

# TENNESSEE LAW ON MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

All members of the University community are responsible for compliance with Tennessee laws on mandatory reporting of child abuse and child sexual abuse. Please go to the following website to find detailed information from the Tennessee Department of Children's Services on how to identify and report child abuse and child sexual abuse: <http://www.tn.gov/youth/childsafety.htm>.

The following is a summary of key provisions of Tennessee law on mandatory reporting of child abuse and child sexual abuse.

## Who Must Report

Tennessee law mandates reporting by **any person** who has knowledge of physical or mental harm to a child if: (1) the nature of the harm reasonably indicates it was caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect; or (2) on the basis of available information, the harm reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect.

Tennessee law also mandates reporting by **any person** who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been **sexually abused**, regardless of whether it appears the child has sustained an injury as a result of the abuse.

The Tennessee mandatory reporting laws define a child as a person under 18 years of age.

## How to Report

**Call 911 if the situation is a life threatening emergency.** In other cases, a report of child abuse or child sexual abuse must be made **immediately** to one of the following four authorities:

- The Tennessee Department of Children's Services (reports can be made by calling the Central Intake Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004);
- The sheriff of the county where the child resides;
- The chief law enforcement official of the city where the child resides; or
- A judge having juvenile jurisdiction over the child.

**Please note that University police departments are not included in the list of authorities. Reporting to University police, a supervisor, or any other University official or employee does not satisfy an individual's duty to report child abuse or child sexual abuse to one of the authorities listed above.**

**Criminal Penalties for Failure to Report**

Any person who knowingly fails to make a report of child abuse as required by Tennessee law commits a Class A misdemeanor.

Any person who knowingly and willfully fails to report known or suspected child sexual abuse, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so, commits a Class A misdemeanor.

**I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND, AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF TENNESSEE LAW DESCRIBED IN THIS DOCUMENT.**

PRINTED NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_