

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Principals, Independent School Headmasters & Education Staff
FROM: Rebecca Holcombe, Ed. D., Secretary of Education
Ken Schatz, Esq., Commissioner, Department for Children and Families
SUBJECT: Mandated Reporting Law
DATE: November 2016

The Agency of Education and Department for Children and Families would like to provide information and support relating to the requirements of Act 1 of 2009 and Act 60 of 2015. You will recall that Act 1 required that all school employees, including non-teaching staff (bus drivers, custodians, food service staff), receive training on the dynamics of sexual abuse and sexual violence. Act 60 also made significant changes to the mandated reporting law.

Both subject areas are addressed in the new online mandated reporting training: *Protecting Vermont’s Children: Reporting Abuse & Neglect* (<https://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1087433>). We encourage you to utilize this resource in your strategic plan for training school staff.

Mandated Reporting

Act 60 made changes to the mandated reporter law that was effective July 1, 2015. The law now provides: **Any mandated reporter who reasonably suspects abuse or neglect of a child shall report in accordance with the provisions of Section 4914 of this Title within 24 hours of the time information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect was first received or observed (33 V.S.A. § 4913(c)).**

Two significant changes of note that were made by Act 60 are:

- The previous standard of “*have reasonable cause to believe*” a child has been abused or neglected is no longer in effect. A report now must be made when a mandated reporter “*reasonably suspects*” abuse and neglect; and
- The individual who suspects abuse or neglect must make a report directly to DCF; it is no longer sufficient to “*cause a report to be made.*”



All mandated reporters have an independent obligation to report to DCF even if they have knowledge that a report of the same suspected abuse or neglect has already been made. DCF offers the following guidance:

Group Reporting: If more than one individual within an organization needs to make a report about the same information or incident, DCF recommends the following course of action for making a group report (*please note that the required 24-hour time limit for making reports applies to both steps below*):

- The person(s) with the most direct knowledge of the allegation should contact the child protection hotline at (800)-649-5285 to make a verbal report; AND
- A written report should be drafted and signed (please print) by everyone with direct knowledge of the information (get the form on-line at mandatedreporters.vt.gov/). Please fax the written report to: (802) 241-3301.

Helpful Links and Resources:

[Agency of Education Technical Assistance and Resource Guide \(TARG\)](http://education.vermont.gov/sexual-health/sexual-violence-prevention)
<http://education.vermont.gov/sexual-health/sexual-violence-prevention>

Commit to Kids DVD and written Step Up to Protect Vermont Kids materials: Contact Priscilla.White@vermont.gov

[Department for Children and Families – Child Abuse Prevention Page:](http://dcf.vermont.gov/prevention)
<http://dcf.vermont.gov/prevention>

[Department for Children and Families - Mandated Reporting:](http://dcf.vermont.gov/protection/reporting/mandated)
<http://dcf.vermont.gov/protection/reporting/mandated>

[Protecting Vermont's Children: Reporting Abuse and Neglect.](https://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1087433)
<https://goto.webcasts.com/starthere.jsp?ei=1087433>

[Vermont Teacher's Guide: Responding to Domestic and Sexual Violence](http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/Resources/VTteachhandbook.pdf)
<http://dcf.vermont.gov/sites/dcf/files/Resources/VTteachhandbook.pdf>

[Vermont Center for Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Abuse:](http://humanservices.vermont.gov/center-for-prevention-and-treatment-of-sexual-abuse)
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