

Mandated Reporter: Quick Guide

Summerville Catholic School, South Carolina

Indicators of Maltreatment

Child:

- ☐ Shows sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- ☐ Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents attention
- ☐ Is always watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
- ☐ Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn
- ☐ Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, or does not want to go home

Parent:

- ☐ Shows little concern for the child
- ☐ Treats one child differently from siblings
- ☐ Denies the existence of – or blames the child for – the child's problems
- ☐ Asks teachers or other caretakers to use
- ☐ harsh physical discipline if child misbehaves
- ☐ Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome
- ☐ Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve
- ☐ Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs

Signs of Physical Abuse

Child:

- ☐ Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- ☐ Has injuries that mirror the shape of an object
- ☐ Has bruises in various stages of healing, or on different body planes
- ☐ Has bruises on the fleshy parts of the body
- ☐ Has fading injuries after an absence from school
- ☐ Attempts to hide injuries
- ☐ Seems frightened of the parents and does not want to go home
- ☐ Shrinks at the approach of adults
- ☐ Reports injury by a parent or guardian

Parent:

- ☐ Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injuries
- ☐ Does not seek medical care when needed for the child's injuries
- ☐ Describes the child in a very negative way
- ☐ Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- ☐ Has a history of abuse as a child

Signs of Neglect

Child:

- ☐ Is frequently absent from or late to school
- ☐ Is always hungry; begs or steals food or money
- ☐ Is constantly tired
- ☐ Has slow physical development or is underweight
- ☐ Lacks needed routine or urgent medical or dental care
- ☐ Has poor hygiene; is consistently dirty and has a body odor
- ☐ Lacks appropriate clothing for the weather
- ☐ Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- ☐ States that there is no one at home to provide care or supervision

Parent:

- ☐ Appears to be indifferent to the child
- ☐ Seems apathetic or depressed
- ☐ Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- ☐ Is abusing alcohol or drugs
- ☐ _____

- ☐ _____

- ☐ _____

- ☐ _____

Signs of Sexual Abuse

Child:

- ☐ Reports sexual abuse
- ☐ Has difficulty walking or sitting
- ☐ Refuses to change for P.E. or participate in activities
- ☐ Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- ☐ Experiences a sudden change in appetite or weight
- ☐ Has a sudden change in grades
- ☐ Appears withdrawn or depressed
- ☐ Demonstrates unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- ☐ Becomes pregnant or contracts a sexually transmitted disease, particularly if under 14
- ☐ Runs away from home

Parent:

- ☐ Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex
- ☐ _____

- ☐ _____

- ☐ _____

Signs of Mental Injury

Child:

- ☐ Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- ☐ Is either inappropriately adult (e.g., parenting other children) or inappropriately infantile (e.g., rocking or head-banging)
- ☐ Has attempted suicide or engaged in self-harm
- ☐ Exhibits a lack of attachment to parents

Parent:

- ☐ Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child
- ☐ Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems
- ☐ Overtly rejects the child

NOTES:

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Steps for Reporters:

1) Create a safe environment

- a) Students have a right to feel safe in school. Safe environments will allow reporters to protect children.
- b) OR send the child to another trusted adult that can provide a safe environment such as the counselor.

2) Listen to the Child

- a) Do not probe for details. Do not attempt to investigate.
- b) Do not indicate doubt, disbelief, shock or anger towards the child or possible perpetrator. The child usually loves the perpetrator.
- c) You may take photos of visible trauma but child cannot remove clothing.

3) Tell the Child what you will do

- a) (e.g., that you are going to contact DSS and a caseworker will come to talk with the child).
- b) Do not give the child false assurances or promise that you will keep the information confidential.

4) Documentation *(See example below)*

- a) Document the basis of your concerns, including physical and behavioral signs.
- b) Document the child's statements to you. Try to use the child's exact words.
- c) Document the child's demeanor while talking with you. Note any signs of fear or distress.
- d) If you make the report orally, record the date, time, and the person and agency you contacted. If you make the report in writing, keep a copy of the correspondence.
- e) Be aware that your records concerning the report may be subject to subpoena. Do not put your personal opinion or feelings.

5) Inform

- a) Inform School Principal, Vice Principal, or School Counselor of what the student reported. School Administration will support you in reporting if necessary.
- b) School Counselor can assist you in making actual report to DSS

6) Making the Report

- a) Make the report as soon as possible
- b) You must personally make the report. You cannot delegate this to someone else.
- c) You do not need to have conclusive proof. The law requires you to report when you have "reason to believe" a child is being or may be abused or neglected.

PHONE CALL:

Calling is much more effective than making an online report.

- d) DSS will need this info: (Have RenWeb/FACTS open).
 - i) Child's name, age, birthdate, address
 - ii) Parent's name, address, all phone numbers
 - iii) Sibling's names, age, birthdate
 - iv) Any other individuals that live in the home.
 - v) SCS's address and phone number.
- e) Explain why you are concerned about the child when making the report
 - i) Use your documentation
 - ii) Although reports can be made anonymously, it is often helpful to provide your name and telephone number in the event that further information is needed.
- f) At the time the report is made, you can request to be notified of the outcome of the investigation.
- g) After you have made a report, if you learn new information or additional information, report it to DSS or law enforcement.

Contact with Parents

- In general, it is best not to contact the child's parents about your suspicions before making the report.
- Informing parents before the appropriate intervention can be made may lead to retribution against the child or destruction of evidence.
- Never accuse a parent of abuse or neglect.

Documentation Example:

06/05/2081

Student X, 7th grade.

Student approached this counselor in her office on 06/05/2081 at 11am. Student's appearance appeared to be within normal limits. Students' mood and facial expressions appeared to be down and hesitant throughout this meeting. When student was asked how her day was going, student replied "okay". Student reported that "things are stressful at home". This counselor asked student if she would like to share more about this. Student reported that her "dad has been gone for 3 days". Student expressed that she and her mom "don't know where he is". Student reported that her mom and dad "fight a lot". Student described that fighting includes "yelling", parents "throwing" items at each other, and are often "drunk". Student described that her mom and dad will "drink a lot", especially mom when "dad leaves". Student described that her mom "can be really nice" to her or "really mean". Student reported that she is "scared" to go home because she "doesn't know what home will be like". When asked if she feels safe going home today, student reported "I don't know" and appeared to shrug.

This counselor reported the above information to the school Principal. School Principal advised this counselor to report to DSS.

12:15pm- This counselor made a call to DSS and reported the above. DSS reported that they will "report to supervisor" and give the counselor a call back with a decision of further action.

2pm: DSS called this counselor back to inform her that DSS personnel will be coming to the school today to speak with the student.

Personal NOTES:

- Student appears to have a good rapport and trust with this counselor.
- No past reports of this.
- Child has frequent tardiness and 8 unexcused absences