



**BRADLEY HILLS PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

**CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT
PROTECTION POLICY**

**JULY 2015
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SECTION 1 – PURPOSE

As members of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church (BHPC), we are called to create a loving community of faith that strives to ensure the welfare of its participants. Therefore, we are committed to the protection of all children, youth, and vulnerable adults participating in the activities and programs of BHPC. Abuse, exploitation, or harassment in any form – physical, emotional, or sexual – will not be tolerated.

BHPC cannot, nor can any institution or organization, absolutely guarantee that no harm will befall a child or vulnerable adult entrusted to its care. However, BHPC can, through adherence to this policy, create an environment of accountability and trust. BHPC will make every effort to ensure that persons placed in positions of responsibility are persons deserving of that trust and responsibility.

As a community of faith, it is our imperative to create and maintain a safe environment for our children and vulnerable adults. It is within this sanctuary that they will learn and receive trust, respect, and love as individuals and members of the church.

SECTION 2 – DEFINITIONS

Abuse or Misconduct: Any action (or lack of action) by any person (regardless of age) who, by other than accidental means, (1) inflicts, endangers or harms, (2) threatens to inflict, endanger or harm, or (3) allows to be inflicted, endangered or harmed, a child's or vulnerable adult's physical, psychological or emotional health and development.

Abuse occurs in different ways and may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, bullying, etc.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child or vulnerable adult is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing. Other examples include bullying, ignoring, terrorizing, corrupting, constantly criticizing, constantly demeaning, insulting, withholding love, guidance, or support on a sustained basis.
- **Sexual abuse** – any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a child or vulnerable adult is being used for sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. It may be violent or non-violent and includes behaviors that involve touching aspects (including but not limited to fondling, oral, genital and anal penetration, intercourse, and rape) and non-touching aspects (including but not limited to verbal comments, pornographic pictures or videos, obscene electronic communications, e.g., phone call, text messaging, exhibitionism and allowing children to witness sexual activity). For the avoidance of doubt, sexual abuse includes making children or vulnerable adults subjects of pornographic photographs, videos, or files, as well as exposing children to such materials.

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- **Spiritual Abuse** –Any abuse administered under the guise of religion including harassment, humiliation, or any action that leaves children and youth emotionally cut off from the healing love of God. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, the use of Christian doctrine or biblical texts to harm, insult, or belittle a person’s identity as a beloved child of God. Examples might include a transgendered individual being told they will go to Hell based on the authority of a specific Bible passage
- **Neglect** – purposefully depriving a child or vulnerable adult of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, medical care and supervision. This also includes a child left alone in the same dwelling as a person (1) to whom the child is not related by blood, (2) who has a known conviction for an offense against a child, and (3) is required to be registered as a sexual offender under Maryland law.

BHPC: Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church

Child: For purposes of this policy, the terms “child,” “children” or “minors” mean those of less than 18 years of age. Children may also be designated into three categories based on age: **Young Children** (newborn through age 6); **Elementary Children** (persons ages 7 - 11); and **Youth** (persons ages 12 - 18). Additionally any person (regardless of age) that is attending high school shall be a Youth for purposes of this CPP.

Communications: Any communication between a child or vulnerable adult and BHPC staff or volunteer via analog or digital communications (e.g., sharing internet, email, phone, texting, Skype, social network, postal mail, etc.)

CVAPP: This Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

PPC: The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy Committee (PPC) is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The PPC shall include the Pastor/Head of Staff, Associate Pastor(s), the Director of Christian Education, the Chair of Children’s Ministry, the Chair of Youth Ministry, the Director of the Nursery School and the Executive Director of the Friends Club and a representative from the Personnel Lay Ministry (PLM). The PPC shall annually review and update (as needed) the CVAPP.

Employee or Paid Adult: A person who is hired or called to work for BHPC for salary or wages.

Supervision: The direct observation, control, and visual monitoring of activities.

Vulnerable Adult: A person 18 years of age or older, who possesses a physical or mental infirmity or other physical, mental, or emotional dysfunction that impairs the individual’s ability to protect himself or herself from harm or exploitation.

Volunteer: An adult who provides service to BHPC, the BHPC Nursery School, or Friends Club, without monetary compensation and has been cleared by the application and criminal background check process to work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Youth Helper: A person age 12-18 who has undergone training and orientation programs to assist in BHPC-sponsored activities (whether or not conducted on BHPC premises) with Young Children or Elementary Children.

SECTION 3 – ACCOUNTABILITY

The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy Committee, working with Children’s Ministry, Youth Ministry, and the Friends Club, shall assume responsibility for the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. Such responsibility includes supervision and implementation of the policy as well as education and training. In order to create the safest possible environment at BHPC, the following practices will be observed.

Recruitment

1) Screening

- A) The PPC shall require all paid and volunteer adults who are in positions of trust with children or vulnerable adults to complete an application form with criminal background check authorization, read the church’s Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy, and sign a form indicating that they have read the policy and agree to abide by it. Such applications should be completed and signed before persons begin to serve or as soon as possible thereafter. Background checks will be repeated every three years or if the person has left the area for more than two years and then moved back.
- B) The PPC shall use the “Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church Volunteer Application for Work with Children and Vulnerable Adults” form (Appendix A) when evaluating volunteers/applicants, paying attention to the questions concerning criminal offense, child neglect, physical/sexual abuse, sexual harassment or misconduct, viewing adult or child pornography, or misconduct against children or vulnerable adults.
- C) What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children or vulnerable adults will be determined by the PPC in its sole discretion on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Convictions, pending charges and credible allegations of an offense involving children or vulnerable adults and/or for offenses involving violence, indecency, and dishonesty will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children or vulnerable adults. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction or job dismissal on the application form for the aforementioned reasons will also be a disqualifying event.
- D) The appropriate Head of Staff (BHPC, Nursery School, Friends Club), in consultation with the PPC, will contact volunteers/applicants regarding any

perceived problems that would potentially prohibit their work, either in paid or volunteer capacities.

2) Staff and Volunteer Training

- A) The Director of Christian Education, Nursery School Director, and Executive Director of the Friends' Club will be responsible for communication and an explanation of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy which will be provided annually in training and orientation programs to those volunteers and staff who are in positions of trust with children and vulnerable adults.
- B) All BHPC, Nursery School and Friends Club officers will be required annually to review the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy, sign the Acceptance Form (Appendix B – BHPC and Nursery School Acceptance Form and Appendix C – BHPC Friends Club Acceptance Form), and participate in such training and orientation programs as determined by the PPC.

Member Awareness

1) Congregation Outreach

- A) The congregation shall be informed of the CVAPP (and subsequent updates) upon its adoption by the session.
 - B) The CVAPP shall be widely disseminated, especially after updates through any or all of the following channels – newsletter, website, announcements, special presentations/classes, and new member packets.
 - C) A copy of the CVAPP shall be posted in the church library as well as the church office.
- 2) **Compliance.** Upon adoption by the session, the Director of Christian Education together with the PPC shall work to ensure that the policies set forth in this CVAPP are fully implemented.

SECTION 4 – STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND SUPERVISION

Personal Conduct

- 1) Paid and volunteer adults and youth helpers shall not touch or interact with children or vulnerable adults in any way that is intended or could be reasonably construed to be within the meaning of Abuse or Misconduct.
- 2) Care must also be taken that consenting adults or youth do not act in a sexual way during any Church activity.

