



## Vulnerable Persons Act

- Florida State University is committed to protecting the well-being of all members of the campus community. Therefore, the University would like to alert you to recent developments in Florida law that impact all of us. On October 1, 2012, Florida's new Protection of Vulnerable Persons Act went into effect. Florida now has the toughest laws in the nation regarding mandatory child abuse reporting obligations.
- Under the law, every individual in the state is required to immediately report known or suspected child abuse and child sexual abuse to the Florida Department of Children and Family Services' Abuse Hotline, with the definition of "child" including any person under the age of eighteen. This includes reporting suspected abuse committed by adults who are not the child's legal guardian and by juvenile sexual offenders.
- Failure to report a known instance of child abuse of any kind is a third-degree felony, punishable by up to five years in prison and up to a \$5,000 fine. In addition, the failure of a University Administrator to report suspected abuse potentially exposes the University to a \$1 million fine. In implementing the new law, the Board of Governors has defined "administrator" as president, equal opportunity programs director, athletic director, internal auditing director, Title IX coordinator, and compliance officer. To report possible child abuse using the Abuse Hotline please go to: [reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us](http://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us), call toll-free 1-800-962-2873 (TDD 1-800-453-5145), or report by fax to 1-800-914-0004.
- Reports may be made (24 hours a day, 365 days a year) by phone using a toll-free telephone number, by fax, or by web-based report. For more information and tips on successful reporting please go to: [www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/abuse-hotline/howtoreport](http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/abuse-hotline/howtoreport).
- Anyone reporting in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability.
- The University strongly urges you to familiarize yourself with these reporting requirements and to immediately report any suspected child abuse. If you have questions regarding the above, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance at (850) 645-6519.