

The background of the slide features a blurred image of a microphone and a keyboard, suggesting a professional or educational setting. The microphone is positioned diagonally across the upper right, and the keyboard is visible in the lower left.

# MANDATED REPORTER TRAINING

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# WHO ARE MANDATED REPORTERS?

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- School Official, which includes but is not limited to:
  - School Teacher
  - School Guidance Counselor
  - School Psychologist
  - School Social Worker
  - School Nurse
  - School Administrator
  - or other school personnel required to hold a teaching or administrative license or certificate
- Athletic Trainer (effective 12/2025)
- and more

# WHAT IS THE REQUIREMENT?

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- Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment **when, in their professional capacity**, they are presented with **reasonable cause to suspect** child abuse or maltreatment. The obligation is on the individual and independent of any other Mandated Reporter's obligation.
- No one may direct a Mandated Reporter not to report, but an administrator can insist on making the call personally so long as the Mandated Reporter is present when the call is made.

# MALTREATMENT AND ABUSE

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- For professionals working with children and families, it is important to understand the definitions of maltreatment and abuse. In New York State, parents, and other people legally responsible for children, must provide the minimum degree of care, which includes:
  - Food
  - Clothing
  - Shelter
  - Medical Care
  - Education
  - Adequate Supervision



# MALTREATMENT AND ABUSE (CONT.)

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- The minimum degree of care standard does not necessarily equate to optimal parenting. For example, food may be the same meal every day; clothing does not need to be fashionable. The child's residence does need to be structurally sound and able to pass a code inspection.
- *Note: When determining whether the minimum degree of care was taken, we must consider whether the parent was financially able to provide for the child or was offered financial or other means to do so. **Remember, poverty in and of itself, is not maltreatment or abuse.***

# MALTREATMENT AND ABUSE (CONT.)

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- Caregivers must provide children with basic medical, dental, optometrical or surgical care, if they are financially able to do so.
- Caregivers must also ensure that children are actively enrolled in school. This does not mean a child has to be earning high grades, participating in activities, or have impeccable attendance.
- Absence from school in itself does not constitute maltreatment or abuse, but excessive absenteeism can be some evidence and should not be overlooked.

# MALTREATMENT AND ABUSE (CONT.)

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- Under Section 412 of the Social Services Law and at Section 1012 of the Family Court Act a child is maltreated when:
  1. a child under eighteen years of age whose parent or other person legally responsible for the child fails to provide the minimum degree of care and that failure results in harm or imminent danger of harm to the child's physical, mental or emotional condition, OR
  2. a parent or other person legally responsible causes a non-accidental, serious physical injury to a child, OR
  3. a child under eighteen years of age who has been abandoned by their parents or other person legally responsible for their care.

*Note: Actual harm is not always required. If a parent or other person legally responsible for a child puts their physical, mental, or emotional condition at imminent risk of harm – that is maltreatment*

# MALTREATMENT AND ABUSE (CONT.)

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- Under Section 412 of the Social Services Law and at Section 1012 of the Family Court Act, a child is abused when:
  1. a child under eighteen years of age whose parent or other person legally responsible for a child inflicts (or allows someone else to inflict) a non-accidental serious injury which causes:
    1. a substantial risk of death
    2. serious or protracted disfigurement
    3. protracted impairment of physical or emotional health
    4. protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ cause OR



# MALTREATMENT AND ABUSE (CONT.)

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2. a child under eighteen years of age whose parent or other person legally responsible for a child creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of non accidental physical injury which would be likely to:

- a. a cause death
- b. serious or protracted disfigurement
- c. protracted impairment of physical or emotional health
- d. protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ OR

# MALTREATMENT AND ABUSE (CONT.)

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3. a parent or person legally responsible commits, or allows someone else to commit, a sex crime against a child

# SIGNS OF ABUSE OR MALTREATMENT

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- As a professional who works with children and families, it is important to understand, and be alert to, indicators of maltreatment and abuse.
- These indicators can help you determine whether signs or behaviors you witness are indicators of possible abuse or maltreatment.

# PHYSICAL INDICATORS MAY INCLUDE

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- Unexplained fractures, burns, welts or lacerations
- Suspicious injury or bruising including where the:
  - location of the injury may be atypical
  - explanation provided for the injury doesn't match the pattern of injury
  - bruise or laceration is shaped like an object (e.g. a handprint or looped cord)
  - Repeated instances of similar injuries



# PHYSICAL INDICATORS (CONT.)

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Unattended physical problems, medical or dental needs

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Pain or itching in the genital area

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Lags in physical development/growth

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Note: These may be indications of maltreatment/abuse but none necessarily indicate maltreatment/abuse and should not, without more, necessarily result in a report.



# BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS MAY INCLUDE

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- Sometimes, the victims of abuse or maltreatment do not exhibit any physical indicators. In these cases, you can look for behavioral indicators
- A significant change in the child's demeanor including:
  - not acting like themselves
  - acting oddly shy or attention-seeking
  - a sudden drop in grades or lack of interest in activities
  - Note: These may be indications of maltreatment/abuse but none necessarily indicate maltreatment/abuse and should not, without more, necessarily result in a report.

# BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS (CONT.)

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- Engaging in self-destructive behaviors Isolating from peers
- Begging for or stealing food
- Consistent fatigue
- Lingering in school/reluctance to go home Use of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Infrequent school attendance
- Sudden new sexual behavior or knowledge that is inconsistent with the child's development, age, circumstances or past behaviors

# EDUCATION NEGLECT

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- Poor school attendance, in and of itself, is not a reasonable cause to suspect maltreatment.
- A report of suspected educational neglect should be called in to the SCR only when there is an identifiable harm or imminent risk of harm to the child due to the parent or other person legally responsible failing to provide the minimum degree of care regarding the education of the child.
- School personnel should first try working with the student, family, and community agencies to identify needs and resources available to meet those needs/



# SIGNS OF MALTREATMENT AND ABUSE IN A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

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- As a mandated reporter, you may have interactions with children that occur in a virtual space. Children may attend school remotely, visit doctors using telemedicine, and participate in therapy sessions on virtual platforms.
- It is important to remember that if you are interacting with children in your professional role, your responsibilities as a mandated reporter remain the same. It is important to continue to assess the safety of children during all your professional interactions with them.



# SIGNS OF MALTREATMENT AND ABUSE IN A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT (CONT.)

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- To do this:
  - Be **alert for indications that a child is trying to communicate something** to you without someone else in the room noticing.
  - Pay attention to **non-verbal cues**. Note if a child's demeanor is different when someone else enters the room.

# DEFINITIONS

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- **Professional Role**: means that you are working or volunteering in a role that requires a specific licensure or certification.
- For example, if a teacher assistant is working with a child in the back of the classroom and develops a reasonable suspicion of abuse or maltreatment, they must report their concerns to the Statewide Central Register (SCR). If the same teaching assistant is a parent hosting a sleepover for their son and his friends and see something that they suspect is child abuse/maltreatment, they may call the SCR as a member of the general public, but are not required by law to call the SCR because they were not in their professional role when they observed the situation.

# DEFINITIONS (CONT.)

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- **Reasonable Cause to Suspect:** occurs when what you have observed or been told, combined with your professional experience or training, leads you to reasonably believe that a child has been or is being maltreated/abused.
- A reasonable suspicion does not require concrete proof. One indicator or several indicators in combination may give you a reasonable suspicion. For example, explanations of injuries that are inconsistent with your training or experience may give you a reasonable suspicion.



# WHEN TO REPORT

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- It is important to understand when you are legally obligated to make a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment, and when it is more appropriate to connect the family to community supports. Remember: just because you disagree with a parent's decisions or actions does not mean a child is being abuse or maltreated.
- As a mandated reporter you are required by law to call the SCR when:
  - In your **professional role**,
  - you develop a **reasonable cause to suspect**
  - a child is being maltreated or abused by a parent or person legally responsible for the child
  - Note: as a Mandated Reporter, you need not be certain, but must have reasonable suspicion and should err on the side of reporting.

