**OBLIGATION TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE; CHILD ABUSE TRAINING**

**The Law Regarding Reporting.** Texas law is clear, Under Chapter 261 of the *Texas Family Code* any person who has reason to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by another person must immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (“DFPS”) or to a state or local law enforcement. This responsibility is applicable to all members of the Texas Woman’s University (“TWU”) community, whether administrators, faculty, staff, students, or others. “Professionals,” a designation which includes “teachers, nurses, doctors, day-care employees and employees of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services,” have a higher duty to report than anyone else; they must make a report within 48 hours after suspecting child abuse or neglect. A “child,” in Texas, is a person under 18 years of age who has not been married and who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes.

**Penalties for Failure to Report.** The duty to report child abuse or neglect may not be delegated to another. The failure to make this report is a Class A misdemeanor, which can result in punishment of up to one (1) year in jail and/or a fine of up to $4,000.

**Where to Report.** While employees and students are encouraged to report incidents of child abuse or suspected abuse to a supervisor or responsible university official, the first obligation is to protect the child by immediately contacting one of the following:

1. DFPS at its toll-free, 24-hour hotline at 1-800-252-5400
2. Local Law Enforcement
3. Campus Law Enforcement

* TWU Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) at Denton – 940-898-2911
* TWU DPS at Dallas – 214-689-6666
* TWU DPS at Houston – 713-794-2222

**Required Information.** Anyone making a report should be prepared to provide the following, if known: 1. The name and address of the child; 2. The name and address of the individual who is responsible for care or welfare of the child; and 3. Any other pertinent information concerning the suspected abuse or neglect. The identity of the reporting person will be confidential and be disclosed only under limited circumstances or upon specific written agreement.

**Confidentiality and Immunity.** For one who makes a good-faith report or assists in the investigation of a report or any resulting judicial proceeding, the law provides immunity from any resulting civil or criminal liability.

**New Requirements for Camps at TWU.** TWU hosts or sponsors numerous events, activities, and programs for youth, including camps for children. A new Texas law) found in Chapter 51 of the Texas Education Code) requires that workers for these camps receive special state-approved training regarding child abuse and molestation.

For any specific questions relating to these obligations, please contact the Office of General Counsel at (940) 898-3250.