

# **Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse**

## **Office of the Attorney General**

Quote:

**Teachers and administrators are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse.** Teachers are not to attempt to determine who caused the abuse on the child, only that a child is in danger due to *reasonable* evidence that they observed. If a child has physical marks on them, such as bruises or other evidence of inappropriate treatment or discipline, they would violate the law if they did not report it to the local Child Protective Services Agency and be charged with a misdemeanor, punishable by jail and or a fine and lose their license to teach.

**The infliction of injury or the resulting injury, rather than the degree, is the determinant for intervention.**

Factors that raise suspicion often include suspicious bruises:

Bruises teachers need to note are...

- a. Bruises either multiple and all of the same color or multiple and of different color (which indicate various stages of healing);
- b. Bruises found on multiple surfaces of the body, particularly on the back;
- c. Bruises multiple and in the same area, and appear to be instrument-inflicted;
- d. Bruises and wounds on the arms and hands, which are characterized as "defense" wounds;
- e. Thumb prints on the upper arms where someone might grip a child and "slap" handprints that leave an impression or bruise.

One of the most important grounds for suspicion appears to be the one that is discussed the least; that is when the child tells someone. It is essential that such a child not be ignored, or the situation diminished. It should be remembered, too, that when a child tells a person who happens to be one of those mandated to report, there is no privileged communication. That person **must** report what the child has related to them.