



Human Resources and Payroll

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CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING

While everyone should be concerned about child abuse and neglect, certain individuals are required by law to report suspected instances. In 2012, the Virginia General Assembly (SB 239) added “any person employed by a public or private institution of higher education” to the list of “mandated reporters” set out in §63.2-1509 of the Code of Virginia. Mandated reporters, including all Mason employees, are those persons who, in their professional or official capacity, are required to report instances of suspected child abuse and neglect to the local Social Services Department or to the Department of Social Services (DSS) Toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline **1-800-552-7096**.

What is an abused or neglected child?

The Code of Virginia §63.2-100 defines an abused or neglected child as any child under 18 years of age whose parent or any person responsible for his or her care:

- Causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury;
- Has a child present during the manufacture of a controlled substance or during the unlawful sale of such substance where such activity would constitute a felony violation;
- Neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or health care;
- Abandons the child;
- Neglects or refuses to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child’s age and level of development;
- Knowingly leaves a child alone in the same dwelling with a person, not related by blood or marriage, who has been convicted of an offense against a minor for which registration is required as a violent sexual offender; or
- Commits or allows to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, prostitution, or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

Where should Mason employees report suspected child abuse or neglect?

Any Mason employee who, in their official or professional capacity, has reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, is required to report the matter as soon as possible, but not longer than

24 hours after having reason to suspect a reportable offense of child abuse or neglect. Reports must be submitted to the local office of the Department of Social Services (in Fairfax, **Fairfax County Department of Family Services** -703 324-7500) or to the Department's state-wide toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline (**1-800-552-7096**).

Mason employees may also report suspected child abuse or neglect to their supervisors or other University officials. Virginia Law (§63.2-1509) allows persons who receive information concerning child abuse or neglect in the course of providing professional services to certain state institutions to immediately notify those in charge of their institution or department of such abuse or neglect, in order for those persons to make the mandated report to DSS. Mason employees may report suspected child abuse to University Police (703-993-2810), to University Human Resources (703-993-3878) or to their Departmental or School administration.

What resources or other materials are available to help Mason employees understand their legal obligation to report child abuse or neglect?

- **[A Guide For Mandated Reporters in Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/dfs/cps/intro_page/mandated_reporters/resources_guidance/booklet.pdf)** http://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/dfs/cps/intro_page/mandated_reporters/resources_guidance/booklet.pdf Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services
- [Mandated Reporter Overview & Resources](#) (PDF) Virginia Child Protective Services
- Mandated Reporters: Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect. http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/mandated_reporters/cws5691/index.html . On-line training for mandated reporters developed and hosted by Virginia Department of Social Services.

Questions about child abuse or neglect reporting? Contact University Human Resources (703-993-3878)

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