- 3) Common expressions of affection (hugs), affirmation (pat on the back), support (prayer), or physical caretaking (diapers, etc.) are appropriate as long as respect for others personal wishes about being touched are honored, the expressions are not excessive, and the expressions are not imposed upon another individual.
- 4) Paid and volunteer adults and youth helpers working with children and vulnerable adults are also tasked with guarding the physical and emotional safety of those in their care and to be aware of signs indicating neglect of such person’s well-being.
- 5) Paid and volunteer adults and youth helpers shall follow not only the “letter” of this policy document, but also the “spirit” of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

Supervision

The following safe practices are to be observed to the highest degree possible when working with children and vulnerable adults at BHPC or BHPC sponsored events.

1) **Two-Adult Rule.**

A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), a minimum of two adult helpers will be in attendance at all times for activities and classes for children on church grounds; We do not allow a minor to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity. Exceptions may be made to this rule in counseling and pastoral care situations with the pastors and the Director of Christian Education in which Presbytery guidelines are to be followed, or when professional therapists or medical personnel are working with a child. One adult may accompany children to the bathroom following the guidelines set forth in paragraph 3 below.

B) **Youth Helpers:** For activities and classes for Young Children or Elementary Children, two Youth Helpers that are age 12-14 or one Youth Helper age 15+, may serve as a substitute for one adult helper, meaning that such activities may be staffed with one adult helper and either one or two Youth Helpers (depending on their age), subject, however to the prior approval of the Director of Christian Education. The purpose of this subparagraph (B) is to permit responsible Youth Helpers the opportunity to volunteer and assist with activities held on church grounds without compromising the safety and security of any children (including the Youth Helpers themselves) or vulnerable adults.

2) **Open Classrooms.** Classroom doors without windows shall remain open at all times. Except in an emergency lock-down situation, doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room. The DCE and Nursery School Director should always have physical and visual access to rooms.

3) **Restroom Guidelines.** For the protection of all, adults/youth helpers should never be alone with a Young or Elementary child in a restroom with the door closed and never be in a closed restroom stall with a child of any age. Restroom doors shall remain open during

educational hours. Children six years of age and younger should utilize a classroom restroom if one is available. If a classroom restroom is not available, helpers should escort more than one child to the hallway bathroom.

- 4) **Transportation.** Other than in special circumstances described below, children shall be transported in groups rather than alone. A child’s parent or guardian may give permission for an unaccompanied adult to drive a single child or children in a church-sponsored activity. Parental permission should be obtained in writing (e.g., letter or electronic communications). This policy is not intended to prohibit staff or volunteers from offering a ride home to children in emergency situations. In this situation, the adult leader shall make a reasonable attempt to contact parents prior to providing the ride. If unable to reach parents, he/she will notify another responsible adult of the situation and then may provide a ride home.
- 5) **Classroom Discipline.** All teachers and helpers will adhere to the following PPC Classroom Discipline Guidelines in order to maintain order.
 - A) If a child is behaving inappropriately, the teacher/helper will tell the child specifically what he/she is doing that is not acceptable, and state what the expected behavior is, e.g., “We do not throw blocks. We use blocks for building.” If this is not effective the child should be guided to another activity.
 - B) If inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be placed in an area in the classroom where he/she will play alone, away from the other students for a brief period of time.
 - C) If the child’s disruptive behavior continues after these steps have been taken, a teacher or helper will notify the Director of Christian Education, who will talk with the child and work with the child’s parents.
- 6) **Off-Campus Events.** BHPC shall, when possible, uphold a “one adult to seven children of the same gender” ratio for overnight trips (and for on-campus overnight events).
 - A) In no circumstance is one adult (other than the parent or guardian) to take a child or children on an overnight outing alone.
 - B) Male and female youth will sleep in separate rooms. Female staff will supervise female minors in their sleeping quarters and male staff will supervise male minors in separate sleeping quarters. In situations where all youth are sleeping in one large room, male and female sleeping areas will be kept separate. In no circumstance is one adult (other than the parent or guardian of that child) permitted to be in separate sleeping quarters with one child.
 - C) Spouses or legally bound couples may not be the sole supervisors for an overnight activity.

