

## **Policy Regarding Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child**

**BOR approved 1/17/14; requires annual distribution to employees**

The Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (ConnSCU) accept that institutions of higher education foster educational opportunities for people under the age of 18 years. The BOR, in acknowledging the special care required for children, strives to the utmost to protect children on its campuses from any form of abuse or neglect.

Pursuant to state law, certain individuals are “mandatory reporters” legally obligated to report all suspected cases of child abuse to the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families. Although most ConnSCU employees are not mandatory reporters in accordance with the General Statutes, the BOR recognizes that each ConnSCU campus must be a safe and secure environment for children to grow and develop. By requiring all employees to report any witnessed or suspected abuse or neglect of a child on a ConnSCU campus, regardless of where the abuse may have occurred, will create a safer environment for all.

Consequently, it is the policy of the BOR that any employee who witnesses or has reason to suspect that a child on a ConnSCU Campus has been abused or neglected must immediately (within 12 hours) report what they have witnessed or suspect to their immediate supervisor. The supervisor must report the incident to their director or Vice President who must then inform the campus President and the System Office Vice President of Human Resources or his/her designee.

If the director or vice president reasonably believes that a reportable incident has occurred, he/she will immediately contact the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families and, if the perpetrator is a ConnSCU employee, assign an objective person to investigate the report. An employee under investigation may be placed on administrative leave pending the scope and results of the investigation. Employees who report suspicions of abuse or neglect are protected from any disciplinary action at work unless it is proven that the report is malicious. An employee who fails to report, but is later determined to have had previous knowledge of the abuse, will be subject to discipline.

A report is required if there is reasonable cause to suspect that a person under the age of 18 is in imminent harm, has had non accidental injuries or has been abused or neglected. Reasonable cause to believe or suspect that child abuse has occurred is sufficient to make a report.

All staff shall be required to take the Department of Children and Families Mandated Reporter Training on-line within three months of either the adoption of this policy or the availability of the Department of Children and Families on-line training, whichever occurs last. Mandated Reporter Training will be included in New Employee Orientation. Compliance with training will be monitored by each ConnSCU campus’s Department of Human Resources. A copy of this policy shall be disseminated annually to all employees.

Reasonable steps will be taken to preserve privacy while promptly investigating and responding to the report. While the institution will strive to maintain the confidentiality of the information reported, which information may be subject to privacy requirements of the Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), the institution also must fulfill its duty to protect the ConnSCU community and to assure that the appropriate disciplinary processes are implemented.