# PROTECTION OF MINORS

## Policy/Procedure

### Purpose

This policy is designed to educate our community members – faculty, staff, students, volunteers, -- about the state laws and regulations regarding the prevention, identification, and reporting of child abuse. Dickinson College is committed to the protection and safety of minors. While the vast majority of the members of the Dickinson community are adults 18 years of age or older, our community also includes minors less than 18 years of age, both in formal relationship to the College, and more informally, as frequent visitors. For example, minors may be matriculated or prospective students, participants in camp programs, volunteer programs, outreach and enrichment programs or children in our Children’s Center.¹

### Policy

It is the obligation of every member of the College community to report suspected child abuse as soon as possible as outlined below.

### Duty to Report

Every member of the Dickinson Community has a duty to report as soon as possible if he/she has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse based on:

1. Information shared with him/her by the child or any other individual; or
2. His/her own observations or knowledge.

The duty to report is triggered by reasonable suspicion or belief. There is no requirement that there be actual evidence of abuse, nor should any individual seek to investigate the matter for him/herself. Any doubt as to whether or not to report should be resolved in favor of making the report to ensure that the appropriate professionals in child protective services can assess the report and evaluate the safety of the child.

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¹ Nothing in this policy is intended to supersede obligations imposed by law regarding the maintenance of privilege by specified professionals.
Procedure

Under this policy, any Dickinson community member (faculty, staff, students, volunteers) suspecting abuse of a child is required to bring all reasonable suspicions or beliefs to the immediate attention of the appropriate state authorities immediately.

Child Line: 1-800-932-0313

As soon as the report is made, you must next contact the Director of Human Resource Services or the Chief of Public Safety. These individuals, in turn, have the obligation to verify that appropriate authorities have been notified and to coordinate investigations by police or other agencies.

Failure by any member of the Dickinson community to report information related to suspected child abuse as soon as possible to either Child Line or the designated officials will result in discipline up to and including termination for employees and dismissal for students. Failure of these officials to initiate timely notice and timely and appropriate investigation will result in discipline up to and including termination.

Definition of Child Abuse

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. The term "child abuse" shall mean intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following:

(1) Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.

(2) Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.

(3) Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act.

(4) Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act.

(5) Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.

(6) Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act.

(7) Causing serious physical neglect of a child.

(8) Engaging in any of the following recent acts:

   (i) Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
(ii) Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.

(iii) Forcefully shaking a child under one year of age.

(iv) Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age.

(v) Interfering with the breathing of a child.

(vi) Causing a child to be present at a location while a violation of 18 Pa.C.S. § 7508.2 (relating to operation of methamphetamine laboratory) is occurring, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.

(vii) Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the actor knows or reasonably should have known:

(A) Is required to register as a Tier II or Tier III sexual offender under Pennsylvania law, where the victim of the sexual offense was under 18 years of age when the crime was committed.

(B) Has been determined to be a sexually violent predator under Pennsylvania law.

(C) Has been determined to be a sexually violent delinquent child as defined by Pennsylvania law.

(9) Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act.

Child abuse may be committed by any individual, including an employee, student, volunteer, parent, caregiver or other party in the child’s life. The duty to report exists regardless of whether or not the suspected perpetrator is a member of the Dickinson community and regardless of the specific role he/she occupies in the child’s life.

Duty to Report

Pennsylvania law requires that private colleges, including Dickinson College, their employees and persons affiliated with the college, such as students, and volunteers (the Dickinson community), report suspected child abuse. Reports of suspected abuse must be made by members of the Dickinson community to Child Line at 1-800-932-0313. Consistent with this policy, however, it is expected that notice of this report will also be shared as soon as possible with the Director of Human Resource Services and/or the Chief of Public Safety after Child Line has been notified.

Consequences of Abuse

The employment of any college employee who is convicted of a charge related to abuse of a minor will be terminated, whether the abuse occurred on or off campus. Any employee against whom a credible allegation of child abuse has been made as determined by a preponderance of the evidence, on
or off campus, is subject to College discipline up to and including termination. Any Dickinson student who is convicted of a charge related to abuse of a minor will be expelled from the College, whether the abuse occurred on or off campus. Any Dickinson student against whom a credible accusation has been made as determined by a preponderance of the evidence, on or off campus, is subject to discipline up to and including expulsion.

**Related Information**

Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy  
Children’s Center Policies and Procedures

**History/Revision Information**

**Responsible Division/Office:** Office of Human Resource Services  
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**Also Found In:** Student Handbook