- 7) **Gifts.** Because gift-giving can be a form of “buying” silence or loyalty, gift-giving must be done on a group basis and for specific occasions only (e.g., baptism, 3rd grade bibles, confirmation, graduation). Any adult wanting to provide a gift to an individual child must obtain permission from the child’s parent and the Director of Christian Education.
- 8) **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities.** To help ensure that young and elementary-age children remain properly supervised, teachers will only release a Young Child or Elementary Child to his/her parent, guardian, or person with written consent to pick up said child. A parent or guardian must promptly pick up his/her Young Child or Elementary Child following any Church sponsored activity, including classes and activities that are held during worship services (e.g., before refreshments).
- 9) **Protecting Children from Harmful Internet Communications** -- To help protect children from pornography on the internet, the PPC will be responsible for reviewing BHPC’s practices to determine whether such technologies are being implemented in accordance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act and make any necessary improvements to bring such technologies and practices into compliance.
- 10) **Classroom Visitors.** While occasional visitors, such as parents considering the church or out of town relatives, are welcome, the Director of Christian Education needs to be informed prior to the visit.

SECTION 5 – REPORTING OF ABUSE OR MISCONDUCT; RECORDKEEPING

Reporting Obligations

- 1) Whenever there is an instance or suspicion that abuse or sexual misconduct toward or against a child may have occurred or may be occurring, it must be reported to the appropriate legal and church authorities. Everyone shall comply with Maryland’s law as to reporting, and a report shall be made immediately to Child Protective Services and the appropriate head of staff (BHPC, Nursery School, or Friends Club). The PPC shall receive a report with names withheld. An Incident Report Form (see Appendix D) will be filed confidentially with the Head of Staff.
- 2) Paid and volunteer adults and youth helpers who have reason to believe that Abuse or Misconduct as defined by this policy is occurring or has occurred on BHPC premises, at any sponsored activity, and/or with respect to any child or vulnerable adult under supervision (i.e., whether or not such activity occurred on BHPC premises or at a BHPC sponsored activity) shall, within 48 hours, report such information to one or more of the following: the Pastor/Head of Staff, Associate Pastor(s), the Director of Christian Education the Director of the Nursery School, or the Director of the Friends Club as appropriate. They may also report directly to local law enforcement. The Pastor/Head of Staff or such other individual as determined by the PPC shall report such allegations to local law enforcement agencies as required by Maryland law and to the parents and/or guardian of the child or vulnerable adult involved (unless it is the parent and/or guardian who are suspected of abuse or misconduct), shall comply with the recordkeeping

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requirements set forth below, and shall take such further action as determined by the PPC to ensure the welfare of children and vulnerable adults entrusted in the care of the church. See Appendix E: Maryland Law for reporting requirements to local law enforcement agencies.

- 2) In addition to the above notifications, if the alleged offender is an ordained clergy member, the PPC shall make a report to the Clerk of Session, who will notify the Stated Clerk of the National Capital Presbytery as required in the Presbytery's Sexual Misconduct Policy.
- 3) Anyone with a concern about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult is encouraged to report that concern to a member of the PPC.
- 4) This Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy is not intended to relieve or otherwise supersede any of the following reporting obligations:

- The mandatory reporting obligations set forth in the Book of Order imposed on members of BHPC in ordered ministry and certified Christian educators employed by BHPC or its congregations:

G-4.0302 Mandatory Reporting

Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

- Any reporting obligations under Maryland law imposed on health practitioners, professional educators, human service workers, police officers, and such other professionals if notification does not violate privilege or confidentiality to report suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate Maryland authorities (currently, the Department of Health & Human Services and/or the Montgomery County Police Department).
- 5) Upon the reporting of any Abuse or Misconduct, the CVAPP will determine whether competent outside legal counsel should be engaged by BHPC to ensure that BHPC complies with its legal obligations with respect to such incident, whether or not included in this CVAPP.

