



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1010

DEC 18 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY

SUBJECT: Allegations of Child Abuse and Neglect in Department Child and Youth Programs

The Department of Defense's (DoD) position on child abuse and neglect is clear: harm to any child is unacceptable. It is our duty to prioritize preventative measures assuring the health and safety of children and youth in Department child and youth programs (CYP).

Following through on this commitment, the Department conducted a review to determine whether there is consistent and effective implementation of all applicable policies at the installation level, to strengthen our requirements for prevention, identification, and reporting of child abuse incidents in Department CYPs. Based on our review, I direct Department CYPs to implement the requirements specified below. These requirements clarify and reinforce the intent of existing policies and will be included in the update to DoD Instruction (DoDI) 6060.02, "Child Development Programs," and DoDI 6060.04, "Youth Services Policy."

- When CYP staff is made aware of an allegation of child abuse or neglect against a CYP staff member, volunteer, or other personnel working in CYPs, management staff will consult with the servicing human resources office, and the subject of the allegation must be immediately removed from any role working with children and youth.
- The appropriate CYP manager will coordinate with the servicing human resources and legal offices to determine whether the employee should be placed on a leave status or reassigned to other duties while the incident is under review.
- The employee may not resume working with children and youth until the review of the incident, including any law enforcement investigation, is complete. The appropriate CYP manager will then consult with the servicing human resources and legal offices to determine the appropriate next steps.
- CYP staff must notify the parents or legal guardians of children and youth who are impacted by an allegation of child abuse or neglect no later than 24 hours after CYP staff are made aware of the allegation.
- Military Service headquarters and Defense Logistics Agency CYP staff must report to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy through the Office of Child and Youth Programs, within 72 hours of the incident any allegation of child abuse or neglect involving installation CYP staff members, volunteers, and other adults working within CYPs for which the installation



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Family Advocacy Program Office, local Child Protection Services, or military/civilian law enforcement agencies have accepted for further action.

In addition, CYP staff are required to re-complete the Virtual Lab School Supplemental Training (VLS ST) courses developed in 2023 to support child abuse prevention, identification, and reporting no later than March 14, 2025. The VLS ST series includes the following courses:

- Appropriate Expectations and Responses to Behavior;
- Reporting Child Abuse in Your Program;
- Enhancing Protective Factors of Children and Families; and
- Leader's Role in Prevention and Awareness of Child Abuse (required of all CYP management staff).

These requirements and responsibilities are effective immediately and will be incorporated through changes to DoDIs 6060.02 and 6060.04. We will continue to work together to ensure CYP facilities and staff meet the highest standards of care for our children and youth. I ask for your support to implement these requirements and promote a zero-tolerance culture regarding incidents of child abuse and neglect in Department CYPs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen H. Harris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'K' and 'H'.