

# Policy 238 - Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

It is the policy of Lower Columbia College that all employees report child abuse as described below. The report must be made at first opportunity, and never later than 48 hours after the college employee has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect.

## 238.1 Reporters

Mandatory reporters are Academic, Administrative, Athletic employees and other employees as required by state or federal law, including student employees if applicable, who have reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect. The report must be made to the proper law enforcement agency or the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Contact DSHS at 1-866-ENDHARM (1-866-363-4276). Find common manifestations of child abuse here: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/safety/report-abuse>.

All other employees who have reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect must report the suspected child abuse or neglect immediately to Human Resources via phone, in person, or email. Human Resources must make a report to the proper law enforcement agency or the Department of Social and Health Services.

## 238.2 Elements of the Report

You must report child abuse as described below. You must make the report at the first opportunity and never later than 48 hours after you have reasonable cause to believe a child suffered abuse or neglect.

The report must include as much detail as possible. It must include the identity of the accused if known. Detail includes:

1. The child's name, address, and age.
2. The name and address of the child's parents, stepparents, guardians, or other persons who have custody of the child.
3. The nature and extent of the alleged:
  - a. Injury or injuries.
  - b. Neglect.
  - c. Sexual abuse.
4. Any evidence of previous injuries, including their nature and extent.
5. Any other information that may help to establish the cause of the child's injury, injuries, or death.
6. The identity of the alleged perpetrator(s).

The reporting requirement doesn't apply to the discovery of abuse or neglect that occurred during childhood if it's discovered after the child becomes an adult. However, if there's reasonable cause to believe other children are or may be at risk of abuse or neglect by the accused, the reporting requirement does apply and you must make a report.

## 238.3 Definitions

### Child

- Anyone under age 18.

### Abuse

- Sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or injury of a child by anyone under circumstances that cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety; OR
- The negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or who provides care to the child.

### Abused Child

- A child subjected to child abuse or neglect.

## Allowable Physical Discipline

- Reasonable and moderate physical discipline inflicted by a parent, teacher, or guardian to restrain or correct the child. Any use of force on a child by anyone else is unlawful unless it's:
  - Reasonable and moderate.
  - Authorized in advance by the child's parent or guardian to restrain or correct the child.

## 238.4 Legal Liability

Anyone who takes part in reporting alleged child abuse or neglect in good faith will not have any legal liability that comes from such reporting. If you, in good faith, cooperate in an investigation of a report of child abuse or neglect, you won't be subject to civil liability that comes from your cooperation. If you intentionally and in bad faith knowingly make a false report of alleged abuse or neglect, you will be guilty of a misdemeanor and violating college policy.

## 238.5 More Information

Human Resources receives reports and provides guidance on employees' reporting obligations. Contact the Office of Human Resource Services or call [\(360\) 442-2120](tel:3604422120). Also see [RCW 26.44.030 \(apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=26.44.030\)](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=26.44.030) for more information.

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# Historic Information

- Reviewed - No Changes Needed: July 13, 2022
- Reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team: June 19, 2019
- Adopted: October 25, 2012

# Resources

Resource/Reference/Procedure	Unit Responsibility
<a href="https://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.030">RCW 26.44.030 (apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.030)</a>	Human Resources