

# What to Know About Child Abuse and Neglect for the School Nurse/Health Room Aide

## Things to Consider:

It is important to know your district's reporting policy and procedure.

With whom in the district do you need to share the suspicion or disclosure of abuse/neglect?

Who will provide health office coverage while you are making a report?

Where can you access names, address, and guardian information for the child of concern?

## Reporting:

Emergency cases of abuse (the child is in imminent danger) should be reported to the Child Abuse and Neglect (CA/N) Hotline at: **1-800-392-3738**

Non-Emergency reports can be made via the web-reporting system at:

<https://apps.dss.mo.gov/OnlineCanReporting/default.aspx> (\*Doing a search for "Missouri child abuse online reporting" may be easier than typing the direct web address)

**TIP: It is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that mandated reporters take a moment to set up an online account prior to ever needing to make an online report. This will ensure the most timely reporting.**

**If the child needs immediate help to ensure safety, it may be necessary to first call 911. This does not eliminate the need to also report to the CA/N hotline.**

To use the online system, you will need to have an account. To create an account, click on "1st Time User/Create New Account" on the right side of the page. There will be a pop-up. Make sure to allow pop-ups for the page. Follow the prompts. You will be asked to enter an email address and create a password. This will be your log-in information. Record it here for future reference:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Password reminder: \_\_\_\_\_

**Important tip:** When making an online report, it is best to have all information readily available as the online reporting app will "time out" after 15 minutes and all information will be lost.

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## Information to have when making a report:

- Child's name and address
- Parent/guardian/caregiver name and address
- Child's age, sex, and race
- Nature of the injuries
- Source of the report
- Name and address of alleged perpetrator if known
- Family composition
- Name, occupation, and contact information of the reporter

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## Legal Requirements:

- School nurses and health room aides are mandated reporters under section 210.115 RSMO.
- All mandatory reporters shall, upon finding reasonable cause, directly and immediately report suspected child abuse or neglect as provided in section 210.115.
- No supervisor or administrator may impede or inhibit any reporting under section 210.115.
- No person making a report under section 210.115 shall be subject to any sanction, including any adverse employment action, for making such report.
- Failure to report is a Class A misdemeanor for a person who is required under the law to report.
- Filing a false report is also a Class A misdemeanor.
- A Class A misdemeanor conviction may result in up to **a year in jail and/or up to a \$1000 fine.**
- Mandated reporters may not make child abuse/neglect (CA/N) reports anonymously provided the reporter is informed that reporter information will be held as confidential.

# Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse or Neglect

Remember: Some children will show no signs.

## Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises, bites, burns
- Faded bruising following a school absence
- Fear of caregiver and/or protests when time to go home
- Physically aggressive with no/little provocation
- Abuses animals/pets

## Sexual Abuse

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Sudden refusal to change in gym class or participate in physical activity
- Developmentally inappropriate sexual knowledge or behavior
- Nightmares and/or bedwetting
- Pregnancy or STI

## Emotional Abuse

- Emotional abuse is the most difficult to identify
- Extreme behavior (overly compliant or demanding, extreme passivity or aggression)
- Displays a level of maturity that is developmentally inappropriate (overly adult-like behavior; overly infantile behavior)
- Attempts suicide

**\*Poverty is not the same as neglect.** Poverty is a lack of necessary resources while neglect is failure to provide needed care when resources are present.

## Neglect

- Frequent school absence
- Begs or steals food or money
- Dirty cloths and poor hygiene
- Clothing is inappropriate for the weather
- States there is no caregiver at home
- Lacks needed medical care such as immunizations, dental care or glasses

## Technology Facilitated Abuse (abuse and exploitation that occurs online)

- Sudden change in social connections/friendships
- Sudden change in personality
- Sudden change in grades
- Becomes secretive
- Unexplained gifts/money including online gifts such as music downloads

## Human Trafficking (including sex trafficking and labor trafficking)

\*When reporting, please specify that you suspect human trafficking

- History or signs of other forms of abuse
- Presence of older “romantic partner”
- Unexplained expensive gifts, clothing or other items
- History of running away
- Drug addiction
- Social withdraw

## Considerations for Children with Disabilities

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Children with disabilities are more at risk for abuse because:

- They may be used to having their body touched without their permission due to a physical need
  - They may lack an understanding about boundaries and privacy
  - They may have impaired ability to communicate creating a barrier to disclosing abuse
  - Children with disabilities are less likely to have been taught about body safety and healthy sexuality
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