
TO: House Ways and Means Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 1046 – School and School-Sponsored Activities - Report of Suspected Abuse or Neglect - Parental Notification

DATE: March 4, 2026

POSITION: Support

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) supports House Bill (HB) 1046 – *School and School-Sponsored Activities - Report of Suspected Abuse or Neglect - Parental Notification* which requires a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse and neglect (Family Law § 5-704) to notify the parent or guardian of the child, unless the parent or guardian is the subject of the report.

HB 1046 seeks to balance two critical priorities: the protection of children and the rights of parents and guardians to be informed about significant matters affecting their children. By requiring schools to notify a parent, guardian, or caretaker within 24 hours of a report made pursuant to § 5-704 of the Family Law Article, unless that individual is the subject of the report, the bill seeks to reinforce transparency while preserving essential safeguards for child safety.

Maryland educators and school personnel serve as mandated reporters and play a vital role in identifying and responding to concerns of abuse or neglect. While mandated reporting requirements are well established, HB 1046 provides additional clarity about the communication process when the alleged incident occurs in a school setting or during a school-sponsored activity.

Establishing a uniform statewide standard for parental notification will support schools in implementing well-defined, reliable procedures and will help ensure families are promptly informed when concerns arise in educational environments. It should be noted that when a referral is received by Child Protective Services (CPS) and a case is opened, the CPS worker will make contact with the family to assess needs and provide appropriate services. The protocol for the school could include contacting CPS to determine if a report from the school to the parents is appropriate or if that report will be done by CPS. The school's record should note whether the school or CPS is making the report to the parents. This approach helps preserve the integrity of CPS investigations, minimizes risk to students, and maintains clear lines of authority between reporters and investigators.

MSDE supports policies that strengthen trust between schools and families, promote transparency, and prioritize the safety and well-being of students. HB 1046 advances these goals while aligning with existing child welfare statutes and mandated reporting frameworks. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov.