Mississippi Law on Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

All members of the University community are responsible for compliance with Mississippi laws on mandatory reporting of child abuse, neglect and exploitation. Please go to the following website to find detailed information from the Mississippi Department of Human Services on how to identify and report child abuse, neglect and exploitation: **http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/report-child-abuseneglect/**

The following is a summary of key provisions of Mississippi law on mandatory reporting of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

In accordance with Section 43-21-105 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, "Abused Child means a child whose parent, guardian or custodian or any person responsible for his care or support, whether legally obligated to do so or not, has caused or allowed to be caused upon said child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, emotional abuse, mental injury, non-accidental physical injury or other maltreatment. Provided, however that physical discipline, including spanking, performed on a child by a parent, guardian or custodian in a reasonable manner shall not be deemed abuse under this section."

In regard to physical abuse, it is important to understand that although parents, guardians and custodians are legally allowed to utilize corporal punishment, they **are not** allowed to cause bruises, marks, or other injuries to children when utilizing corporal punishment. Any evidence of such will constitute abuse by the Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Who Must Report

In accordance with Section 43-21-353 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, "Any attorney, physician, dentist, intern, resident, nurse, psychologist, social worker, family protection worker, family protection specialist, child caregiver, minister, law enforcement officer, public or private school employee or any other person having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a neglected child or an abused child, shall cause an oral report to be made immediately by telephone or

otherwise and followed as soon thereafter as possible by a report in writing to the Department of Human Services, ..."

How to Report Suspected or Known Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation

A report must be made immediately to the Hotline, **800-222-8000**, a statewide toll-free 24-hour line that is answered seven days a week.

When a child appears to be in immediate danger of serious harm, call 9-1-1 (9-911 from campus landlines) and/or MUW Police at 662-241-7777 to ensure the fastest possible response time to protect the child. The person reporting should provide, whenever possible:

- The child's name, description, age and address
- The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody or welfare of the child
- Any other information to help authorities assist the child (who, what, when, where)

Criminal Penalties for Failure to Report

Upon being found guilty, the individual shall be punished by a fine not to exceed $5,000, or by imprisonment in jail not to exceed one year, or both. Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated Section 43-21-353(7).

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND, AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF MISSISSIPPI LAW DESCRIBED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____