

Making a Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Who must report?

- Any person whose profession brings them into contact with minors under the age of 18 is legally mandated to report signs of suspected abuse or neglect to civil authorities.
- Any non-professional, though not legally mandated, who is aware of abuse of a minor should also report their suspicion of abuse to civil authorities.

What must be reported?

- Any suspected physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of a minor who is under the age of 18.

Where should reports be made?

- Reports are to be made to local civil authorities (Department of Human Resources or local law enforcement). A listing of local DHR or law enforcement agencies by county can be found on the Office for the Protection of Minors and Adults website, www.protection.mobarch.org.
- If the report involves a member of the clergy, Archdiocesan employee or lay volunteer, please notify the Archdiocese of Mobile by contacting the Office for the Protection of Minors and Adults at 251-434-1559.

What if the incident happened a long time ago?

- There are no statutes of limitations for sexual abuse occurring after January 1, 1985. All cases of sexual abuse involving minors must be reported to civil authorities.
- If the victim was sexually abused and is now an adult, encourage the adult victim to make a report to civil authorities, as the perpetrator might still be active.
- Additionally, if the accused is a member of the clergy or an employee of the Archdiocese make a report to the Office for the Protection of Minors and Adults at 251-434-1559.

What if?

- If you are not sure it happened, report anyway. It is the job of the civil authorities to investigate and confirm. It is better to err on the side of caution.

Is the reporter protected?

- Yes. Alabama law provides civil and criminal immunity to those, who in good faith, report suspected child abuse.