



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Children and Families
600 Washington Street, 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02111

DEVAL L. PATRICK
Governor

JOHN W. POLANOWICZ
Secretary

OLGA I. ROCHE
Commissioner

Tel.: 617-748-2000
Fax: 617-261-7435
www.mass.gov/dcf

Updated DCF Abuse/Neglect (51A) Forms for Mandated Reporters

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) recognizes the important role that mandated reporters play in ensuring the safety of the Commonwealth's children.

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 119, §21 defines a mandated reporter as “a person who is: (i) a physician, medical intern, hospital personnel engaged in the examination, care or treatment of persons, medical examiner, psychologist, emergency medical technician, dentist, nurse, chiropractor, podiatrist, optometrist, osteopath, allied mental health and human services professional licensed under section 165 of chapter 112, drug and alcoholism counselor, psychiatrist or clinical social worker; (ii) a public or private school teacher, educational administrator, guidance or family counselor, child care worker, person paid to care for or work with a child in any public or private facility, or home or program funded by the commonwealth or licensed under chapter 15D that provides child care or residential services to children or that provides the services of child care resource and referral agencies, voucher management agencies or family child care systems or child care food programs, licenser of the department of early education and care or school attendance officer; (iii) a probation officer, clerk-magistrate of a district court, parole officer, social worker, foster parent, firefighter, police officer; (iv) a priest, rabbi, clergy member, ordained or licensed minister, leader of any church or religious body, accredited Christian Science practitioner, person performing official duties on behalf of a church or religious body that are recognized as the duties of a priest, rabbi, clergy, ordained or licensed minister, leader of any church or religious body, accredited Christian Science practitioner, or person employed by a church or religious body to supervise, educate, coach, train or counsel a child on a regular basis; (v) in charge of a medical or other public or private institution, school or facility or that person's designated agent; or (vi) the child advocate.” Mandated reporters are individuals, whose work brings them in contact with children and are legally obligated to notify DCF if they suspect that a child is being abused and/or neglected. DCF depends on reports from mandated reporters to learn about children who may need protection.

In an effort to increase the ease of mandated reporters to fulfill their legal obligation to report instances of suspected abuse and/or neglect, DCF has revised its mandated reporter form (“**Report of Child(ren) Alleged to be Suffering from Serious Physical or Emotional Injury by Abuse or Neglect**”). The form includes a reminder that all 51A reports are to be made first by immediately calling the appropriate local area DCF office and then submitting the written report within 48 hours. To increase the ease of reporting, the form has been modified to include the listing of phone numbers

for the area DCF offices, as well as the Child-at-Risk-Hotline that can be used to make reports after 5 PM on weekdays and 24-hours on weekends and holidays.

For additional information on making reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect, please see DCF's "Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting A Guide for Mandated Reporters" available at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dcf/can-mandated-reporters-guide.pdf>.

Thank you for your continued efforts and cooperation as we work together to ensure the safety of children and strengthen the families that we serve.