

Procedure

FILE: JL

STUDENT WELFARE PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Reporting to Authorities – Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

MGL c. 119, §§51A and 518 govern the reporting of child abuse and neglect and require all professional school employees to report suspected cases of abuse of students to the Department of Children and Families.

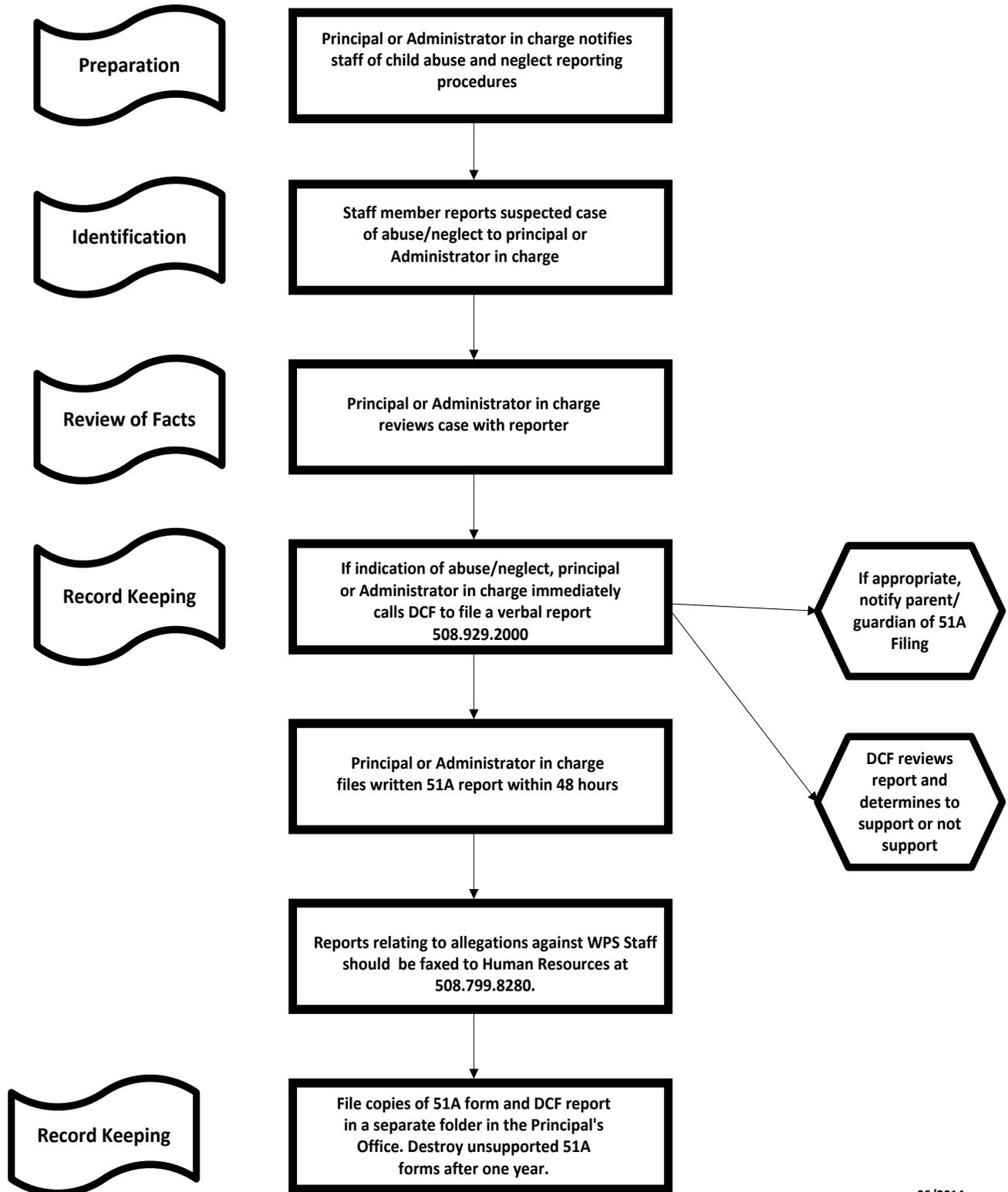
The contact agency for reporting cases is:

The Massachusetts Department of Children & Families
13 Sudbury Street
Worcester, MA 01609
Telephone: (508) 929-2000 8:45 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
Child at Risk Hotline: (800) 792-5200 all other times (weekends & holidays)

REPORTS RELATING TO ALLEGATIONS AGAINST WPS STAFF, SHOULD BE FAXED TO HUMAN RESOURCES AT 508-799-8280.

