



# IN BRIEF: LA. R.S. 14:403 & CHILDREN'S CODE ARTS. 603, 609, 610

## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

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### Mandatory Reporters

- *Health practitioners; mental health/social service practitioners;* members of the clergy; police officers/law enforcement officials; commercial film and photographic print processors; Children's Code-appointed mediators; appointed parenting coordinators; court-appointed special advocates; and
  - *Teaching or child care providers:* any person who provides or assists in the teaching, training, and supervision of a child – including but not limited to:
    - Any public or private teacher, teacher's aide, instructional aide, school principal, school staff member, bus driver, coach, professor, technical or vocational instructor, technical or vocational school staff member, college or university administrator, college or university staff member, social worker, probation officer, foster home parent, group home or other child care institutional staff member, personnel of residential home facilities, a licensed or unlicensed day care provider, or any individual who provides such services to a child in a voluntary or professional capacity.
  - *Organizational or youth activity provider:* any person who provides organized activities for children, including administrators, employees, or volunteers of any day camp, summer camp, youth center, or youth recreation programs or any other organization that provides organized activities for children.

### Suspected Abuse Reporting Requirements

All *mandatory reporters* are required to report to the proper authorities instances in which they have reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect, or that abuse or neglect was a contributing factor in a child's death.

- Failure to report (or knowingly filing false reports) can result in fines and criminal prosecution (including imprisonment).
- *Anyone* who is 18 years old or over who *witnesses* the sexual abuse of a child must report the abuse – if not, then that witness will be subject to fines and criminal prosecution.

### Reporting Procedure

Immediately report abuse directly to the Dept. of Children & Family Services' Child Protection Hotline (<http://www.dss.louisiana.gov/> or 1-855-4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437) toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week) when the abuser is believed to be:

- The child's parent/caretaker
- A person dating the child's parent/caretaker
- A person living with the child's parent/caretaker (living as a spouse whether married or not)

Immediately report abuse to a *local or state law enforcement agency* when the abuser is someone other than the child's parent/caretaker, a person dating the child's parent/caretaker, or a person living with the child's parent/caretaker AND the parent/caretaker is not believed to have any responsibility for the abuse or neglect of the child.

- Dual reporting to both the Dept. of Children & Family Services' Hotline *and* a local/state law enforcement agency is permitted.

## More Information

- R.S. 14.403: <http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/Law.aspx?d=78520>
- Children's Code Article 603: <http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/law.aspx?d=73195>
- Children's Code Article 609: <http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/law.aspx?d=73201>
- Children's Code Article 610: <http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/law.aspx?d=73202>

**Please note:** LAPCS In Briefs are merely reference guides that summarize the law and are not legal advice. LAPCS strongly encourages all charter schools to read laws and policies in full and to always check with your school's attorney and authorizer.

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