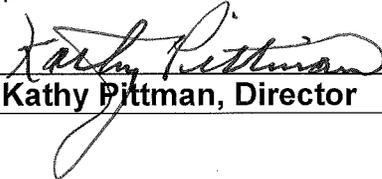


MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES JUVENILE INSTITUTIONS	
Subject: Abuse and Neglect Reporting	Policy Number: 5
Number of Pages: 2	Section: VII
Attachments	Related Standards & References
A. Abuse & Neglect Reporting Signature Sheet B. Pocket Card	Mississippi Code of 1972, Section 43-21-353
Effective Date: November 02, 2006 Revised September 16, 2009	Approved:  Kathy Pittman, Director

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Division of Youth Services (DYS), that all departmental, contractual, and volunteer employees who have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being neglected and/or abused while in the custody of the DYS, is expected to properly report to MDHS without fear of retaliation and retribution.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Abuse: The verbal, physical, and/or sexual mistreatment of youth; and/or the misuse of force, which may result in the death, serious physical harm, exploitation, or humiliation of such youth while in the custody of the DYS; or other act that poses an imminent risk of serious harm.
- B. Neglect: The reckless disregard of the fundamental needs and rights of youth, and/or the failure to provide due care, protect and/or act on behalf of a youth in the custody and care of the DYS by any staff member operating or providing services under the auspices and authority of the DYS.
- C. Mandatory Reporters: Per the Mississippi Code, Section 43-21-353, any individual operating or providing services under the auspices or authority of the MDHS/DYS including but not limited to the following: any physician, dentist, nurse, psychologist, school employee, social worker, intern, child care giver including counselor, recreation staff, juvenile care worker, and/or direct care staff.
- D. Pocket Card: A quick reference card, which states the Mississippi State Statute referenced in the Abuse and Neglect Reporting policy and provides the Child Abuse Hotline Number that shall be given to all Training School Staff.
- E. Abuse and Neglect Reporting Signature Sheet: A form documenting that Training School Employees have been informed of and are familiar with the Abuse and Neglect Reporting policy and have received a Pocket Card for use on duty.

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- F. Reasonable Cause: Knowledge of allegations of abuse or neglect made by youth, parents, guardians and care givers, and/or suspicions based on injury or behavior, or observed abuse or neglect.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. Duty to Report – It is the duty of all Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services departmental, contractual, and volunteer employees to immediately report any alleged, suspected or apparent acts of neglect or abuse against children by calling the abuse and neglect reporting hotline. The telephone number for reporting abuse is 1-800-222-8000 or (601) 359-4991.
- B. The use of the hotline, in all instances shall be followed by the submission of an Incident Report. All mandatory reporters shall make record of the call in the youth’s master file and/or medical or educational file(s).
- C. Using the abuse and neglect reporting hot line is confidential and staff will not be subject to sanctions, threats, or retribution.
- D. Prior to the assumption of post all new employees shall be given a Pocket Card, which shall be kept within immediate reach of the employee’s person for the duration of scheduled shift. As well, each employee shall sign the Abuse and Neglect Reporting Signature Sheet to verify that the information covered in the policy has been received, understood, and will be upheld, in addition to the receipt of the Pocket Card and its function.
- E. Training – All MDHS/DYS employees will receive documented competency-based training in policy, approved practices and on the requirement to report all allegations, suspicions, or apparent child abuse and neglect. Trainers shall make all efforts to insure that staff members understand and can apply training content.
 - 1. All new employees will receive an explanation of Mississippi Code, Section 43-21-353 and instructions on procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect during the mandatory pre-service training.
 - 2. All staff will receive documented competency-based in-service training, facilitated by their supervisor, at least quarterly, to provide ongoing instruction regarding policy VII.5: Abuse and Neglect Reporting.
 - 3. All staff will be required to sign the Abuse and Neglect Reporting Signature Sheet at the time of training. The signature sheet will be maintained by each supervisor and a copy will be forwarded to the office of the Training Director.