

# Gloucester County Department of Community Engagement



## IMPORTANT Volunteer Understandings & Agreements

As a volunteer with Gloucester County and/or Gloucester County Public Schools, you have entered into a partnership to enhance and enrich the experiences of our youth to help them learn and grow to their greatest potential. **You have an important role as a volunteer.** Along with your important role there are important responsibilities you need to be aware of in working with children in a school environment.

Two of the responsibilities as a volunteer involve **school policy** and **Virginia law**. Both require that you acknowledge, in writing, that you have received information on these responsibilities, by reading and signing the **Statement of Confidentiality** and the **Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status** below.

### STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

As a volunteer working in Gloucester County Public Schools, I understand that I may be privileged to confidential information. I agree to maintain confidentiality regarding all information pertaining to students, faculty, and staff. Information deemed confidential includes but is not limited to:

- ◆ information that could hurt someone else
- ◆ a child's progress
- ◆ a child's test information
- ◆ a child's home life
- ◆ information about teachers/staff/administration
- ◆ teachers' instructional techniques and strategies
- ◆ school records
- ◆ behavior/discipline
- ◆ telephone numbers
- ◆ medication taken by a student
- ◆ any treatment received from our nurse

I understand that I am obligated to report to the Community Engagement Coordinator any information that may affect the welfare or safety of a student. I have read the above statements and will keep confidential all information that I am privileged to as a volunteer in the school.

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## INTRODUCTION TO MANDATED REPORTER STATUS

Effective July 1, 2012 a change was made to the Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporting Law of Virginia (VA Code [§ 63.2-1509](#)) which includes individuals who volunteer with a public organization (school) to be a mandated reporter for child abuse and neglect. It is important that you read the acknowledgment statement below and request further information if needed from your Community Engagement Coordinator.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MANDATED REPORTER STATUS

I understand that as a volunteer with Gloucester County/Gloucester County Public Schools, I am a **MANDATED REPORTER** as defined and identified in section 63.2-1509(11) of the Code of Virginia. (A copy of the code is available on request.)

As a mandated reporter of child abuse/neglect, I acknowledge that I am required to report suspected child abuse/neglect as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after having a suspicion of a reportable matter. I am required to report my concerns to the school principal or assistant principal. Concerns regarding suspected child abuse/neglect may also be reported to the Gloucester Department of Social Services (693-2671 during normal business hours), the Gloucester Sheriff's Office (693-3890 after normal hours) or to the state's toll-free child abuse/neglect hotline at 1-800-552-7096.

I understand that I am immune from civil or criminal liability on account of any reports, information, testimony and records I release if the report is made in good faith and without malicious intent. My identity will be held confidential unless I authorize the disclosure or disclosure is ordered by the court.

I understand that if I fail to make a required report of suspected adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation, immediately upon suspicion, I can be fined not more than \$500 for the first failure. and for any subsequent failures not less than \$1,000. In the most serious of abuse cases, as defined in Virginia Code - Article 7 (§ [18.2-61](#) et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2, a person who knowingly and intentionally fails to make the report required pursuant to this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

### AFFIRMATION:

I affirm that I have read both the **Statement of Confidentiality** and the **Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status** and understand my responsibilities as a volunteer in these areas.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MANDATED REPORTER STATUS**

Effective July 1, 2012 a change was made to the Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporting Law of Virginia (VA Code [§ 63.2-1509](#)) which includes individuals who volunteer with a public organization (school) to be a mandated reporter for child abuse and neglect. More specific and detailed information and resources are available by request to your Community Engagement Coordinator or visiting the Virginia Department of Social Services website at [www.dss.virginia.gov](http://www.dss.virginia.gov) (Report Abuse and Neglect button.)

## **WHAT DOES BEING A MANDATED REPORTER MEAN?**

Mandated reporters are people who are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse/neglect as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after having a suspicion of a reportable matter.

Child abuse and neglect is defined, at minimum as any act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents imminent risk of serious harm. Signs associated with physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse are included at the end of this document.

## **WHAT DOES MAKING A REPORT MEAN?**

A report may initiate a family assessment response or an investigation to gather facts and protect the child should it meet the legal criteria. A person making a report does not need proof of abuse or neglect prior to reporting. Family assessment responses, investigations and validation of child abuse reports are the responsibility of the local Department of Social Services.

## **TO WHOM SHOULD I REPORT?**

Virginia law requires mandated reporters to report suspected child abuse and neglect as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after having a suspicion or concern. School volunteers should report their suspicion/concerns immediately to the school principal or assistant principal. In that mandated reporters are required to report, you can also always report your concerns to the Virginia toll-free child abuse/neglect hotline at 1-800-552-7096, Gloucester Department of Social Services (693-2671 during regular office hours) or the Gloucester Sheriff's Office (693-3890 after normal hours).

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### **MAY I MAKE A REPORT ANONMOUSLY?**

You may call the Virginia (toll-free) Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline at 1-800-552-7096, but you are encouraged to work with the school system by making the report to the school principal or assistant principal and providing your name, address and phone number when reporting. If you give your name when you report, it will be documented that you have met your legal obligation to report the suspected child abuse/neglect. This also makes it possible for child protective service workers to contact you later if additional information is needed and enable the worker to inform you of the outcome of your referral.

### **WHAT CAN I EXPECT IF I MAKE A REPORT?**

When making a report it is helpful to provide as much information as possible such as the name, address and telephone number of the child and parents/guardians; child's birth date or age, sex and race; nature and extent of the suspected abuse/neglect or specific details that caused you to report and other information that might be pertinent. If the report meets legal criteria for validation, you will be informed once the assessment or investigation is completed and what action may be taken.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T MAKE A REPORT?**

Mandated reporters who fail to make a report may be fined up to \$500 for the first failure to report and up to \$1,000 for subsequent failures. In the most serious of abuse cases, a person who knowingly and intentionally fails to make the report required pursuant to this section may be found guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

### **WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A MANDATED REPORTER?**

The Code of Virginia provides that persons making a report have a right to have their identity held confidential unless they consent or court orders the identity of the reporter to be revealed. Persons making a report are immune from any civil or criminal liability unless the reporter acted in bad faith or with a malicious purpose. Persons who report must be informed of the results of the assessment or investigation. Due to confidentiality no specific details will be provided.

### **LOCAL CONTACTS & RESOURCES ON CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT, CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND MANDATED REPORTER RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Gloucester Department of Social Services – 693-2671
- Virginia Department of Social Services Website  
[www.dss.virginia.gov](http://www.dss.virginia.gov) (Report Abuse and Neglect button)

## **Abuse & Neglect Information**

The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. It is important to note, however, that these types of abuse are more typically found in combination than alone. A physically abused child, for example, is often emotionally abused as well, and a sexually abused child also may be neglected.

### **Signs of Physical Abuse**

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the child:

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver

### **Signs of Neglect**

Consider the possibility of neglect when the child:

- Is frequently absent from school
- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care

### **Signs of Sexual Abuse**

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the child:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver

### **Signs of Emotional Maltreatment**

Consider the possibility of emotional abuse when the child:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example)
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- Has attempted suicide
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent