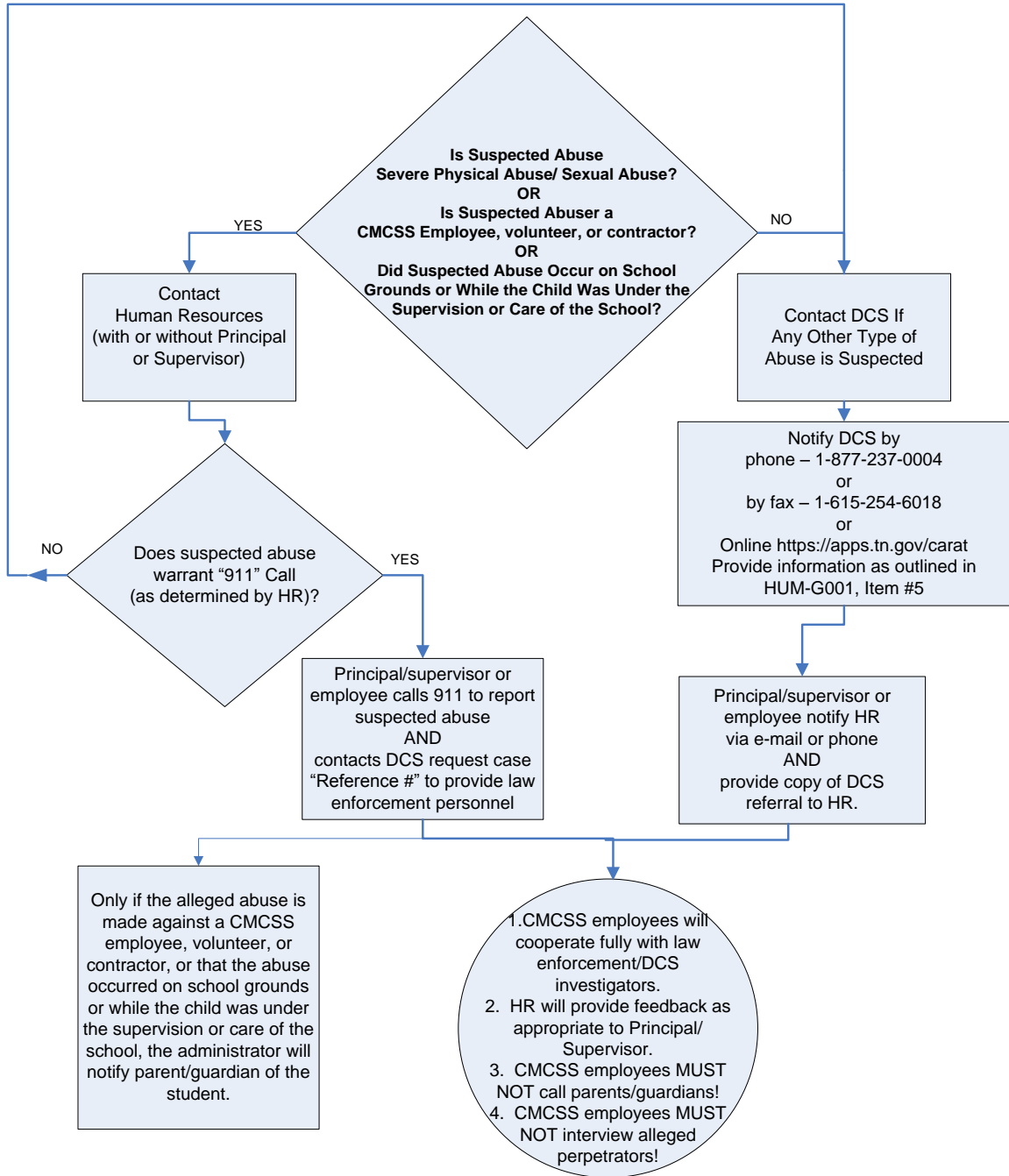
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7/23/12	E	Updated DCS Central Intake phone numbers. Updated HUM-F050.
8/27/12	F	Added approval authority "This procedure will be reviewed and approved by legal counsel every two (2) years or upon any changes to the procedure content. Approval signatures kept on file."
6/13/14	G	Updated wording in 5.8, deleted 5.8.2, revised flowchart, updated logo
10/8/14	H	Updated DCS fax number in 5.1.2 and flowchart
4/8/2015	I	Legal counsel review, updated TN code annotation
2/7/17	J	Updated contact information and added online referral information.
9/8/17	K	Added 5.8.2.
1/31/18	L	Updated DCS Central Intake fax number. Updated flowchart.
5/3/18	M	Added "If the child is at risk in the home, the central-intake hotline should be called" to 5.1.2.

**9.0** A flowchart detailing this process can be found below.

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