

## CHILD ABUSE

The *Illinois Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act* mandates that school personnel promptly report alleged or suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the **Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)** when the alleged abuser is a parent, guardian, relative, or other caretaker who has some responsibility for the child's welfare at the time of the abuse or neglect. This includes professionals such as teachers who are responsible for the care of the child.

Illinois law requires school professionals to notify DCFS even if there is a suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Thus, the school professional need not have proof or convincing evidence of the abuse; merely suspicion of abuse makes a call to DCFS necessary. Furthermore, Illinois law protects school professionals from litigation if the DCFS call was made in good faith.

Types of child abuse include physical abuse (such as corporal punishment), sexual abuse (such as inappropriate touching) or psychological abuse (such as name calling or intimidation) or other emotional inappropriateness.

School personnel shall follow Archdiocesan procedures, which have been developed in accord with Illinois law. The school administrator shall maintain confidentiality for the benefit of all those involved.

### I. GENERAL PROCEDURES

#### A. IF THE ALLEGED ABUSER IS A PARENT, GUARDIAN OR CARETAKER AT THE TIME OF THE ABUSE:

1. Call the State Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) at 1-800-25-ABUSE or 1-800-252-2873. Before calling DCFS, the caller should ascertain some information which the DCFS caseworker will request. This information includes:
  - a. The child's name, home address, and parents or other persons responsible for the child's welfare;
  - b. The child's age, sex, race, and date of birth;
  - c. The nature and extent of the child's abuse or neglect, including any evidence of prior injuries, abuse, or neglect of the child or siblings.
  - d. The names of the person(s) suspected of being responsible for the abuse or neglect;
  - e. Family composition;

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