

**OFFICE OF SPECIAL SERVICES: SPED Program and Related Services**

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### **Ajhae: PROCEDURE FOR MANDATORY REPORTING OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

During in-person, blended or remote learning, educators and school personnel continue to be mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. The suspicion alone of child abuse and neglect constitutes a required report. If after repeated failed attempts of reaching the student and family and if neglect or abuse is suspected, educators and school personnel should make a report to local child protective services. Educators and school personnel should follow district processes for reporting suspicions of child abuse and neglect. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services provides the following information on mandated reporting:

**OUTLINE FOR MANDATED REPORTING**

 Who is a mandated reporter?

 A mandated reporter is someone required by law to report if he or she suspects or knows child abuse if occurring. The following are mandated reporters in Ohio:

* Animal control officers and agents
* Attorneys
* Audiologists
* Childcare workers
* Children services personnel
* Clergy
* Coroners
* Day care personnel
* Dentists
* Foster parents
* Nurses
* Physicians, including hospital interns and residents
* Podiatrists
* Psychiatrists
* School authorities, employees and teachers
* Social workers
* Speech pathologists

**AJHAE: SCHOOL PROCEDURE FOR MANDATED REPORTING**

* A teacher communicates with the school administrator if he or she has not had any contact with a family after repeated attempts.
* If a student cannot be reached, AJHAE District Office for Special Services identifies additional staff members who may be able to connect with the family.
* If there are suspicions of abuse or neglect, a referral should be made by the school district to the local children services.
* If there are immediate safety concerns, school personnel can contact the police department for a wellness check.

 How is abuse or neglect reported in Ohio?

* ANY Ohioan who suspects child abuse or neglect can call the following toll-free number any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1-855-OHCHILD. This line links callers directly to a children services or law enforcement office in their county. Reports can be anonymous.

What information is needed to make a report?

* The following information is needed:
1. The name and address of the child suspected of being abused or neglected.
2. The age of the child.
3. The name and address of the parents or caretakers.
4. The name of the person suspected of abusing or neglecting the child and the address, if available.
5. The reason for suspicion of abuse or neglect.
6. Any other information that may be helpful to the investigation.
7. A reporter has the option of giving his or her name or reporting anonymously. Giving a name can help the investigator clarify information. The agency will not give a reporter’s name to the person suspected of abusing the child.

 What happens after a report is made?   In Ohio, after a report is made:

1. A child protective services investigator will interview the child, family members and others as deemed appropriate.
2. The investigator determines whether the child is being abused or is at risk for abuse.
3. The case may be referred to local social service agencies or to juvenile, family or criminal court.

When is a mandated reporter required to make a report?

* The law requires a mandated reporter to make a report if he or she believes a reasonable person also would suspect abuse or neglect given the same circumstances. The reporter does not have to provide proof when making a report of abuse. It is not the reporter’s responsibility to conduct an investigation. In fact, questioning too many individuals regarding suspected concerns may interfere with a formal investigation.
* A report of suspected abuse or neglect should be made even if the reporter believes it already has been reported. The reporter may have additional information that was not previously reported to the child protective services agency.

To which child protective services agency should a report be made?

* The child protective services agency to which the report should be made is determined by where the parent(s) or guardian resides. The law enforcement jurisdiction is determined by where the alleged abuse took place.

What are the consequences for failure to report?

* It is a misdemeanor criminal offense for a mandated reporter to fail to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect. For a licensed professional, failure to report could jeopardize the individual’s current licensure or potential licensure in the future. If a reporter makes a report in good faith, the reporter is immune from civil or criminal liability if complaints of intentionally providing false information are made but unfounded.