

Working with Minors

» CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND MENTAL INJURY - A GUIDE FOR MONTGOMERY COLLEGE EMPLOYEES, STUDENTS & VOLUNTEERS

KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Reporting Requirements

The Maryland Child Abuse, Neglect, and Mental Injury Law requires that all persons, including all Montgomery College employees, students, volunteers, visitors, and individuals or groups using College facilities for any purpose be mandated to report as soon as possible when they SUSPECT a child has been or is being subjected to abuse, neglect or mental injury. In Montgomery County, reports are made orally and then followed up with a written report within 48 hours to the Department of Health and Human Services/Child Welfare Services (DHHS/CWS). In cases of child abuse, make a report to DHHS/CWS or the Montgomery County Police Department. In cases of child neglect, make a report to DHHS/CWS.

IF IT IS AN EMERGENCY, CALL 911.

Anyone who knowingly fails to make a report of instances of abuse, neglect or mental injury may be subjected to professional sanctions.

A. Montgomery College employees are **MANDATED** to first make an immediate oral report to a social worker in DHHS/CWS, and follow-up with a written report (Form 180) within 48 hours. Employees are also required to notify the Montgomery College Office of Public Safety at (240) 567-3333 and share the report with the Youth Protection Coordinator to ensure the College is informed of the incident. **Do not** delay making a report regarding any suspicion of abuse, neglect, and/or mental injury.

B. An individual shall notify DHHS/CWS or law enforcement if they believe a child lives with or is in the regular presence of a person, other than the child's parent or guardian, who is a registered child sexual offender and poses a substantial risk of sexual abuse to the child.

9 Health practitioners, police officers, educators, or human service workers acting in a professional capacity must follow an oral report with a written report to the relevant agency within 48 hours after making an oral report that the child may have been subjected to abuse or neglect.

D. Suspected abuse, neglect, or self-neglect of students 18 years of age or older who are unable to provide for their own needs must be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services Information and Assistance Unit. Staff is available at 240-777-3333 to assist Montgomery College employees in clarifying concerns about these cases.

E. After reporting to government authorities, the individual must also make a report to the College if either the abuse bears a connection to the College or the individual became aware of the abuse as part of their College responsibilities. Promptly notify the Office of Public Safety and the Youth Protection Coordinator. Make a report to the College only after any mandated reporting to the government. If an individual is unsure about whether or how to make a report, promptly contact the Youth Protection Coordinator for assistance.

F. An adult may disclose that they were abused or neglected as a child. Even if the event(s) occurred a long time ago, employees are compelled by law to make a report. If there are concerns about reporting, please contact the Youth Protection Coordinator for assistance. (See Opinion of the Maryland Attorney General dated December 3, 1993, at 78 Op. Att'y Gen. 189).

Who must make a report?

Anyone who has reason to believe a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect must make a report to government authorities. This includes College employees, students, volunteers, visitors, and individuals or groups using College facilities for any purpose.

Protection for individuals making reports.

The College will not retaliate against any person for making a good faith report of child abuse or neglect. In addition, Maryland law provides immunity to anyone making a good faith report of child abuse or neglect, so the alleged wrongdoer cannot recover damages from the reporter for making the report.

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WHAT ARE CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND MENTAL INJURY?

Physical Abuse: Any non-accidental injury (visible and invisible) to a minor by a parent/guardian, household or family member under circumstances that indicate the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed.

Physical Indicators

- Bruises in various stages of healing
- Unexplained burns
- Welts, cuts, abrasions, fractures, internal injuries

Behavioral Indicators

- Behavioral extremes (aggressive vs. withdrawn)
- Avoiding physical contact
- Fearful of parents

Sexual Abuse: The molestation or exploitation of a minor for the sexual gratification of a parent/guardian, household or family member. Included is behavior such as intercourse, sodomy, exhibitionism, fondling, voyeurism, incest, rape, sexual offense in any degree, and the involvement of a child in prostitution or the production of pornography.

Physical Indicators

- Bruises, bleeding, pain, or itching of the genitals, anal, or oral regions
- Sleep disturbances
- Sexually transmitted diseases diagnosed in young children

Behavioral Indicators

- Persistent and inappropriate sexual behavior with peers, toys, or with self
- Overly aggressive or compliant behavior
- Detailed and age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behavior, especially by young children

Neglect: The leaving of a child unattended or other failure of a parent, caretaker, or household or family member to provide a child under 18 with the basic needs of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, attention to hygiene, protection, and supervision under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed.

Physical Indicators

- Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress
- Inadequate supervision
- Unattended physical problems or medical

Behavioral Indicators

- Constant fatigue
- Assumption of adult responsibility
- Inappropriate seeking of affection

Mental Injury: Any observable, identifiable, and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function that is a direct result of an act or omission by a parent, caretaker, or household or family member under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed.

Child's Behavioral Indicators

- Difficult family and/or social relationships
- Sleeping and eating disorders
- Need for specific mental health intervention

Parent's Behavioral Indicators

- Frequently threatening to harm or kill the child
- Constantly denigrating the child
- Subjecting the child to extensive emotional or physical isolation or confinement



MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

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