Recordkeeping

- 1) Reports of allegations of Abuse or Misconduct should never be taken lightly or disregarded and allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the victim, the accused, and the church. Reports of allegations should be dealt with as matters of highest

confidentiality, both before and after they have been submitted to appropriate authorities as outlined herein.

- 2) Upon being informed of an incident of Abuse or Misconduct and as part of its reporting obligations, the PPC shall make a record of such incident to memorialize such event, and thereafter record the actions taken by the CVAPP and BHPC with respect thereto. All such records shall be confidential and made available to the appropriate authorities on request.
- 3) Without intending to limit the information to be included in any such record, at a minimum such record shall include the following:
 - i. A description of the incident as reported, including first and last name(s), age(s), relationship(s), date(s), time(s) and location(s).
 - ii. A description of any action taken at the time of the incident.
 - iii. The name(s) of the person(s) reporting the incident
 - iv. Steps taken by the CVAPP in complying with the requirements of this CVAPP, including the dates that such incidents were reported to the parent/guardian and/or appropriate authorities, as applicable
 - v. Any additional information deemed necessary by the CVAPP with respect to such incident.

SECTION 6 – ANNUAL POLICY REVIEW

The PPC shall review and make revisions to the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy as necessary on an annual basis.

Approved by Session: _____

APPENDIX A – VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

**Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church - Volunteer Application
for Work with Children, Youth, and/or Vulnerable Adults**

THIS APPLICATION IS A CONFIDENTIAL AND MANDATORY PART OF A PROCESS TO HELP THE CHURCH PROVIDE A SAFE, NURTURING ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND VULNERABLE ADULTS. PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUPERVISION AND CARE OF SUCH INDIVIDUALS ARE IN A SPECIAL POSITION OF TRUST AND CONFIDENCE.

THEREFORE, PERSONS WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS MUST COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

FULL NAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE # (H) _____ (W) _____ (C) _____

EMAIL: _____

STATES WHERE YOU HAVE RESIDED FOR THE LAST SEVEN YEARS: _____

- 1. ARE YOU 18 YEARS OR OLDER? YES NO
- 2. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OR CHARGED WITH ANY CRIMINAL OFFENSE (EXCLUDING PARKING TICKETS?) YES NO
- 3. HAVE YOU PLEADED GUILTY OR NO CONTEST TO ANY CRIMINAL OFFENSE? YES NO
- 4. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CHARGED WITH OR CONVICTED OF CHILD NEGLECT OR PHYSICAL/SEXUAL ABUSE INVOLVING CHILDREN OR ADULTS? YES NO
- 5. HAVE YOU PLEADED GUILTY OR NO CONTEST TO ANY NEGLECT OR ABUSE OFFENSE? YES NO
- 6. HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS OR ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT INVOLVING CHILDREN OR ADULT EVER BEEN MADE AGAINST YOU? YES NO
- 7. HAVE YOU EVER LEFT OR BEEN ASKED TO LEAVE A VOLUNTEER OR PAID POSITION BECAUSE OF CHARGES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT? YES NO
- 8. HAVE YOU EVER LEFT OR BEEN ASKED TO LEAVE A VOLUNTEER OR PAID POSITION BECAUSE OF VIEWING ADULT OR CHILD PORNOGRAPHY? YES NO

IF ANSWER IS YES FOR QUESTIONS 2-8, PLEASE EXPLAIN:

I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION THAT I HAVE PROVIDED IS TRUE AND CORRECT. IF IT IS FOUND THAT THE ANSWERS GIVEN ARE UNTRUE, I UNDERSTAND IT MAY BE GROUNDS FOR DISQUALIFICATION FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE. I ALSO AUTHORIZE BRADLEY HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO CONDUCT A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

**APPENDIX B – CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY
ACCEPTANCE FORM**

**Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church
Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy Acceptance Form**

I, _____, accept the responsibility to nurture the Christian faith and well-being of the children, youth, and vulnerable adults of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church community, and to care for them as Christ cares for me.

