

Policies of the University of North Texas System Administration	Chapter 02
02.1500 Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect	Administration

Policy Statement. The System Administration is committed to protecting children as vulnerable members of society and in fulfilling the institution’s obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect as required by Texas law.

Application of Policy. All members of the System Administration community, including but not limited to faculty, students, staff and individuals authorized to act on behalf of the System Administration.

Definitions.

1. **Abuse.** “Abuse” means the following acts or omissions by a person:
 - a. Mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child’s growth, development or psychological functioning;
 - b. Causing or permitting a child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the child’s growth, development or psychological functioning;
 - c. Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm;
 - d. Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child;
 - e. Sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of continuous sexual abuse of young child or children, indecency with a child, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault;
 - f. Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child;

- g. Compelling or encouraging a child to engage in sexual conduct, including conduct that constitutes an offense of trafficking of persons, prostitution, or compelling prostitution;
 - h. Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is obscene, or pornographic;
 - i. The current use by a person of a controlled substance in a manner or to the extent that the use results in physical, mental, or emotional injury to a child;
 - j. Causing, expressly permitting, or encouraging a child to use a controlled substance;
 - k. Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing a sexual performance by a child; or
 - l. Knowingly causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing a child to be trafficked in a manner punishable as an offense, or the failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent a child from being trafficked in a manner punishable by law.
2. Campus Law Enforcement. “Campus law enforcement” means any of the law enforcement agencies of the UNTS campuses including the UNT Police Department, the UNTHSC Police Department and the UNT Dallas Police Department.
3. Child. “Child” means a person under 18 years of age.
4. Employee. “Employee” means anyone employed by the System Administration, including staff and faculty and including full and part-time employees. The term includes employees who do not regularly come into contact with minors in the course of their employment. The term does not include independent contractors.
5. Neglect. “Neglect” means:
- a. The leaving of a child in a situation where the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging for necessary care for the child, and the demonstration of an intent not to return by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator of the child; or
 - b. The following acts or omissions by a person:
 - i. Placing a child in or failing to remove a child from a situation that a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and

that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child;

- ii. Failing to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for a child, with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of the child;
 - iii. The failure to provide a child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services had been offered and refused;
 - iv. Placing a child in or failing to remove the child from a situation in which the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of sexual conduct harmful to the child; or
 - v. Placing a child in or failing to remove the child from a situation in which the child would be exposed to acts or omissions that constitute abuse committed against another child; or
- c. The failure by the person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare to permit the child to return to the child's home without arranging for the necessary care for the child after the child has been absent from the home for any reason, including having been in residential placement or having run away.
6. Professional Employee. "Professional employee" means an employee who is certified by the state who, in the normal course of official duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children.
7. Student. "Student" means anyone actively enrolled in at least one SCH (semester credit hour) during a given enrollment term. Student also includes individuals between academic terms that completed the most recent term and registered for the upcoming term.

Procedures and Responsibilities.

1. Reporting Obligations.

- a. An employee or student who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or will be adversely affected by abuse and/or neglect by any person must immediately report their belief to:
 - i. Any local or state law enforcement agency, including campus law enforcement, especially in situations requiring an immediate response; or
 - ii. The Department of Family and Protective Services ("DFPS") or the agency designated by a court as responsible for the protection of children.
- b. A report must be made to DFPS if the suspected child abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the care, custody or welfare of the child.
- c. A professional employee who has cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected or may be abused or neglected, or that a child is the victim of the offense of indecency with a child must make a report not later than 48 hours after the time the professional first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected, or is the victim of child abuse or neglect or the offense of indecency with a child.
- d. An employee or student witnessing, either a child in imminent danger or a crime against a child in progress should immediately call 911 to make a report.
- e. Reporting suspected child abuse or neglect is mandatory and cannot be delegated to another individual or System Administration official. Reporting suspicion to another System Administration officials or employee or to the UNTS Compliance Hotline does not satisfy the reporting requirement.
- f. An individual whose personal communications might otherwise be privileged including an attorney, a medical practitioner, a social worker or a mental health professional must still make a report.
- g. A report must be made in good faith. Confirmed evidence or proof of child abuse or neglect is not required prior to making a report. Uncertainty should be resolved in favor of making a report.
- f. Suspicions must be reported when an individual learns of an allegation regardless of the alleged date of the incident.
- g. An employee or student who makes a good faith report will not be retaliated against for making a report, even if a suspicion is unfounded.

- h. Failure to immediately report suspected child abuse or neglect is a violation of state law and may subject an employee or student to discipline.

Responsible Party: Employees and individuals authorized to act on behalf of the System Administration and students

2. Internal Reporting.

- a. In addition to reporting requirements under this policy, Employees and individuals authorized to act on behalf of the System Administration are required to make an internal report of suspected child abuse or neglect in accordance with System Administration Policy 02.1400, Reporting Suspected Wrongdoing.
- b. While not required under this policy or System Administration Policy 02.1400, Students and other individuals are strongly encouraged to make an internal report of suspected child abuse or neglect engaged in by any person on any of the component campuses of UNTS or on any property owned, leased or controlled by any of the component campuses or UNTS, or while employees or students of UNTS are participating in any activity or event sponsored by the UNT System or a component campus. This report can be made to one of the offices identified to accept reports under System Administration Policy 02.1400 or to the Vice Chancellor and General Counsel after reporting to law enforcement or DFPS.
- b. Upon receiving a report, the Vice Chancellor and General Counsel will take appropriate action in cooperation with DFPS and/or law enforcement and will not take any action which might otherwise compromise a criminal investigation.
- c. Unless waived in writing by the person making the report, the identity of a reporting individual will be confidential and may only be disclosed in accordance with law.

Responsible Party: Employees and individuals authorized to act on behalf of the System Administration; Students and other individuals connected with the System Administration, but who do not fall in the category of an Employee or individual authorized to act on behalf of the System Administration; and Vice Chancellor and General Counsel.

3. Training.

- a. All Professional Employees will be provided training in child abuse prevention techniques and the recognition of sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children and the responsibility and procedure of reporting suspected

occurrence of sexual abuse and other maltreatment. The training must include:

- i. Techniques for reducing a child's risk of sexual abuse or other maltreatment;
- ii. Factors indicating a child is at risk for sexual abuse or other maltreatment;
- iii. The warning signs and symptoms associated with sexual abuse and other maltreatment and recognition of those signs and symptoms;
- iv. The requirements and procedures for reporting suspected sexual abuse or other maltreatment as provided by state law and this policy.

Responsible Party: System Administration Human Resources

References and Cross-references.

Texas Education Code § 51.9761
Texas Family Code, Ch. 261, Sub. Ch. B
Policy 02.1400, Reporting Suspected Wrongdoing
Policy 03.701, Ethics

Forms and Tools.

Texas Abuse Hotline – 1-800-252-5400 available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week
For secure website reporting to DFPS - <https://www.txabusehotline.org>

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