

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY
POLICY STATEMENT ON REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

I. Policy Statement

In accordance with Washington State’s Abuse of Children Law ([RCW 26.44](#)), all Seattle University employees, including faculty, staff, administrators, temporary staff, and student employees who have reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect are required to immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or Child Protective Services as specified in this policy.

II. Purpose

Seattle University is committed to the safety of all individuals in its community. The University has particular concern for those who are potentially vulnerable, including children, who require special attention and protection. This policy establishes requirements for the reporting of suspected abuse or neglect of a child, with the goal of promoting the safety and well-being of children and educating mandated reporters about obligations under Washington State law.

All Seattle University faculty, staff, students, and volunteers are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy.

III. Definitions

The following definitions apply to the terms used in this policy:

Child or children means any person or persons under the age of 18.

Child abuse or neglect means sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or injury of a child by any person under circumstances which 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 providing care to, the child.

Negligent treatment or maltreatment means an act or a failure to act, or the cumulative effects of a pattern of conduct, behavior, or inaction that evidences a serious disregard of consequences of such magnitude as to constitute a clear and present danger to a child's health, welfare, or safety.

Sexual exploitation includes:

- Allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution by any person; or
- Allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child by any person.

Reasonable cause means a person witnesses or receives a credible written or oral report alleging abuse, including sexual contact, or neglect of a child.

IV. Child Abuse Reporting Process

1. **Emergencies.** In case of an emergency, one should immediately call Seattle University's Department of Public Safety (DPS) at 206-296-5911 or the Seattle Police Department at 911.
2. **How to Make a Report.** University employees must orally report suspected child abuse or neglect by telephone or otherwise at the first opportunity, but no longer than forty-eight (48) hours after there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has suffered abuse or neglect. There are two alternative ways to make a report:
 - Call Child Protective Services (CPS) at the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) at 1-866-ENDHARM (1-866-363-4276); or
 - Call the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the location of the suspected incident.

Upon request by the law enforcement agency or CPS, the oral report must be followed by a written report.

For suspected child abuse that occurs in a University-run or affiliated program or at a University facility regardless of its location, University employees must also immediately notify one of the following University officials of the suspected abuse:

- Dr. Timothy Leary, Executive Vice President, (206) 296-6160, tleary@seattleu.edu
- Dr. Shane Martin, Provost, (206) 296-2595, martins@seattleu.edu
- Ms. Jill Moffitt, Interim Assistant Vice President for Institutional Equity | Title IX Coordinator | ADA/504 Coordinator, (206) 220-8515, jmoffitt@seattleu.edu

The University official will contact the law enforcement agency or CPS to confirm that it has received a report of the suspected abuse. The University official, in consultation with appropriate senior University leadership, will take immediate steps to prevent further harm to the alleged victim or other children and will facilitate the University's cooperation with any investigation conducted by CPS, Seattle Police or other governmental agency. As appropriate to the circumstances, the University will investigate the report and resolve the matter in a way that safeguards children, protects the interests of victims and reporters, affords fundamental fairness to the accused, and meets relevant legal requirements.

3. **What to Report.** Some or all of the following information may be requested by CPS, law enforcement or the University official when making a report:
 - The name, address, and age of the child;
 - The name and address of the child's parents, stepparents, guardians, or other persons having custody of the child;
 - The description of the alleged injury or injuries;
 - The description of the alleged neglect;

- The description of the alleged sexual abuse;
- Any evidence of previous injuries, including their nature and extent; and
- Any other information that may be helpful in establishing the cause of the child's death, injury, or injuries and the identity of the alleged perpetrator or perpetrators.

4. ***All Other Reports of Known or Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect.*** Volunteers and anyone participating in a University-run or affiliated program or activity involving children or a non-University program or activity operating on campus involving children who knows, suspects, or receives information indicating that a child has been abused or neglected or who has other concerns about the safety of children must inform one of the University officials identified above. Anyone who knows or suspects abuse or neglect of children may also notify law enforcement or CPS as described in section IV of this policy.

V. Retaliation Prohibited

Seattle University prohibits retaliation against any individual who makes a report in accordance with this policy and/or RCW 26.44 or who cooperates with or participates in any investigation of allegations of child abuse or neglect. Retaliation means to take any adverse action against an individual because he or she has acted in accordance with this policy and/or RCW 26.44. The University's Whistleblower Protection Policy protects individuals from retaliation when they make good faith reports about possible violations of university policy or law.

VI. Cooperating in Good Faith

All Seattle University employees, students and volunteers are expected to cooperate fully in any investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect. Under RCW 26.44.060, a person who, in good faith and without gross negligence, cooperates in an investigation arising as a result of a report made pursuant to RCW 26.44, is not subject to civil liability arising out of his or her cooperation. This exemption from civil liability does not apply to a person who caused or allowed the child abuse or neglect to occur.

VII. Enforcement

Sanctions for violations of this reporting policy will depend on the circumstances and the nature of the violation, but may include the full range of available University sanctions applicable to the individual including suspension or dismissal, and where appropriate, exclusion from campus. The University may also take necessary interim actions before determining whether a violation has occurred. The University may terminate relationships or take other appropriate actions against non-University individuals or entities that violate this policy.

Seattle University does not tolerate child abuse or neglect. Suspected perpetrators of child abuse or neglect, including University employees, volunteers, or students, may be subject to arrest and criminal prosecution. Employees, volunteers, or students who engage in child abuse or neglect are also subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment or expulsion from the University or its programs.

VIII. Policy Implementation and Modification

Questions about the interpretation or application of this policy should be raised with the Office of University Counsel. This policy may be modified with the approval of the President to reflect changes in the law, standards relating to the protection of children, or University processes, or as otherwise necessary.

IX. Additional Resources

- Abuse of Children Law, [RCW 26.44](#)
- Department of Children, Youth, and Families, [Report Child Abuse or Neglect](#)
- Department of Social and Health Services, [A Guide for Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect](#)

August 11, 2021