



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012**

**CONTACT: Jimmie Whitelaw**  
**312-814-6847**

## **STATEMENT FROM DCFS REGARDING MAINE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 207**

The Department has referred allegations, reported in numerous media outlets, that one or more school district employees of Maine Township High School District 207 knew of alleged abuse or neglect as early as 2007 to the Cook County State's Attorney to determine whether Illinois' Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act was violated and take action if warranted.

The Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5) requires all school personnel, including administrative, certified and non-certified school employees, as well as school board members to immediately report or cause a report to be made to DCFS whenever they have "reasonable cause to believe a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be an abused child or a neglected child."

Under the act, an "abused child" includes a child whose teacher, coach, or other person responsible for their welfare:

- a) Inflicts, causes to be inflicted, or allows to be inflicted upon such child physical injury, by other than accidental means, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;
- b) Creates substantial risk of physical injury to such child by other than accidental means which would be likely to cause death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;
- c) Commits or allows to be committed any sex offense against such child, as such sex offenses are defined in the Criminal Code of 1961, as amended, or in the Wrongs to Children Act, and extending those definitions of sex offenses to include children under 18 years of age;
- d) Commits or allows to be committed an act or acts of torture upon such child.

**(more)**

Knowingly and willfully violating the Act's reporting requirements is "a Class A misdemeanor for a first violation and a Class 4 felony for a second or subsequent violation; except that if the person acted as part of a plan or scheme having as its object the prevention of discovery of an abused or neglected child by lawful authorities for the purpose of protecting or insulating any person or entity from arrest or prosecution, the person is guilty of a Class 4 felony for a first offense and a Class 3 felony for a second or subsequent offense."

DCFS defers to local prosecutors and courts to interpret and enforce the statute.

The safety and well-being of Illinois children relies heavily on Illinois' "mandated reporters," who account for roughly two-thirds of the more than 250,000 calls to our Child Abuse Hotline each year. DCFS offers free online training through our website for all mandated reporters, which includes most staff in education, health care, law enforcement and social work, as well as clergy. In addition, our newly revised "Manual for Mandated Reporters" is available in the Downloads section of our homepage at [www.state.il.us/DCFS](http://www.state.il.us/DCFS).

###

**About Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.** Founded in 1964, DCFS has the primary responsibility of protecting children and strengthening families through the investigation and intervention of suspected child abuse or neglect by parents and other caregivers. Over the last four years, DCFS received more than one million calls to our Child Abuse Hotline, offering and coordinating services wherever needed to help children remain in their homes safely. In instances where children must be removed from the home for their safety and well-being, DCFS makes every effort to return them safely to their homes as quickly as possible. When that simply is not possible, DCFS is equally committed to pursuing adoption by loving families to provide children with the permanent, safe, and nurturing homes they need and deserve to reach their fullest potential. As part of its duties, DCFS licenses and monitors all Illinois child welfare agencies and more than 14,000 day care centers, homes, group homes and day care agencies in the state.

100 West Randolph, 6-200 • Chicago, Illinois 60601-3249  
312-814-6847 • 312-814-8783 / TTY

