



Illinois Department of Children and Family (DCFS) Mandated Reporting as it relates to candidates in UIC Education and School Service Personnel programs

Who is legally considered a mandated reporter as defined by the Illinois Administrative Code (89 Ill. Adm. Code 300.20–2009)?

Illinois mandated reporters include “Child Care Workers” defined as any person employed to work directly with children in the course of their professional duties. “Child” means any person under the age of 18 years, unless legally emancipated by reason of marriage or entry into a branch of the United States armed services. “School personnel” are included in the list of such professionals who are mandated reporters; included in school personnel are those employed by a school, district, or agency to serve in the role of, for example, teacher, principal, school counselor, school nurse, school social worker, assistant principal, truant officer, and school psychologist. Also included in the legal definition of mandated reporters is anyone currently enrolled in an academic program that leads to a position as a child care worker*.

What are the responsibilities and liabilities of mandated reporting?

Mandated reporters are obligated and liable under the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting *Act 325 ILCS 5/1 et seq 2004* to help protect the children of Illinois from neglect or abuse. This means that mandated reporters are required and agree to report or cause a report to be made whenever there is reasonable cause to believe a child with whom they have contact in their professional capacity may be abused or neglected. This may be based on specific evidence or reasonable suspicion. Protecting the children from abuse or neglect is a serious responsibility and failure to do so by a mandated reporter may result in being charged with a Class A misdemeanor.

What is abuse or neglect?

Guidelines for such are on the DCFS web page: http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/FAQ/faq_faq_can.shtml

The web page contains information provided by DCFS describing the nature of neglect and abuse. It also differentiates between the role of the general public who may or may not choose to act as a good citizen and report what is observed or suspected to DCFS, versus the role of *official mandated reporter who has legal responsibility and can be held liable for not reporting to DCFS*.

* UIC Candidate’s role in the mandated reporting process

Any UIC candidate in education and school service personnel programs are considered state mandated reporters. As such, and in an effort to protect the children of Illinois from abuse and neglect, such candidates are legally responsible for reporting evidence or reasonable suspicion of neglect and abuse. The UIC candidate has the following responsibilities:

- To familiarize himself or herself with the DCFS description of neglect and abuse;
- Be alert to what may potentially be neglect or abuse of any child with whom they are working in any of their assignments at the host school or agency;
- Be required to report any evidence or suspicion of abuse or neglect to DCFS.
- Seek to gain a better understanding of how to handle such situations by requesting the opportunity to meet and discuss each case with the cooperating teacher and UIC field instructor. This will enable the UIC student to begin to gain the professional experience and perspective necessary to become an effective mandated reporter and to learn to discern what to report and when to report it. With this system in place, DCFS is more likely to receive the relevant information in order to best protect the children.

Online training for mandated reporters

As a legally mandated reporter, any candidate who wants to better understand what is required may visit the DCFS website and participate in the on-line training offered at: <https://www.dcfstraining.org/manrep/index.jsp>

This **training includes** (a Certificate of Completion which **must** be printed at time of completion)

1. A pre-training assessment (13 multiple-choice questions)
2. 60-90 minutes of self-paced interactive training
3. A post-training assessment (13 multiple-choice questions)

What if a host site requests candidate to sign a DCFS or other form accepting responsibility?

UIC candidate should sign the DCFS form or any district waiver accepting responsibility as a mandated reporter. The candidate may submit a copy of that signed form or a copy of the DCFS training certificate of completion to the CTE for his or her file but definitely should retain a signed copy for his or her personal records as the request for any evidence will be directly between the district and the candidate.

In summary, protecting the children of Illinois from abuse or neglect is a serious responsibility that extends to all pre-service teachers and other school service personnel who are considered mandated reporters. Failure to report evidence or suspicion of neglect or abuse by a mandated reporter may result in being charged with a Class A misdemeanor.