

## **Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse**

The University of Georgia is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and to the prompt reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect in alignment with Georgia Law (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5) and university policies for the protection of minors. Under Georgia Law, all UGA employees, students, and volunteers are considered mandatory reporters of child abuse. These guidelines are intended to assist faculty and staff in making appropriate reports themselves and in supporting students and volunteers who need to make reports.

This policy applies to experiential learning that takes place at schools, clinics, or organizations in the community; to on-campus clinics, camps, or classes; and to other situations such as research projects and community screenings in which a UGA employee, student, or volunteer comes into contact with minors. The actions to be taken are determined by the nature of the placement site. Hereafter, these settings are collectively referred to as “placements” or “placement sites,” and UGA faculty, staff, students, and volunteers are referred to as “UGA members.”

For each placement site for which you have responsibility you should:

1. Ensure that all UGA members at the site understand the following:
  - a. The first priority in any situation of suspected child abuse is to take immediate action to protect the safety of the minor.
  - b. The second priority is to make an immediate report to the appropriate authority(ies) as detailed below based on the nature of the placement site.
  - c. Under no circumstances should a UGA member attempt to investigate a suspected child abuse situation him/herself before or after reporting to the appropriate authority.
  - d. If, after following the appropriate protocol below, a UGA member is unable to get in touch with the appropriate authority(ies), does not believe that a report is being taken seriously, or if the suspected abuser is the one to whom a report is to be made, the UGA member should report immediately to DFCS and then within 24 hours to UGA Police and Associate Dean Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett.
  
2. Clearly articulate the reporting protocol based on the nature of the placement site to all UGA members at the site.
  - a. If an off-campus placement site is a legally mandated reporter of child abuse, their reporting protocol supersedes UGA’s protocol. Determine who at the placement site is responsible for making reports to DFCS. For instance, in a public school, the counselor or assistant principal is often the person designated to report all suspected child abuse cases at that school. Ensure that UGA members who are placed at that site know who the designated reporter is and that the responsibility of UGA members, if they become aware of a potential child abuse situation, is to report immediately to that individual (or another official in a position of authority at the site) and to document that the report has been made by contacting their UGA supervisor within 24 hours.

- b. If the placement site is on the UGA campus in a clinic in which the UGA member is performing duties under the direct supervision of a licensed professional (e.g., counselor, school psychologist, speech pathologist), the UGA member should immediately report the suspected abuse to the licensed professional, and then together the UGA member and the licensed professional will follow professional protocols to notify DFCS and UGA Police.
- c. If the placement site is on the UGA campus but not a clinic with licensed professionals or is an off-campus site that is not a legally mandated reporter (such as a community center or public park), then the UGA member should immediately call UGA Police or call 911 to report the suspected abuse. After calling the police, the UGA member should then report to DFCS and their UGA supervisor as soon as possible but always within 24 hours.

The table below summarizes the reporting protocol at each type of placement site:

<b>Where are you?</b>	<b>Report first to</b>	<b>Report next to</b>	<b>Report next to</b>
Off campus site that is a mandatory reporter	Designated reporter at that site	UGA supervisor	
UGA clinic working under a licensed professional	Licensed professional	DFCS with the licensed professional taking the lead	UGA Police
UGA not in a clinic working under a licensed professional	UGA Police	DFCS	UGA supervisor
Off-campus site that is not a mandatory reporter	UGA Police	DFCS	UGA supervisor

- 3. Ensure that UGA members have been appropriately trained in recognizing and reporting child abuse before being placed at the site.
- 4. Ensure that UGA supervisors know that they should forward any reports they receive to Associate Dean Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett.
- 5. Ensure that appropriate information relevant to the duty to report suspected child abuse is contained in a course syllabus, program handbook, clinic assignment paperwork, or other written or electronic documentation provided to all UGA members at a placement site. This information should include phone numbers for DFCS (1-855-GACHILD, 1-855-422-4453) and UGA Police (706-542-2200).