

EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING

DHB
(LOCAL)

Reporting

Any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect has a responsibility under state law to immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect to an appropriate authority.

As defined in state law, child abuse and neglect include both sex and labor trafficking of a child. For purposes of this policy, the term "child" is defined in state law as a person younger than 17 years of age.

A professional who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected or may have been a victim of the crime of indecency with a child has an additional legal obligation to submit a written or oral report within 24 hours after the professional first has reasonable cause to believe the abuse or neglect has occurred or may be occurring.

A "professional" is anyone licensed or certified by the state who has direct contact with children in the normal course of duties for which the individual is licensed or certified.

A person is also required to make a report if the person has reasonable cause to believe that an adult was a victim of abuse or neglect as a child and the person determines in good faith that disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of another child or of an elderly or disabled person.

Oral Reports

As required by law, an oral report made to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is recorded.

Making a Report

Reports may be made to any of the following:

1. A law enforcement agency, as defined by law;
2. The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of DFPS at (800) 252-5400 or the [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](#)¹;
3. A local CPS office; or
4. If applicable, the state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering the facility in which the suspected abuse or neglect occurred.

However, if the suspected abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child, the report must be made to DFPS, unless the report is to the state agency that operates, licenses, certifies, or registers the facility where the suspected abuse or neglect took place; or the report is to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department as a report of suspected abuse or neglect in a juvenile justice program or facility.

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An individual does not fulfill the person's responsibilities under the law by only reporting suspicion of abuse or neglect to the District President or another College District staff member. The College District will not require an employee to first report the employee's suspicion to a College District or campus administrator.

In accordance with law, an individual must provide the individual's name and telephone number. If the individual making the report is a professional, as defined by law, the individual must also provide the individual's business address and profession, such as title.

Confidentiality

The identity of a person making a report of suspected child abuse or neglect will be kept confidential and will be disclosed only in accordance with law and the rules of the investigating agency.

Immunity

A person who in good faith reports or assists in the investigation of a report of child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability.

Failure to Report

By failing to report suspicion of child abuse or neglect, an employee:

1. May be placing a child at risk of continued abuse or neglect;
2. Violates the law and may be subject to legal penalties, including criminal sanctions for knowingly failing to make a required report; and
3. Violates Board policy and may be subject to disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment.

It is a criminal offense to coerce someone into suppressing or failing to report child abuse or neglect.

**Responsibilities
Regarding
Investigations**

In accordance with law, College District officials will be prohibited from:

1. Denying an investigator's request to interview a child on campus in connection with an investigation of child abuse or neglect;
2. Requiring a parent or College District employee be present during the interview; or
3. Coercing someone into suppressing or failing to report child abuse or neglect.

College District personnel will cooperate fully and without parental consent with an investigation of reported child abuse or neglect.

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**Adverse
Employment Action
Prohibited**

The College District prohibits any adverse employment action, including termination or discrimination, against any employee who in good faith reports child abuse or neglect or participates in a related investigation.

Training

The College District will provide training to employees as required by law. Training will address reporting requirements and techniques to prevent and recognize sexual abuse, trafficking, and all other maltreatment of children.

¹ Texas Abuse Hotline Website: <https://www.txabusehotline.org>