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WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING PROCEDURES



SUMMARY OF WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS' POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The Worcester Public Schools' policy reflects the content of Chapter 119, Section 51A, of the Massachusetts' General Laws as amended by Chapter 1076 of 1973. The purpose of the Law is to protect children and prevent further neglect or abuse.

POLICY:

Worcester Public School personnel are required to report abuse or neglect cases if in their "professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen years is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon him/her, including sexual abuse, or from neglect, including malnutrition". M.G.L. C. 119, S. 51A

PROCEDURES:

- School personnel who have reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or neglect, whether or not the alleged perpetrator is a caretaker or not, shall report such cases to the principal*.
- The principal or his/her designee will **immediately** contact the Department of Children and Families, 13 Sudbury Street, by telephone (929-2000) and give the following information:
 - a. Name and address of student.
 - b. Name and address of parents/guardian.
 - c. Age and sex of student.
 - d. Nature and extent of injuries or description of neglect.
 - e. Any evidence of prior injuries or neglect.
 - f. Circumstances under which the person first became aware of abuse or neglect.
 - g. Action taken to assist child if any is taken.
 - h. Name, address, and telephone number of person(s) making report and facility representative.

The oral report should be as complete as possible since the Department of Children and Families will make a decision relative to "reasonable cause" based on this conversation. Any doubts about a reportable condition should be discussed as the Department of Children and Families has "screeners" trained to receive both oral and written reports.

Reports relating to allegations against Worcester Public School's staff shall be faxed to Human Resources at 508-799-8280.

The principal* must forward a written report (Form 51A) within 48 hours after the oral communication. In the event, that the written report has been compiled by the principal's designee, the principal must co-sign the report.

Mandated reporters can be fined up to \$1,000 for not reporting a case of alleged child abuse/neglect.

Mandated reporters are not liable in any civil or criminal action for submitting a report that is made in good faith.

*** In his/her absence, the Administrator in charge.**

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

- **Mandated Reporter:** Any... school teacher, educational administrator, guidance or family counselor who, in his or her professional capacity shall have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon him or her including sexual abuse, or from neglect, shall immediately report such condition to the Department of Children and Families by oral communication and by making a written report within 48 hours.
- **Abuse:** The non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker upon a child under age eighteen (18) which causes, or creates a substantial risk of, serious physical or serious emotional injury or constitute a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e. abuse can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).
- **Neglect:** Means failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence or inability to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care; provided, however, that such inability is not due solely to inadequate economic resource or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e. neglect can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).
- **Caretaker:** The “caretaker” definition is meant to be construed broadly and inclusively to encompass any person who is, at the time in question, entrusted with responsibility for the child. Examples of caretakers are:
 - Parent
 - Step-parent
 - Guardian
 - Any household member entrusted with the responsibility for a child’s health or welfare
 - Any other person trusted with the responsibility for a child’s health or welfare whether in a child’s home, a relative’s home, a school setting, a day care setting, a foster home, a group care facility, or any other comparable residential setting.

This is only a summary. Comprehensive procedures are available in the principal’s office, the health office, and the school library. You are encouraged to read the policy in its entirety.

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT COMPREHENSIVE PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Child abuse and neglect are always very serious problems. Discussing a situation of abuse or neglect with a child can be a difficult and sensitive matter. It is not uncommon for the child to be frightened and prefer to avoid any discussion. For this reason, adults who are trying to help the child are encouraged to express warmth, patience, and support in reviewing the suspected case of abuse/neglect. Efforts to help a child believed to be abused/neglected must also involve the child's parent or guardian unless you think discussion with the parent would increase the risk to the child. It is best to discuss the alleged case of child abuse/neglect in a face-to-face situation with the child's parent or guardian. The essence of the conversation should deal with the facts supporting the alleged abuse, the responsibility of the school under the law, and the services provided by the Department of Children and Families. In most cases of child abuse/neglect, the parent or guardian is aware of the problem, wants to help, but is unable to take the necessary steps to get help. Therefore, your effort to report the child abuse/neglect situation can be viewed by the parent or guardian as the initial step in securing help for the family and child.

The following are procedures for reporting alleged cases of child abuse/neglect:

1. Principals are to notify teachers and other school personnel who have contact with students to immediately report alleged cases of child abuse/neglect to the Principal or, in his/her absence, to the Administrator in charge.
2. An effort should be made to determine the extent of the following:
 - Who is responsible for the alleged abuse/neglect?
 - Is there indication that harm inflicted upon the child was deliberate?
 - Is there indication that the child is in personal danger or feels in personal danger?

The abuse/neglect must be reported to the Department of Children and Families (929-2000).

3. The Principal* must file a verbal report with the Department of Children and Families. Any staff member completes his/her legal responsibility when he/she has reported to the Principal*. The Principal* remains the mandated reporter. This does not preclude a staff member from directly filing a 51A Form f, in conscience, he/she feels obligated to do so.
 4. The Principal, or the Principal's Designee, will call the Department of Children and Families (929-2000), immediately and give an oral report.
 - A. The DCF worker will evaluate the report to determine the severity of the case and what further action will be taken. The case must be investigated in ten calendar days and must include viewing of the child/children reported and speaking with the parent/guardian.
 - B. If the reporter believes the case to be an emergency (s) he should request an immediate visit citing the reasons, and although the final decision is with the screening supervisor, the reporter's request is always strongly considered.
 - C. It is the policy of DCF to keep the identity of the reporter confidential from the family, unless ordered by the Court, or unless the DCF investigation results in a report to the District Attorney's Office or the Office of Child Care Services.
- * **Or in his/her absence, the Administrator in charge.**
5. Form 51A must be completed by the Principal/Designee and mailed within 48 hours of the oral report.

In the event, that the written report has been compiled by the principal's designee, the principal must co-sign the report. Reports related to allegations against WPS staff should be faxed to 508-799-8280.

6. It is recommended that the parent/guardian be informed by the Principal or his/her Designee, that the child has been referred to the Department of Children and Families, but DO NOT do so if you think it would increase risk to the child. It is preferred that the parent/guardian be notified personally rather than by telephone or letter. The Principal/Designee should not disclose the identity of the staff member who brought the information, which caused the 51A to be filed, to the Principal's/Designee's attention. In discussing the situation with the parent/guardian, it is suggested that the following be emphasized:
 - A. The school has serious concerns regarding the child's health and safety.
 - B. The school is required by law to report alleged cases of child abuse/neglect to DCF.
 - C. The DCF will determine whether or not the family is in need of services and will act accordingly. DCF will notify the mandated reporter, in writing, of its decision on the report.
 - D. If the family is not notified by the Principal or his/her Designee, DCF should be informed.
7. In an EMERGENCY SITUATION where the abuse/neglect is so severe that the Department of Children and Families concludes that the child is seriously at risk and will not be sent home, the Department has the authority to take the child into immediate physical custody. It is the responsibility of the Department of Children and Families to notify the parent/guardian that this action has been taken. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Principal* to notify both the parent/guardian and the appropriate Worcester Public Schools' supervisor that this action has been taken. The child is then prepared for the placement in the most therapeutic way possible by both the social worker and school personnel who have been involved with the child.
8. Interviewing of children, by the Department of Children and Families during the school day, can occur provided that the DCF has obtained parental permission and provided any such interview does not interfere with the child's education.
9. The following are school guidelines relative to record keeping of child abuse/neglect cases:
 - A. School personnel should keep a separate file of suspected incidents, with dates and specifics in order to document patterns of neglect or abuse.
 - B. Filed copies of the 51A Form and the DCF report of their findings, should be kept in a separate folder in the Principal's office.
 - C. When the student changes schools, the Principal should consider consulting with the new Principal regarding concerns of abuse/neglect.
 - D. Unsupported 51A Forms should be destroyed after one year.
 - E. Supported 51A Forms should be kept no later than five years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from the School System.
10. In unsupported cases, should the school personnel remain convinced that the child is abused/neglected, the reporter may seek consultation from the investigator's supervisor or an administrative staff person at the DCF.
11. In the event of a new abuse/neglect situation involving a child who is already serviced under the DCF, a new 51A Form must be filed.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS
CHAPTER 119