“I...will tend the flock of God that is in my charge, exercising the oversight ... willingly, as God would have me do it ... (I Peter 5:2).

I have read the Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and I agree to abide by it. I hereby affirm that I have not been charged with, been convicted of, or left a paid or volunteer position for reasons related to criminal offense, child neglect, physical/sexual abuse, sexual harassment or misconduct, viewing adult or child pornography, or misconduct against children. I further affirm that I am not a registered sex offender.

Volunteer/Staff/Applicant’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

**APPENDIX C –VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY ACCEPTANCE
FORM**

**Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church Friends Club
Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy Acceptance Form**

I, _____, accept the responsibility to nurture the vulnerable adults of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church Friends Club.

I have read the Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and I agree to abide by it. I hereby affirm that I have not been charged with, been convicted of, or left a paid or volunteer position for reasons related to criminal offense, child neglect, physical/sexual abuse, sexual harassment or misconduct, viewing adult or child pornography, or misconduct against children. I further affirm that I am not a registered sex offender.

Volunteer/Staff/Applicant’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D – INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Confidential

Incident Report Form

This form should be completed to report any concerns regarding suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect. This form is considered CONFIDENTIAL and should be submitted immediately to the appropriate head of staff: Pastor or Associate Pastor, Director of Nursery School, or Director of Friends Club. At no time will this report be delayed to gain additional details. Confidential reports will not be copied except at the direction of the appropriate head of staff. All reports are considered to be confidential unless reduced to non-confidential by the Head of Staff.

All staff and adults volunteers are required by BHPC and by law to report any situation which present a clear instance or suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. The allegation may be against a pastor, staff member, or volunteer, or it may be against a person outside of these groups. If a concern is expressed or an allegation is made against any person involved in the reporting process, that person shall be omitted from the reporting process.

1. Describe the incident(s) as reported, including first and last name(s), ages, relationship(s), date(s), time(s), and location(s):

2. Was any action taken at the time of the incident(s)? If so, please explain:

3. Additional information:

BHPC representative filling out this form Signature Date of Report

Name of person(s) reporting incident Signature Phone

Disposition:

APPENDIX E – MARYLAND LAW REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

§ 5-704. Reporting of abuse or neglect -- By health practitioner, police officer, educator, or human service worker

(a) In general. -- Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including any law on privileged communications, each health practitioner, police officer, educator, or human service worker, acting in a professional capacity in this State:

(1) who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, shall notify the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency; and

(2) if acting as a staff member of a hospital, public health agency, child care institution, juvenile detention center, school, or similar institution, shall immediately notify and give all information required by this section to the head of the institution or the designee of the head.

(b) Oral and written reports; cooperation among departments and agencies. --

(1) An individual who notifies the appropriate authorities under subsection (a) of this section shall make:

(i) an oral report, by telephone or direct communication, as soon as possible to the local department or appropriate law enforcement agency; and

(ii) a written report:

1. to the local department not later than 48 hours after the contact, examination, attention, or treatment that caused the individual to believe that the child had been subjected to abuse or neglect; and

2. with a copy to the local State's Attorney.

(2) (i) An agency to which an oral report of suspected abuse or neglect is made under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall immediately notify the other agency.

(ii) This paragraph does not prohibit a local department and an appropriate law enforcement agency from agreeing to cooperative arrangements.

(c) Contents of report. -- Insofar as is reasonably possible, an individual who makes a report under this section shall include in the report the following information:

(1) the name, age, and home address of the child;

(2) the name and home address of the child's parent or other person who is responsible for the child's care;

(3) the whereabouts of the child;

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(4) the nature and extent of the abuse or neglect of the child, including any evidence or information available to the reporter concerning possible previous instances of abuse or neglect; and

(5) any other information that would help to determine:

(i) the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect; and

(ii) the identity of any individual responsible for the abuse or neglect.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES: 240-777-4417; FAX 240-777-4258