

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

The University of Georgia is committed to the safety and well-being of children and the prompt reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect. These instructions outline reporting procedures for University employees and volunteers in accordance with Georgia Law (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5) and University policies for the protection of minors.

Reporting Requirements

All University employees and volunteers acting in the scope of their employment who have reasonable cause to believe that child abuse has occurred shall **immediately (but in no case later than 24 hours)** make a report or confirm that a report has been made to **ALL** of the following:

- 1) The UGA Police Department (UGAPD) at 706-542-2200 or 911 (emergency);**
- 2) Their Supervisor, Program Director, or other responsible University official; AND**
- 3) The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) at 1-855-GACHILD.**

If you have reasonable cause to believe child abuse has occurred, DO NOT attempt to investigate the matter further or gather additional information before reporting.

Definitions

Child/Minor: any person under the age of 18.

Child Abuse: non-accidental physical injury, neglect, exploitation, sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation.

University Follow-up

Upon receipt of a report, the UGAPD will investigate any suspected child abuse on campus or involving a University employee or volunteer and will follow up with DFCS, as necessary.

University Supervisors, Program Directors, and officials will take immediate action in order to protect the minor, to encourage employee or volunteer compliance with the directives herein, and to work with the UGAPD during any investigation that results from the report.

Failure to Report

Failure of Mandatory Reporters, as defined by O.C.G.A. §19-7-5, to report suspected child abuse is a violation of state law and may subject the individual to criminal penalties.

Failure of University employees or volunteers to comply with the directives herein may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment or volunteer service.

Non-Retaliation

The University prohibits any employee, student, or volunteer from retaliating or taking any adverse action against another employee, student, or volunteer for reporting a reasonable suspicion of sexual or physical abuse or neglect of a minor. If an individual believes he or she is being retaliated against, the individual should contact his or her supervisor or Human Resources.

The State of Georgia grants immunity from any civil or criminal liability for the making of a report, in good faith, of suspected abuse of a minor.

Professional License Requirements

Professional licensing associations may require additional reporting requirements for certain professions (e.g., teachers, social workers, child care providers). University employees, volunteers, and students holding such designations are encouraged to consult their professional licensing associations for more information.

University Students

University Students employed by or volunteering on behalf of the University who have reasonable cause to believe that child abuse has occurred shall follow the Reporting Requirements listed above.

University Students at a field placement, on-site course, research project, outreach project, or other event supervised by an agency with which the University cooperates (e.g., schools, community agencies, medical facilities, internship sites) who have reasonable cause to believe that child abuse has occurred **must notify the organization's lead administrator or other designated official** (e.g., school principal, counselor, facility director) **immediately**, and subsequently notify their University Supervisor or Program Director, who is subject to the Reporting Requirements listed above.

University Students operating under the supervision and professional license of a University Supervisor or Program Director (e.g. psychologist, speech language pathologist, social worker) who have reasonable cause to believe that child abuse has occurred **must notify their supervisor immediately**, and subsequently the student and the University Supervisor or Program Director will follow the Reporting Requirements listed above.

Programs and Activities for Minors

Additional University resources, including access to a free online training module, are available at: <https://programsforminors.uga.edu/>