



## Tennessee Department of Children's Services

### Protocol for Child Abuse Referrals Against DCS Staff

**Supplemental to DCS Policies: 4.9, Employee Disciplinary Actions and Mediation Process, 14.1, Child Abuse Hotline, 14.10, Special Investigations Unit Child Protective Services Investigations**

All Tennessee citizens, including Department of Children's Services (DCS) staff, are mandated reporters. If a DCS employee receives a verbal/written report from any individual that another DCS employee committed an act of child abuse or neglect, that employee is required to immediately make a referral to the Hotline, where it will be assessed and screened. Staff are not to make presumptions about the validity of the referral prior to calling the Hotline.

When the Child Abuse Hotline receives a referral of abuse or neglect committed by a DCS employee, CAH staff will immediately notify the Hotline Director. The Hotline Director will review the referral to ensure that the screening decision is correct prior to submission or screen out. If screened in, the referral will be assigned to the Special Investigations Unit (SIU). The Hotline Director will notify the Office of Child Safety (OCS) Deputy Commissioner and the SIU Director via email for notification purposes.

If the referral does not meet criteria for assignment per DCS screening policies, the Hotline Director will send the referral for review to the OCS Deputy Commissioner (or Designee) and SIU Director to confirm the screen out decision. The decision to screen out the referral must be approved by the SIU Regional Director and the Executive Director. If the referral is screened out, the Hotline Director will refer the referral to the Regional Director over the employee's program area to address as deemed necessary.

The OCS Deputy Commissioner will notify the Commissioner, the Human Resources (HR) Director, and the Deputy/Assistant Commissioner of the program area of the reported staff and a decision will be made whether the situation warrants an Internal Affairs (IA) investigation and whether the reported staff should be reassigned to administrative duty.

If the decision is made to refer to IA, the HR Director will assign it.

If it is not assigned to IA, the OCS Deputy Commissioner will notify the Director over SIU to monitor the case to closure.

The OCS Deputy Commissioner will be notified of the classification of the investigation and case closure.

**Effective Date: 12/23**

**Supersedes: 05/29/20**

**Supplemental to: 4.9, 14.1, 14.10**

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The OCS Deputy Commissioner will notify the Commissioner and the Deputy/Assistant Commissioner of the reported staff of the classification and closure of the case.

In some cases, it will not be discovered until after the report is assigned that the alleged perpetrator is a DCS employee, so the report will initially be handled according to regular Hotline procedure. If the responding Case Manager discovers after being assigned the case that the referral is against a DCS employee, the responding Case Manager will notify their team leader, who will transfer the case to SIU.

SIU will then notify the OCS Deputy Commissioner and the above protocol will be followed.

In the event a referral is received and said referral does not identify the alleged perpetrator as a DCS employee, it will be handled according to regular Hotline procedure. If the referral is screened out, no action can be taken. However, the report will remain as history in SCWIS/CWIS in the event that another referral is received on the DCS employee.

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**RDA SW22**  
**CS-0001**