

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

### 1. PURPOSE

To outline the policy of Marion Soccer, Inc. (MSI) for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.

### 2. SCOPE

This will apply to any member representing MSI including but not limited to Referees, Coaches, Board members, Trainers, and other affiliated partners.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has the primary responsibility of protecting children through the investigation of suspected abuse or neglect by parents and other caregivers in a position of trust or authority over the child.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Child abuse** is the mistreatment of a child under the age of 18 by:

- A parent or their romantic partner;
- An immediate relative or someone living in their home;
- A caretaker such as a babysitter or daycare worker; or
- Any person responsible for the child's welfare, such as a health care provider, educator, coach or youth program volunteer.
- The mistreatment can either result in injury or put the child at serious risk of injury. Child abuse can be physical (i.e. bruises or broken bones), sexual (i.e. fondling or incest), or mental (emotional injury or psychological illness).

**Neglect** is the failure of a parent or caretaker to meet "minimal parenting" standards for providing adequate supervision, food, clothing, medical care, shelter or other basic needs.

#### Common Questions:

#### 1. What if I'm not absolutely sure abuse is occurring?

- a. Unfortunately, as much as 70 percent of child abuse goes unreported, and a child tells an average of seven adults that they are being abused or neglected before a report is made. Every delay in reporting suspected abuse or neglect increases the likelihood that abuse will become more serious, or even deadly, and that the perpetrator will abuse additional children. By trusting your own senses, common sense and instincts, and calling the hotline whenever you suspect a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, you can ensure a child is safe and that her family is getting the help they need.
- b. To prevent unnecessary investigations, hotline calls are screened by trained social workers to determine whether they warrant investigation for abuse or neglect. Of the more than one million hotline calls received over the past four years, only about one in four resulted in a formal report and an investigation. Many of the calls that do not lead to investigations are

often directed to referrals that connect families with community-based programs aimed at preventing abuse. When formal investigations do occur, only four percent result in children being removed from their homes.

- c. In most cases where abuse or neglect are indicated, DCFS is able to provide services to the family that allow the child to remain in the home safely, provided the abuse or neglect is reported to the department soon enough to intervene.

**2. Will my call be confidential?**

- a. State law protects the confidentiality of all reporters, and your name is never disclosed. You may still choose to make a report anonymously, but the inability of investigators to follow-up with you to obtain additional information may impede our investigation and the child's safety. The law protects you from civil liability for any call made in good faith.

**4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Any member representing MSI including but not limited to Referees, Coaches, Board members, Trainers, and other affiliated partners should follow this policy when they suspect child abuse or neglect.

**5. SPECIFIC PROCEDURE**

- If you believe a child is in immediate danger of harm, call 911 first.
- If you suspect a child has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed by abuse or neglect, call the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline at **1-800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873)**, or TTY 1-800-358-5117.

**6. FORMS/TEMPLATES TO BE USED**

N/A

**7. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REFERENCES**

MSI Policy "Complaints – Investigations – Discipline"

DCFS website: <https://www.illinois.gov/dcfs/safekids/reporting/Pages/index.aspx>