SECTION 51A

Mandated reporters could be assessed by a fine up to \$1,000 for not reporting a case of alleged child abuse/neglect.

Mandated reporters will not be liable in any civil or criminal action for submitting a report.

Mandated reporters shall immediately report such conditions (i.e., abuse/neglect) to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) provided, however, that whenever such person so required to report is a member of the staff of a public or private school (s) he shall immediately notify DCF or notify the person in charge of such school, or that person's designated agent, whereupon such person shall then become responsible to make the report in the manner required by this section.

No employer of those persons required to report pursuant to this section shall discharge or in any manner discriminate or retaliate against any person who in good faith makes such a report, testifies or is about to testify in any proceeding involving child abuse or neglect. Any such employer who discharges, discriminates or retaliates against such a person shall be liable to such person for treble damages, costs, and attorney's fees.

NOTE: Should a school reporter be harassed or threatened by the parent/guardian/caretaker following the report, (s) he should immediately notify his/her supervisor.

SECTION 51B, Paragraph 3

Custody: The Department shall take a child into immediate temporary custody if the Department has reasonable cause to believe that the removal of the child is necessary to protect him or her from further abuse or neglect; provided, however, that the Department shall make a written report stating the reasons for such removal, and provided further, that if any child is so taken into custody, the Department must file a petition pursuant to Section 24 on the next court day.

The Department of Children and Families Regulations provides the following DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

1. Mandated Reporter: Any school teacher, educational administrator, guidance or family counselor, who, in his or her professional capacity shall have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon him or her including sexual abuse, or from neglect, shall immediately report such condition to the Department of Social Services by oral communication and by making a written report within 48 hours after such oral communication.
2. Abuse: The non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker upon a child under the age of 18 which causes, or creates a substantial risk of, physical or emotional injury or constitute a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., abuse can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).
3. Physical Injury such as:
 - A. Death; or
 - B. Fracture of a bone, a subdural hematoma, burns, impairment of any organ, and other such non-trivial injury; or
 - C. Sexual Abuse; or
 - D. Soft tissue swelling or skin bruising depending upon such factors as the child's age, circumstances under which the injury occurred, and the number and location of bruises; or
 - E. Addiction to a drug at birth; or
 - F. Failure to thrive
4. Emotional Injury: Means an impairment to or disorder of the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child as evidenced by observable and substantial reduction in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior.
5. Neglect: Means failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence or inability to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care; provided, however, that such inability is not due solely to inadequate economic resource or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., neglect can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).

6. Caretaker: means a child's

- A. Parent
- B. Stepparent
- C. Guardian
- D. Any household member entrusted with the responsibility for a child's health or welfare
- E. Any other person trusted with the responsibility for a child's health or welfare whether in the child's home, a relative's home, a school setting, a day care setting, a foster home, a group care facility, or any other comparable residential setting.

The "caretaker" definition is meant to be construed broadly and inclusively to encompass any person, who is, at the time in question, entrusted with responsibility for the child.

