

Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

In furtherance of the commitment of the University of South Alabama to provide a healthy and safe educational environment for all, and in compliance with Alabama law (Ala. Code sec. 26-14-1 *et seq.*), as with all others who are not specifically excepted, all employees (including, but not limited to physicians, nurses, physical therapists, teachers, law enforcement officials, mental health professionals, and social workers) who are called upon to render aid or medical assistance to any child and who know or suspect the child (a person under the age of 18 years) is a victim of child abuse or neglect **are required** by Alabama law “to report, orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, followed by a written report, to a duly constituted authority.” A duly constituted authority, under Alabama law, includes the chief of police of a municipality/county, the sheriff (if the observation is made in an unincorporated territory), the Alabama Department of Human Resources, or any individual or agency designated by the Alabama Department of Human Resources to receive such reports.

Child abuse is defined by Alabama law as “[h]arm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare [that] can occur through nonaccidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse or sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation. ‘Sexual abuse’ includes the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child [by an adult or another child] to engage in, or having a child assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of the conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of the conduct, or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children as those acts are defined by Alabama law. ‘Sexual exploitation’ includes allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution and allowing, permitting, encouraging or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child for commercial purposes.”

Child neglect is defined under Alabama law as “[n]egligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including the failure to provide adequate food, medical treatment, supervision, clothing, or shelter.”

Any person making a good faith report of child abuse or neglect shall not be subject to retaliation by the University or its employees for making the report.

For additional information, please contact Human Resources at (251) 460-6133 or hrrmaincampus@southalabama.edu.