

A Texas School Employee Guide to Reporting Suspected Abuse & Neglect

Faculty & Staff Rights & Responsibilities

- You have the right and responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect free of fear, intimidation, or regret (Texas Family Code §261.110).
- Your report of child abuse or neglect is confidential and immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report is made in good faith and without malice (Texas Family Code §261.106).
- Teachers and school employees making reports of suspected abuse or neglect are not required by law to first report the suspicion to a peer, colleague, or supervisor.
- Teachers and school employees may not delegate the duty to report suspected abuse or neglect to any other person (Texas Family Code §261.101(b)).
- When making a report, answer all questions as thoroughly as possible and provide detailed and descriptive information about the situation you are reporting to allow the Texas Abuse Hotline to accurately assess the need for investigation.
- If you request that your identity be kept confidential, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) may not reveal your identity to the child's parents, to alleged perpetrators, or to others without your consent or a court order. However, DFPS may disclose your identity to the district attorney or law enforcement if the case requires further investigation.
- When responding to an outcry, let the child use his or her own words to tell you what happened, but leave the detailed questioning to DFPS Child Protective Services (CPS) and law enforcement. This is critical to ensuring the integrity of any investigation and minimizing additional trauma to the child.

Administration Rights & Responsibilities

- You have the same rights and responsibilities as faculty and staff.
- Ensure all new personnel are formally trained on how to recognize and report child abuse and neglect in accordance with Texas Education Code §38.0041.
- Ensure training opportunities related to recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect are available for all personnel on an annual basis.
- CPS or law enforcement may visit your campus during the course of an investigation. Avoid the use of public media (e.g., intercoms) to notify the appropriate staff or students.
- Establish a known, private location within your campus where both reporters and/or students can confidentially meet with CPS or law enforcement.
- Take steps to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the report by not discussing the report or reporter. You are not required to disclose knowledge of a report to a parent or caregiver. If asked, you may choose to deny any knowledge of the report.
- Avoid implementing policies that require faculty and staff to consult with administration or other staff before they make a report of child abuse or neglect. Leave the detailed questioning and investigation to CPS and law enforcement.

Take action and report abuse to CPS or law enforcement within 48 hours. It could save a child's life.

How to Respond If a Child Reveals Abuse or Neglect

DO:

- Remain calm
- Believe the child
- Allow the child to talk
- Show interest and concern
- Reassure and support the child's feelings
- Take action. It could save a child's life

DON'T:

- Panic or overreact
- Press the child to talk
- Promise anything you can't control
- Confront the offender
- Blame or minimize the child's feelings
- Overwhelm the child with questions

Visit your local CAC to learn more.



Remember, you are obligated by law to report suspected child abuse.

If you suspect a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
For all other cases in Texas, call the abuse and neglect hotline at 800.252.5400.
Outside of Texas, visit www.onewithcourage.org for a list of resources.

This is an initiative of
Children's Advocacy Centers™ of Texas

www.cactx.org