WEBBER BILL

In 1989, legislation became law which expanded the state reporting relative to the investigation of child abuse/neglect cases. This law, known as the Webber Bill, allows a Department of Children and Families' investigator who is conducting a child abuse/neglect investigation under Chapter 119, Section 51B, to seek and obtain collateral information from any individual who is identified by law as a mandated reporter of child abuse/neglect, i.e., physician, teacher, social worker, etc. The mandated reporter from whom the investigator is seeking information need not be the reporter of the 51A that is under investigation, but merely anyone who has information about the reported child (ren) which they believe might aid the Department of Children and Families in determining whether abuse/neglect has taken place. The Webber Bill requires that any mandated reporter who has such information shall disclose that information, upon request, to the Department of Children and Families regardless of any privilege created by statute or common law prohibiting the disclosure of confidential communications. Any mandated reporter who releases such information is granted the same legal safeguards accorded to the reporter of the 51A, i.e., no civil or criminal liability and protection from possible adverse action his/her employer.

When a Department of Children and Families' social worker conducts a 51B investigation, they attempt to obtain as much information as possible about the reported child (ren). Oftentimes, it is an individual such as yourself who may have important knowledge that helps them determine whether protective intervention is warranted with a family. Your knowledge may be instrumental in identifying children at serious risk, as well as helping to identify those families whose children are not at risk and should not be subject to unnecessary involvement with the Department of Children and Families.

If you have any questions regarding the Webber Bill, please call an Investigations Supervisor, Department of Children and Families, Worcester Area Office, at (508) 929-2000.



REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES **24 hours - 7 days a week, including holidays**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts **Disabled Persons Protection Commission**

The mission of the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) is to protect adults with disabilities from abusive acts and omissions of their caregivers through investigation, oversight, public awareness and prevention.

What is the DPPC?

The DPPC is an independent state agency created by M.G.L. c.19C to protect adults with mental and physical disabilities, between the ages of 18 and 59, from abuse or neglect by their caregiver(s) whether in a private, family, or state care setting.

The DPPC receives and screens reports of deaths, and suspected physical, emotional, and sexual abuse or omission (neglect), makes referrals, conducts investigations, oversees investigations conducted by other state agencies, and insures that appropriate protective services are provided when abuse has been substantiated or risk is determined.

The Commission conducts *Commissioners' Investigations* which probe systemic problems contributing to abuse, and *Retaliation Investigations* which examine allegations that reporters have been retaliated against for providing information to the DPPC.

State Police Detective Unit

The State Police Detective Unit (SPDU) is a law enforcement unit within DPPC which reviews all reports to determine whether it appears a crime has been committed. The SPDU investigates allegations of abuse against individuals with disabilities and when appropriate refers reports for investigation to local law enforcement and/or the District Attorney's office.

The principal purpose of the SPDU is to insure a rapid and effective response to complaints of abuse against persons with disabilities by law enforcement. Prior to the implementation of the SPDU there were no statewide standards for referring complaints of criminal abuse against persons with disabilities to law enforcement agencies. The successful investigation and prosecution of crimes against victims with disabilities requires standard investigative and prosecutorial approaches which include awareness of the unique circumstances in dealing with victims who are disabled. SPDU law enforcement procedures include a recognition of the clinical implications of dealing with victims who may have a limited capacity to participate with the investigation and who may be clinically traumatized by the crime committed against them.

Did you know? **The Disabled Persons Protection Commission:**

- Is the central point to access law enforcement and abuse protective services for persons with disabilities.
- Receives approximately 4,500 reports of abuse annually.
- Operates a 24-hour Hotline to receive reports of alleged abuse.
- Conducts investigations into deaths when it is suspected that the death was caused by an act or omission by a caregiver.
- Oversees the conduct of M.G.L. c. 19C investigations referred to other agencies for investigation.
- Conducts independent investigations.
- Provides free training on an overview of M.G.L. c. 19C and identifying stress and preventing abuse for both professional and non-professional caregivers.
- Recommends and monitors the provision of appropriate protective services when abuse is substantiated or risk is determined.
- Maintains an extensive Resource Library of abuse prevention materials.

