

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1046  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Guyton)

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School and School-Sponsored Activities - Report of Suspected Abuse or Neglect -  
Parental Notification

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This bill requires, if a mandated reporter reports suspected abuse or neglect of a child that occurs at a school or school-sponsored activity, for the school to provide notice of the report to the parent, guardian, or caretaker of the child unless the parent, guardian, or caretaker is the subject of the report. Notice must be provided within 24 hours after the report is made. The bill makes conforming changes to provisions within the Human Services Article related to the confidentiality of records. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill does not materially affect the operations or finances of the Department of Human Services.

**Local Effect:** Local school systems can meet the bill's requirement using existing resources. No impact on local revenues.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including any law on privileged communications, each health practitioner, police officer, *educator*, or human services worker acting in a professional capacity in the State who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect must notify the local department of social services or the appropriate law enforcement agency. An oral report, by telephone or direct communication, must be made as soon as possible to the local department or appropriate

law enforcement agency. A written report must be made to the local department of social services (with a copy to the local State's Attorney) not later than 48 hours after the contact, examination, attention, or treatment that caused the individual to believe that the child had been subjected to abuse or neglect.

After receiving a report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child who lives in Maryland that is alleged to have occurred in the State, the local department of social services and/or the appropriate law enforcement agency must promptly and thoroughly investigate the report to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the child or children. Within 24 hours after receiving a report of suspected physical or sexual child abuse, and within five days after receiving a report of suspected child neglect or mental injury, the local department or law enforcement agency must (1) see the child; (2) attempt to have an onsite interview with the child's caretaker; (3) decide on the safety of the child and of other children in the household; and (4) decide on the safety of the other children in the care or custody of the alleged abuser. The determinations and assessments that are required during an abuse or neglect investigation are specified in statute.

Pursuant to § 7-441 of the Education Article, each public school is encouraged to post the appropriate telephone number for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect conspicuously in a high-traffic, widely used area of the school. Each local board of education must ensure that the appropriate telephone number for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect is published in each public school student's handbook and on the website of the local board or school system.

#### *Confidentiality of Child Abuse and Neglect Reports and Records*

In general, a person may not disclose a report or record concerning child abuse or neglect. A report or record concerning child abuse or neglect *must* be disclosed, however, under a court order, an order of an administrative law judge, or the Division of Parole and Probation in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, as further specified in statute.

A report or record concerning child abuse or neglect may be disclosed on request to specified individuals, including a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care and custody of the child, if provisions are made for the protection of the identity of the reporter or any other person whose life or safety is likely to be endangered by disclosing the information within the report.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Human Services; Baltimore City Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 2, 2026  
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