**Northbrook United Methodist Church**

**Mandatory Reporting Form for Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

By law in the State of Georgia, any suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported to the Department of Family and Children’s Services or DFCS [OCGA 19-7-5(c)(1)]. While there is a legal obligation to report suspected abuse or neglect, we also believe there is a moral responsibility to prevent it whenever possible.

A report must be made within 24 hours of the discovery of suspected abuse or neglect:

* By phone 1-855-GACHILD (1-855-422-4453)
* Or online at <https://cps.dhs.ga.gov/Main/Default.aspx>

If the child is in immediate danger, report to law enforcement (911).

A person should report if they have “reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused.” Always err on the side of reporting. Suspicions alone are enough of a reason, even if there is no direct evidence. Make the report even if you do not have ALL the information.

A person cannot be held legally at fault for making a “good faith report,” even if it is a violation of confessional. If it is a staff member or volunteer and the alleged abuse is found to be a false accusation, he/she will not be held legally at fault for making a “good faith report.”

The adult to whom the child reveals the abuse is considered the ideal reporter. However, a designated director/supervisor may call on behalf of that person or keep their name anonymous. DFCS does not release the information of the reporter except through a judge’s order. Failure to report is considered a misdemeanor.

If a report is made, accurate documentation should be kept by Northbrook UMC and must be provided to the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church and appropriate District Superintendent. This is not a substitute for reporting to DFCS. A reporter will not be kept “in the loop” during the investigation, nor will they always be alerted to the outcome.

When reporting with DFCS, a reporter is entitled to documentation that the report has been made. Send that documentation immediately to the District Superintendent.

The reverse side of this form is to be used to provide details to the proper authorities should an investigation arise.

**To Keep on Record with Northbrook UMC and the District Superintendent**

**Today’s Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date of Report to DFCS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Name of Reporter (if not anonymous): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Phone Number of Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Names and ages of Children or child in danger:**

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**Names and Phone Numbers of Parents/Guardians: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Suspected Abuser (if known): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**“Reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused.” (Suspicions are reasons to report. You do not have to have direct evidence. Please be as detailed as possible.**

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**Any other information the reporter believes might help establish the cause of the injuries and the perpetrator’s identity?**

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**Names and contact information of relatives, friends, etc., who can intervene in the interim if the child needs to be relocated temporarily.**

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**Who else should we contact about this?**

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**Signature of Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature of Head Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**