

# REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Compiled from *Questions Teachers Ask About Legal Aspects of Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect*, Tower, Cynthia, a National Education Association publication, 1984.

1. **In schools, who is legally mandated to report child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect?** teacher, principal, administrator, school personnel, or official
2. **What legal action can be taken against the school employee who does not report?** misdemeanor offense
3. **Under what age is a child protected by child abuse statutes?** 18 years
4. **Under what circumstances must school personnel report child abuse?** reasonable cause to suspect child abuse (in cases of alleged sexual misconduct by a school employee, the employee must report even if there is no reasonable cause to suspect.)
5. **Does a mandatory reporter have the discretion not to report?** No.
6. **Are anonymous reports allowed?** Mandatory reporters cannot make anonymous reports. However, reporter information will be held confidential.
7. **What type of immunity is a mandatory reporter given once the report is made in good faith and without maliciously false statements?** immunity from criminal and civil liability
8. **If a child reports abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse to the employee, does the employee or the school have the right to detain the child?** No.
9. **Does Missouri recognize a parent's right due to religious beliefs to withhold medical treatment?** Yes.
10. **To whom should a report be made?** All reports must be made directly to the Children's Division of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Your district may also require an internal report to a designated individual.
11. **Can a report be made by phone?** Yes. Call 1-800-392-3738.
12. **Is there a time limit within which the report has to be made?** Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported immediately.
13. **Is the DFS obligated to investigate all reports that meet the legal definitions of what is reportable?** Yes.
14. **Is the case automatically heard in court?** No.
15. **If a family will not cooperate, might a case go to court?** Yes.
16. **Does the law or policy designate a time period during which a report must be investigated?** Yes.
17. **Is the name of the reporter kept confidential?** Yes.
18. **Are school contacts involved in an investigation?** Yes.
19. **Is the Children's Division with whom the report is filed required to advise the mandated reporter of the results?** Yes.
20. **Which Missouri state statute should a school employee consult for specific information about child abuse?** Sections 210.110 to 210.165 and 160.261, Revised Statutes of Missouri