

Child Abuse

Requirement:

- As per Florida Statute 39.201(1)(a), any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the department in the manner prescribed.
- A person who is required to report, and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so, is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in Chapters 775.082 or 775.083, F.S.

Definitions

- **Abuse** – Any willful act or threatened act that results in a physical, mental, or sexual injury or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired. F.S. 39.01(2)
- **Abandon** – A situation in which the parent or legal custodian of a child or, in the absence of a parent or legal custodian, the caregiver responsible for the child's welfare, while being able, makes no provision for the child's support and makes no effort to communicate with the child, which situation is sufficient to evince a willful rejection of parental obligations. F.S. 39.01(1)
- **Neglect** – when a child is deprived of, or is allowed to be deprived of, necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment or a child is permitted to live in an environment when such deprivation or environment causes the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired or to be in danger of being significantly impaired. F.S. 39.01(43)

Reporting

There are three (3) options for reporting child abuse and neglect to the Florida abuse hotline:

- Calling 1-800-962-2873 or 1-800-96-ABUSE
- Faxing a child abuse report to 1-800-914-0004
- Calling the TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) 1-800-453-5145

Any school teacher or other school official or personnel who makes a report is required to provide his or her name. The name reported shall be entered into the record of the report but shall be held confidential and exempt from disclosure.