



Eastern Florida State College

Vulnerable Persons Act

Protecting Children is Everyone's Job.

House Bill 1355 by Representative Chris Dorworth and its companion bill, Senate Bill 1816 by Senator Lizbeth Benacquisto were filed during the state legislative session following the child sexual abuse scandal that rocked Pennsylvania State University. PSU officials and administrators were made aware of serious and on-going sexual abuse of children perpetrated by one of the assistant coaches, spanning years and failed to report the suspected child abuse, thus allowing it to continue against many victims. As a result, as of October 2012, Florida law includes a provision that requires college administrators to report known or suspected child abuse, abandonment, or neglect committed on College property or at College events or functions. The law now mandates a **\$1,000,000 fine for each failure to report**, applying to both institutional administrators and the institution's law enforcement agency,

What Does This Law Mean to You?

College personnel must notify the Florida Department of Children and Families when there is credible evidence that a minor:

- Is being abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or another person responsible for minor;
- Is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision;
- Is being abused by an adult other than a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or another person responsible for the minor's welfare;
- Is the victim of childhood sexual abuse or the victim of a known or suspected juvenile sexual offender.

At Eastern Florida State College we have daily contact with children who are dually enrolled as students in college courses, who are participating in college activities, and who are otherwise present on our campuses at college activities. This law requires that we all have a heightened awareness for the welfare of these children. (See Procedures 806.11 and 800.13)

Frequently Asked Questions.

Q: *What is child abuse, abandonment, or neglect?*

A: "Abuse" means any willful act or threatened act that results in any physical, mental, or sexual injury or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired. This includes both affirmative acts and omissions to act.

"Abandoned" or "abandonment" means a situation in which the parent or legal custodian of a child or, in the absence of a parent or legal custodian, the caregiver, while being able, makes no provision for the child's support and has failed to establish or maintain a substantial and positive relationship with the child.

"Neglect" occurs when a child is deprived of, or is allowed to be deprived of, necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment or a child is permitted to live in an environment when such deprivation or environment causes the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired or to be in danger of being significantly impaired.

Q: *What is the legal definition of a "child"?*

A: A child is a person under the age of 18 years of age who has not been emancipated by court order.

Q: *For Florida colleges, does the new law just impose a reporting requirement on college administrators?*

A: Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare as defined in this chapter, or that a child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision and care shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the department in the manner prescribed in subsection (2) per FS 39.201(1)(a).

Q: *To whom is this report to be made?*

A: The required report is made to the Florida Department of Children and Families through a Web report to <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us> or by FAX or phone call (including TTY) to the Florida Abuse Hotline. See *Important Phone Numbers* below.

Once your report is filed you will receive a confirmation number which must be sent to the AVP of Human Resources.

Q: *What if I am unsure if I have seen evidence of child abuse or neglect.*

A: If you suspect that you are witnessing evidence of child abuse or neglect you should talk with your supervisor immediately and you or your supervisor should immediately contact your campus Provost or the respective Vice President. All persons with knowledge of the abuse must make the report to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCF) via phone or web, which are the preferred methods of reporting. Eastern Florida State College has a zero-tolerance policy for the failure on the part of any College employee to timely report child abuse, abandonment or neglect committed on College property or at College events or functions to the appropriate authorities. See Procedures 800.13 and 806.11.

We all need to be committed to protecting vulnerable persons within our environment and at our activities and functions here at Eastern Florida State College.

Important Phone Numbers:

Florida Abuse Hotline	800-962-2873
Florida Abuse Hotline TTY	800-955-8771 or Florida Relay 711
Florida Abuse Hotline FAX	800-914-0004
Collegewide Phone Number	321-632-1111
Title IX Compliance Office	433-5775
Cocoa Campus Provost	433-7060
Melbourne Campus Provost	433-5502
Palm Bay Campus Provost	433-5150
Titusville Campus Provost	433-5078
VP Academic Affairs / CLO	433-7380
VP Financial & Technical Services	433-7090
Human Resources	433-7084

Security Services Emergency Numbers:

Cocoa Campus	Office 433-7086; 24/7: 403-5907
Melbourne Campus	Office 433-5586; 24/7: 403-5909
Titusville Campus	Office 433-5086; 24/7: 403-4200
Palm Bay Campus	Office 433-5286; 24/7: 403-5911



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www.easternflorida.edu

Eastern Florida State College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate and associate degrees, as well as specialized certificate programs. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Eastern Florida State College.