Reports made to the DPPC Hotline are:

- Screened in as an emergency, a non-emergency or screened out if it does not meet the criteria of M.G.L. c. 19C.
- Referred to other state agencies (DMR, DMH, MRC, DPH, DSS) whether screened in or screened out.
- Reviewed by the State Police Detective Unit to determine whether it appears a crime has been committed.
- Immediately assigned to an oversight officer, who assesses the level of risk and insures that immediate protective services are implemented, if necessary.
- Referred to local law enforcement and/or the District Attorney's office when appropriate.
- Assigned to a DPPC investigator, or referred for investigation to the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), or the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). All c. 19C investigations conducted by other agencies are done under the authority of the DPPC.
- Investigated, and when abuse is substantiated the protective service recommendations contained in the investigation report are implemented by the service providing agency.
- Monitored by the DPPC's Oversight Unit until the level of risk is eliminated.

Indicators of possible physical abuse:

- Puncture wounds
- Bruises on several different surface areas
- Bruises in various stages of healing
- Multiple bruises, or bruises forming patterns or clusters
- Human bite marks
- Fracture to ribs, skull, arms and leg bones
- Unexplained internal injuries
- Bilateral bruises (e.g. top of shoulders, both sides of face, insides of both thighs)
- Burns shaped like an object (e.g. iron, cigarette), especially on soles of feet, palms, back or buttocks

Indicators of possible sexual abuse:

- Torn or stained clothing and/or bedding
- Pregnancy
- Vaginal or rectal bleeding
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Vaginal infections

Indicators of possible emotional abuse:

- Increased anxiety
- Fearful of others
- Depression
- Appears withdrawn
- Lowered confidence level
- Shame
- Lowered self-esteem
- Changes in the individual's ability to function

Indicators of possible neglect:

- Lack of clothing or improperly clothed for weather conditions
- Decubiti (bedsore), skin rashes
- Dehydration
- Malnutrition
- Lacks needed eyeglasses, dentures, wheelchair, hearing aide, etc.
- Medication mismanagement
- No telephone or access to outside in case of an emergency
- Architectural barriers

MANDATED REPORTERS of abuse and neglect:

Persons who, as a result of their professions, are more likely to hear about or see abuse of persons with disabilities, and so are required to report suspected cases of abuse to the DPPC. The following is a list of mandated reporters:

- Medical personnel
- Medical Examiners
- Social Workers
- Foster Parents
- Police Officers
- Dentists
- Public or private school teachers
- Educational administrators
- Psychologists
- Guidance or family counselors
- Daycare workers
- Employees of private agencies providing services to people with disabilities
- Employees of state agencies within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services

* NOTE: Mandated reporters are immune from any civil or criminal liability as a result of filing a report and are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 for failure to file a report.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission

50 Ross Way Quincy, MA 02169

Office Hours: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Monday - Friday
(617) 727-6465 V/TTY (800) 245-0062 V/TTY (617) 727-6469 FAX
HOTLINE (800) 426-9009 V/TTY

WEBSITE: <http://www.state.ma.us/dppc>

Kathleen M. Vesey
Chairperson

Betty Anne Ritcey
Commissioner

Jack L. McCarthy
Commissioner



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission

M.G.L. c. 19C Reporting Form

When completed, this form should be mailed to:

Intake Unit, Disabled Persons Protection Commission, 50 Ross Way, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

Reporter:		Alleged Victim:	
Name:		Name:	
Address:		Address:	
Daytime telephone: ()		Telephone: ()	
() Mandated		Sex: () Male () Female	
() Non-Mandated		DOB:	
Relationship to Alleged Victim:		Age: Marital Status:	
Alleged Abuser: (Alleged Victim's Caretaker)		Disability: (check as apply)	
Name(s):		() Mental Retardation () Mental Illness	
Home address:		() Mobility () Head Injury	
Relationship to victim:		() Visual () Deaf / Hard of Hearing	
Soc. Security #: DOB:		() Cerebral Palsy () Multiple Sclerosis	
Telephone: ()		() Seizures () Other (Specify: _____)	
Client's Guardian(s): (If any)		Communication Needs:	
Name(s):		() TTY () Sign Interpreter () Other (Specify: _____)	
Address:		Currently Served By:	
Relationship to Alleged Victim:		() Dept. of Mental Health () Mass Comm./Blind	
Telephone: ()		() Dept. of Mental Retardation () Mass. Comm./Deaf/HH	
Collateral contacts or notifications:		() Mass. Rehab. Comm. () Unknown	
(Please list, including telephone numbers.)		() Dept. of Correction () Other (Specify: _____)	
		() Dept. of Public Health () None	
		Type of Service:	
		() Institutional () Service Coordination	
		() Residential () Foster / Spec. Home Care	
		() Day Program () Respite	
		() Case Management () Other (Specify: _____)	
		Client's Ethnicity:	
		() Caucasian () Hispanic () Asian	
		() African American () Native American	
		() Other (Specify: _____)	
Frequency of Abuse:		Is victim aware of report?	
() Daily () Increasing		() Yes () No	
() Weekly () Decreasing		Types of Abuse: (List all which apply)	
() Episodic () Constant		() Physical () Omission	
() Unknown		() Sexual () Other (Specify: _____)	
Date of last incident:		() Emotional	