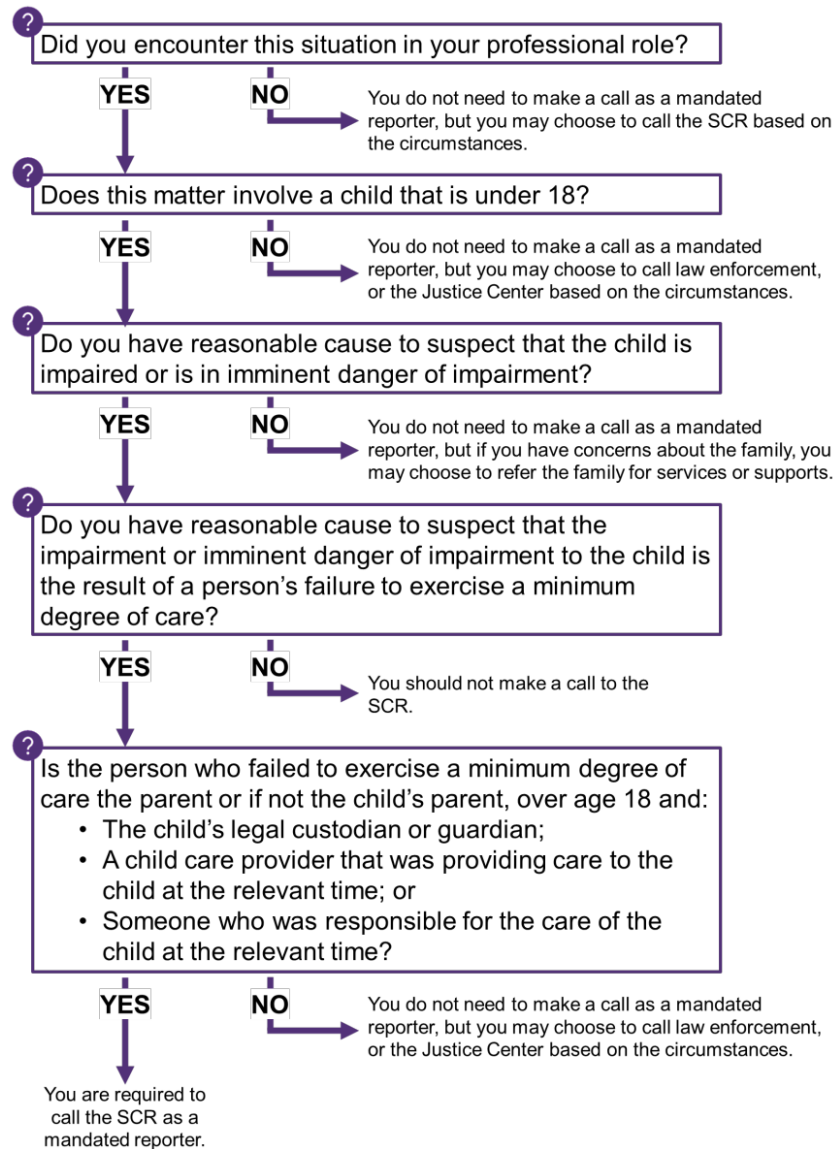
# SELF-DIRECTED TRAINING

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- New York State Mandated Reporter Resource Center – Training
  - Two hours (it will hold you place if you cannot complete it all at one sitting)
  - Must be completed by 8/31/25
  - Original deadline was April 2025
  - New Training to be released 9/1/25 completion required by 11/17/26
  - Necessary to maintain NYS License

# Mandated Reporter Decision Tree

Use the below to determine if you should make a call to the SCR. Remember that as a mandated reporter you should answer the questions in the decision tree based on objective facts and information. Please assess whether your own biases may be impacting your answers by reviewing the reflection question on the other side of this page.



# Assessing for Bias in Decision-Making

Each assessment made by a mandated reporter regarding whether to call the SCR can change the course of the life of a child and the members of a family. It is important to be aware of the propensity for implicit or explicit bias and to be intentional about making decisions based on the objective facts of a situation.

One proven strategy to mitigate bias is to examine whether the facts of the situation would lead you to the same decision to call the SCR if the demographic information for the child or family were different.

For example, would you make the same decision to call if any of the following were different? The child or family's:

- Race?
- Ethnicity?
- Gender?
- Gender identity?
- Sexual orientation or expression?
- Religion?
- Immigration status?
- Primary spoken language?
- Culture?
- Age?
- Neighborhood where they reside?
- Presence of a disability?
- Occupation?
- Socio-economic status?

If you answered no to any of those questions, bias may be impacting your decision to make the call.

If you are interested in learning more about what feeds into implicit bias, Harvard University has developed the Implicit Association Test (IAT). You can access a variety of IAT tests here:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

# IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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- **To report child abuse and neglect, call:**  
1 (800) 342-3720
- **Mandated Reporters Hotline for child abuse and maltreatment reports:**  
1 (800) 635-1522
- **For information on the Abandoned Infant Protection Act, call:**  
1 (866) 505-SAFE = 1 (866) 505-7233



# SUPPORTING FAMILIES

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- A report to the SCR is one tool to keep children safe and should only be used by mandated reporters when they are legally obligated to make a report. In your professional role, you are also likely to encounter families whose needs would be met by a wide variety of community-based services.
- For more information on what services are available in your community, visit <http://nysmandatedreporter.org> or contact the OCFS HEARS Family Line at 1-888-55HEARS ( 1-888-554-3277 )

# NYS OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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- The Office of Children and Family Services serves New York's public by promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of our children, families and communities.
- For more information about OCFS, please visit our website at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov>
- For resources and more information for mandated reporters:  
<http://nysmandatedreporter.org>
- The Mandated Reporter Hotline for child abuse and maltreatment reports: 1 (800) 635-1522

# CREDITS

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- Slides generated from information gathered on <http://nysmandatedreporter.org/> and Office of Children and Family Services