

ALABAMA'S MANDATORY REPORTING LAW

LEARNING YOUR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS TO REPORTING
THE SIGNS OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention
Children's Trust Fund of Alabama

WHO ARE MANDATORY REPORTERS?

Any person whose profession brings them in contact with children on a daily basis is legally obligated to report signs of suspected child abuse or neglect.

- Employees of hospitals, clinics, and sanitariums
- Social workers
- Child care employees
- Clergy
- Public and private K-12 school personnel
- Postsecondary and higher education employees
- Physical therapists
- Dentists
- Peace officers and law enforcement personnel
- Mental health professionals
- Pharmacists
- Nurses
- Physicians, surgeons, and medical examiners
- Podiatrists, chiropractors, optometrists, osteopaths, and coroners



SOME PEOPLE ARE REQUIRED,
BY LAW, TO REPORT SUSPECTED
ABUSE OR NEGLECT, HOWEVER,
EVERYONE IS ENCOURAGED TO
MAKE A REPORT IF HE OR SHE
SUSPECTS A CHILD IS BEING
ABUSED OR NEGLECTED.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Under Alabama law, it is “harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare which can occur through non-accidental physical or mental injury; sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse; sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation.”

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises, marks, or cuts
- Marks in the shape of an object
- Fear of adults
- Destructiveness towards self or others
- Poor social skills
- Aggression
- Defiance
- Clothing that may be inappropriate

Sexual Abuse

- Inappropriate displays of affection
- Unusual interest in inappropriate sexual knowledge
- Over-compliance
- Pain during urination
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Frequent vomiting
- Wetting pants

Emotional Abuse

- Depression or withdrawal
- Lack of emotion
- Lack of interest
- Speech, sleep, or eating disorders
- Repetitive actions, such as rocking, sucking, or biting
- Increased emotional needs

Neglect

- Clothing that’s dirty, torn, poorly fitting, or inappropriate for the weather
- Sleepiness
- Poor hygiene
- Untreated medical or dental problems
- Inappropriate responsibility for younger siblings
- Frequent tardiness or absences from school
- Apparent lack of supervision

MANDATORY SUPPORTERS

You can better protect children by first supporting families. When you see yourself as a mandated supporter rather than just a reporter, you help shift the focus from surveillance to proactive, compassionate care. Find our interactive map at [Children's Trust Fund of Alabama](#) to connect families with supportive resources in their community.



IF YOU SUSPECT CHILD ABUSE, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

**Trust your instincts. Take notes.
Look at the facts.**

Make a report using form: DHR-FCS-1593, which is available at your county DHR office or available online.

DHR | Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting

**MANDATORY REPORTING ONLINE
TRAINING, FORMS, & MORE:**

Alabama Department of Human Resources

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR
WEBSITE:**

Children's Trust Fund of Alabama

WHAT IS YOUR LIABILITY?

All persons reporting suspected child abuse or neglect (whether required by law or not) are presumed to be acting in good faith. Alabama law provides immunity from liability for actions by mandatory reporters.

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-9

IS YOUR JOB PROTECTED?

“A public or private employer who discharges, suspends, disciplines, or penalizes an employee solely for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect ... shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor”

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-3(g)

PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO REPORT:

“Any person who shall knowingly fail to make the report required by this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a sentence of not more than 6 months' imprisonment or a fine not more than \$500.00.”

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-13

