



Abuse Reporting at Cornell University

What is Cornell University’s Reporting Policy?

Whether you are a faculty member, staff member, student, or volunteer working with minors, you share in providing not only a meaningful experience for participants, but also a safe environment that fulfills Cornell’s ethical responsibility and legal responsibility to protect youth as we serve them.

Although New York State imposes Mandated Reporter obligations only on certain categories of employees, Cornell Policy 8.8 Children and Youth Safety creates an independent duty for **all members of the Cornell Community** to report immediately in situations where they have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or maltreatment of minors.

Reasonable Cause means that you have logical reason to believe that a youth is being abused or maltreated; it does not mean that you must be certain or have proof. This can be based on witnessing a single incident, something a child says to you, an implausible explanation for an injury, or a combination of warning signs.

Independent Duty means that you must follow these guidelines for reporting abuse; you cannot delegate this to a colleague or a supervisor.

Abuse means serious harm committed to children. Abuse can be physical, emotional, or sexual.

Maltreatment, which includes neglect, is when a child intentionally or unintentionally receives an inadequate quality of care in the areas of food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care, or supervision. ***It is important to note that poverty or other financial inability to provide the above is not considered maltreatment.***

Make a report as soon as you suspect abuse or maltreatment. The timeliness of your report is vital to the timeliness of intervention to help that child. The New York State Social Services Law protects your confidentiality when making a report and prohibits Cornell University from taking retaliatory action against any report made in good faith. *In good faith* means that the report was made with earnest concern for the child’s welfare.

Students, ask your program director or advisor of your organization if you have questions regarding your responsibility within this policy. The full policy can be viewed [here](#). Additional information can be found at youthsafety.cornell.edu.

Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse:

- ◇ Injuries to the eyes or both sides of the head or body (accidental injuries are typically to one side only)
- ◇ Frequent injuries (bruises, cuts, and/or burns), especially if the child cannot explain the cause
- ◇ Destructive, aggressive, or disruptive behavior
- ◇ Passive, withdrawn, or emotionless behavior
- ◇ Fears of going home
- ◇ Fears of parents or other specific adults

Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse:

- ◇ Symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases
- ◇ Injury to the genital area
- ◇ Difficulty and/or pain when sitting or walking
- ◇ Sexually suggestive, inappropriate, or promiscuous behavior or language
- ◇ Expressing age-inappropriate knowledge of sexual relations
- ◇ Sexual victimization of other children

Possible Indicators of Maltreatment:

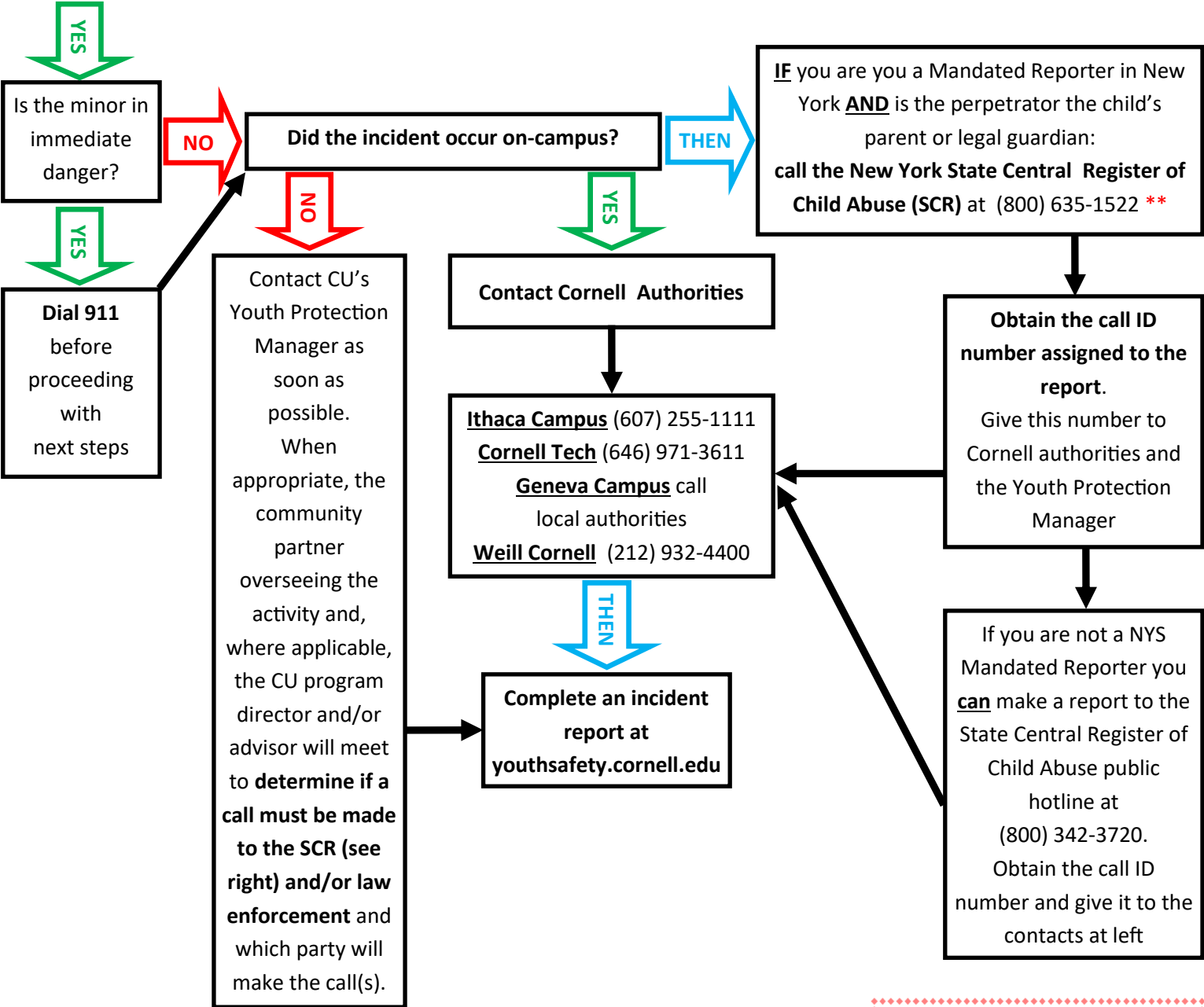
- ◇ Obvious malnourishment, listlessness, or fatigue
- ◇ Stealing or begging for food
- ◇ Lack of personal care—poor hygiene, torn and/or dirty clothing
- ◇ Untreated need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention (not due to poverty)
- ◇ Frequent absence from or tardiness to school
- ◇ Child inappropriately left unattended or without supervision

Violations of the Standards of Behavior for Cornell faculty/ staff/students/volunteers working with minors must also be reported, and may include the following:

- ◇ Physical boundary violations such as tickling or wrestling
- ◇ Any form of unwanted affection
- ◇ Speech, gestures, or other behaviors that are demeaning, belittling, hurtful, or meant to embarrass
- ◇ Inappropriate levels of supervision including 1:1 interactions between adults and minors
- ◇ Unauthorized photo/video of a minor
- ◇ Sexual comments or jokes in front of a minor
- ◇ Sharing sexually explicit material, alcohol, or other drugs with



Do you have reasonable cause to believe a minor under the age of 18 has been the subject of abuse or maltreatment?



Contact Cornell University's Youth Protection Manager
 Alyson Murphy with questions at any time:
Phone: (607) 255-9062
Email: am2987@cornell.edu

****The internal reporting obligations under policy 8.8 exist in addition to any reporting obligation mandated by state law. Those considered Mandated Reporters under New York State law are obligated to make both reports**