Please describe alleged abuse on the back side of this form.

***You must file an oral report of suspected abuse; please call 800-426-9009**

Description - Please complete the following sections.

1. In narrative form, please describe the alleged abuse:	
2. Please describe the level of risk to the alleged victim, including his/her current physical and emotional state:	
3. Please list any resulting injuries:	
4. Please list witnesses, if any, including daytime phone numbers:	
5. Please describe caregiver relationship between the alleged abuser and the alleged victim. (What assistance, if any, does the alleged abuser provide to the person with the disability?)	
6. Was an oral report filed with the DPPC Hotline?	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES (Please note date and time of call: _____)	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO (If no, please call 800-426-9009 to file an oral report)	
7. Is there any risk to the investigator?	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES If yes, please specify:	
<input type="checkbox"/> NO	



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Disabled Persons Protection Commission



50 Ross Way • Quincy • Massachusetts • 02169

Office: (617) 727-6465 (V/TTY) 24-Hr. Hotline: (800) 426-9009 V/TTY

RISK FACTORS
CONTRIBUTING TO ABUSE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- SOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY HAVE RESTRICTED SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS
- PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CAN FEEL POWERLESS
- PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY DEPEND UPON TOUCH (e.g. being assisted with personal care), AND THEY MAY NOT ALWAYS BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE NATURE OF THE CARE
- PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY BE SOCIALIZED TO ACCEPT BEING TOUCHED BY ANYONE, ESPECIALLY SOMEONE CALLED "STAFF"
- SOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY BE UNABLE TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE ACTIONS, AND ARE, THEREFORE, UNCERTAIN AS TO WHAT CONSTITUTES ABUSE
- SOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY NOT UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF STRANGERS
- SOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CONCEIVE OF THE FACT THAT SOMEONE THEY KNOW WOULD HARM THEM
- SOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY NOT RECEIVE SEX EDUCATION
- DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE IGNORED WHEN MADE BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
- PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY BE PARTICULARLY DISADVANTAGED BY COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

- PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE, SUCH AS UNEXPLAINED BRUISES OR ABRASIONS, IN ADDITION TO SECONDARY INDICATORS OF ALL TYPES OF ABUSE, SUCH AS IMPAIRED SOCIAL INTERACTIONS, MAY BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE DISABILITY ITSELF.
- SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE NOT AS HARMED BY ABUSE
- SOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY BE LESS ABLE TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT THE ABUSE
- SOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON THEIR CAREGIVERS FOR DAILY CARE, WHICH MAY MAKE THEM RELUCTANT TO REPORT ABUSE, ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE THREATENED WITH INSTITUTIONALIZATION
- SOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY RELY ON OTHERS FOR DECISION-MAKING IN THEIR "BEST INTEREST"
- SOME PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY LIVE IN A SITUATION WHERE COMPLIANT BEHAVIOR IS REQUIRED, AND CONSIDERED "NORMAL"
- SOME FAMILY MEMBERS OR GUARDIANS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY HAVE A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY ABOUT THE SAFETY OF THEIR LOVED ONES, BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THEY WILL BE SAFER IN A SUPERVISED SETTING