

**Subject: Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect**

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**1. Purpose**

This policy establishes the responsibility of Tidewater Community College (TCC) employees and others who work at the college to report instances of suspected child abuse or neglect in support of TCC’s responsibility to provide a safe environment for children and to comply with relevant state law and the policy of the Virginia Community College System.

**2. Policy**

All TCC [employees](#), as well as the employees of other agencies and contracted services personnel who are assigned to work at the college, who in their official or professional capacity, have reason to suspect that a child is an [abused or neglected child](#), are required to report the matter as soon as possible, but not longer than 24 hours after having reason to suspect a reportable offense of child abuse or neglect.

This requirement is established in the [Code of Virginia § 63.2-1509](#) and [VCCS Policy 3.14.7](#).

### **3. Responsibilities**

The Executive Vice President shall be responsible for maintaining the currency of this policy and for ensuring its compliance with relevant laws and policies of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Virginia Community College System.

### **4. Procedures**

Nothing in these procedures is intended to suggest that reports of violence or the threat of violence should not be reported immediately to appropriate authorities. Any act of violence or immediate threat of violence must be reported immediately by calling 911 and then contacting TCC Security – when in doubt, call 911 and the call taker will evaluate the situation to determine an appropriate response.

#### **4.1. Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

Any employee<sup>1</sup> who, in his/her official or professional capacity, has knowledge or suspects that a child is an abused or neglected child must report the matter within 24 hours of becoming aware of the circumstances. The individual making such a report shall make available any information, records, or reports that document the basis for a report of child abuse or neglect. Such a report will be made to one or more of the following agencies or individuals:

##### **4.1.1. Local Department of Social Services**

- [Chesapeake Division of Social Services](#) - (757) 382-2000
- [Norfolk Department of Human Services](#) - (757) 664-6022 or (800) 552-7096 (24X7)
- [Portsmouth Department of Social Services](#) - (757) 405-1800
- [Suffolk Department of Social Services](#) – (757) 514-7458
- [Virginia Beach Division of Adult & Family Services](#) – (757) 385-3200
- Other Virginia Localities: Contact information may be found at [Local Departments of Social Services](#) or call the Child Abuse Hotline number below.

##### **4.1.2. Virginia Department of Social Services**

Reports may be made to the state's Child Abuse Hotline at 800-552-7096.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless specifically referred to as "TCC employee," the term "employee" in this policy shall be understood to mean employees of TCC as well as those of other agencies and contracted services personnel who are assigned to work at TCC.

#### **4.1.3. TCC Office of Human Resources**

An employee may report the circumstances to TCC's Director of Human Resources at 757-822-1704 or 757-822-1708. The Director will forward the report to the Department of Social Services as soon as feasible.

#### **4.1.4. Employee's Supervisor**

An employee may report knowledge or suspicion of child abuse or neglect to his/her supervisor. The supervisor will forward the report to one of the above listed reporting entities as soon as feasible.

### **4.2. Failure to Report Child Abuse or Neglect**

Any employee who fails to make a report as required by this policy will be subject to appropriate sanctions and penalties.

#### **4.2.1. Personnel Sanctions**

A TCC employee who fails to file or forward a report as required in this policy will be subject to disciplinary action as delineated in Virginia Department of Human Resource Management [Policy 1.60 \(Standards of Conduct\)](#) or [VCCS Policy 3.12 \(Faculty Sanctions\)](#), as appropriate. The sanction imposed will be commensurate with the severity and/or frequency of the offense and may include termination or separation. An employee of another agency or a contractor who fails to file or forward a report as required in this policy will be reported to his/her employer for appropriate disciplinary action. The college reserves the prerogative to advise the other agency or contractor that the employee may no longer work on TCC property.

#### **4.2.2. Legal Penalties**

The [Code of Virginia § 63.2-1509](#) stipulates that any person who fails to file a report as soon as possible, but not longer than 24 hours after having reason to suspect a reportable offense of child abuse or neglect, may be fined not more than \$500 for the first failure and, not less than \$1,000 for any subsequent failures. In cases involving certain crimes of sexual assault, a person who knowingly and intentionally fails to file a report may be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

### **4.3. False Reporting**

Knowingly making a false report of child abuse or neglect is a violation of this policy and of law. A TCC employee who makes or causes to be made such a false report will be subject to appropriate sanctions under the Standards of Conduct Policy or the Faculty Sanctions Policy and may be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. An employee of another agency or of a contractor who knowingly files a false report will be reported to his/her employer for appropriate disciplinary action. The college reserves the prerogative to advise the other agency or contractor that the employee may no longer work on TCC property.

#### 4.4. Communication Plan

Upon initial adoption of this policy and annually at the start of the college's Fall semester, the Executive Vice President will communicate the college's policy on reporting child abuse and neglect to all employees. The communication will be provided to all employees of other agencies or contractors who regularly work at TCC. The Director of Human Resources will ensure that the policy is included in the new employee orientation program. Communications will include the following information:

- definition of child abuse and neglect;
- explanation of employee responsibility;
- where to report suspected abuse or neglect, including specific phone numbers; and
- explanation of the penalties for failing to make a required report.

#### 5. Definitions

**Abused or Neglected Child** [[Code of Virginia §63.2-100](#)]: Any child under 18 years of age whose parent or any person responsible for his or her care:

- Causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury, or allows such an injury;
- Allows a child to be present during the manufacture of a controlled substance or during the unlawful sale of such substance where such activity would constitute a felony violation;
- Neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing or health care;
- Abandons the child;
- Neglects or refuses to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child's age and level of development;
- Knowingly leaves a child alone in the same dwelling with a person, not related by blood or marriage, who has been convicted of an offense against a minor for which registration is required as a violent sexual offender; or
- Commits or allows to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, prostitution or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

**Contracted Service Personnel:** Employees of an independent contractor assigned to work at TCC under a contract wherein the service rendered does not consist primarily of the acquisition of equipment or materials, or the rental of equipment, materials, and supplies. Examples include contracted Security, food services, bookstore, and child care staff.

**TCC Employee:** Any person employed by Tidewater Community College in a full- or part-time capacity (e.g., adjunct faculty, wage staff, and non-credit instructors).

## **6. References**

[Code of Virginia §63.2-100](#)

[Code of Virginia § 63.2-1509](#)

[DHRM Policy 1.60 \(Standards of Conduct\)](#)

[VCCS Policy 3.12 \(Faculty Sanctions\)](#)

[VCCS Policy 3.14.7 \(Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect\)](#)

## **7. Review Periodicity and Responsibility**

The Executive Vice President shall review this policy annually at the anniversary of its approval and, if necessary, recommend revisions.

## **8. Effective Date and Approval**

This policy is effective upon its approval by the College President on October 3, 2013.

Policy Approved:

Procedure Developed:

Edna V. Baehre-Kolovani, Ph.D.  
President

Franklin T. Dunn  
Executive Vice President

## **9. Review and Revision History**

This is the first version of this policy.