

**Policy Title:** Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Policy

**Applicability:** College-Wide – Administrators, Faculty, Staff, Students, Volunteers, Contracted or Sub-contracted Employees, and external organizations using Providence College facilities for programs that include children

**Oversight Department:** Office of Safety and Security

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Policy is to inform members of the College community and others of their obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

**Effective Date:** November 8, 2012.

### **Policy Statement**

Consistent with the mission of Providence College, suspected child abuse or neglect that occurs on campus must be reported to a designated College official so that adequate and timely steps can be taken, which may include but are not limited to, ensuring safety and the provision of services, policy enforcement, and law enforcement.

### **Policy**

Any College employee, or contracted or sub-contracted employee, student, volunteer, or user of College facilities, who suspects that child abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred on campus must comply with the College's mandate to report the suspected misconduct, immediately, to the Executive Director of Safety and Security (401-865-2391). The report should include all relevant information available to the reporter at the time, including: the date, time, and location of the incident; the date the incident was reported to you; and, the identities and ages of the victim and, if known, the alleged perpetrator(s). If a child is in imminent danger, the witness should call both the Police – 911, and on-campus Security – 401-865-2222, to obtain immediate protection for the child. Depending on the particular circumstances, the reporter may have additional reporting obligations pursuant to Rhode Island law, including the section referenced herein.

Willful failure to report a case of suspected child abuse will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Any person participating in good faith in making a report pursuant to this Policy is protected from retaliation and immune from disciplinary action.

The following sections of Rhode Island law are applicable to this Policy.

#### Definitions:

Section 40-11-2 defines "abused and/or neglected child" as a person under the age of eighteen (18) who is harmed or threatened with harm by a parent or other person responsible for his/her welfare at the time. "Harm" includes but is not limited to physical or mental injury, or a substantial risk of physical or mental injury; it also includes acts of sexual abuse or exploitation, or allowing another to commit acts of sexual abuse or exploitation. Sexual abuse or exploitation

includes the use or coercion of any child to engage in any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction, or the rape, sexual assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation of the child. Serious physical neglect includes any condition that arises from prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development, or impairs the child's functioning. (Definitions in this Section include references to definitions in criminal sections of the Rhode Island General Laws.)

**Duty to Report Child Abuse or Neglect:**

Section 40-11-3(a) states that any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected must make a report to the RI Department of Children, Youth, and Families via the RI Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-RICHILD). This hotline is staffed every day, and all hours of the day and night. Failure to file a report to the child abuse hotline is punishable by imprisonment for not more than one year, or a fine of up to five hundred dollars (\$500), or both. Any person who files such a report in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability.