

## RESOLUTION NO. 24-00858

In the matter of authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) /Child Abuse Protocol establishing normal operating procedures, to be employed by all concerned officials in the execution of their respective responsibilities when conducting a child abuse or neglect assessments and investigations in Wood County, Ohio. )

County Commissioners' Office,  
Wood County, Ohio,  
June 20, 2024.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §2151.421 and Ohio Administrative Code §5101:2-33-26, each public children services agency must prepare a county child abuse and neglect memorandum of understanding that sets forth the normal operating procedures to be employed by all concerned officials in the execution of their respective responsibilities when conducting a child abuse or neglect assessment/investigation; and

WHEREAS, the memorandum must be executed by the following parties: Juvenile Court Judge, Wood County Sheriff, Risingsun Police Department, Bowling Green City Police Department, Luckey Police Department, Perrysburg City Police Department, Haskins Police Department, Perrysburg Township Police Department, Walbridge Police Department, Rossford Police Department, Fostoria Police Department, Northwood Police Department, Pemberville Police Department, Bloomdale Police Department, Bradner Police Department, Lake Township Police Department, Ohio State Highway Patrol, North Baltimore Police Department, Wayne Police Department, Wood County Department of Job and Family Services, Wood County Prosecuting Attorney, Wood County Humane Society and the Wood County Clerk of Courts; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ohio Administrative Code §5101:2-33-26, subsection (H), upon obtaining the required signatures, the public children services agency shall submit the signed memorandum to the board of county commissioners for approval; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Wood County Commissioners hereby approves the Wood County Memorandum of Understanding/Child Abuse Protocol establishing normal operating procedures to be employed by all concerned officials in the execution of their respective responsibilities when conducting a child abuse or neglect assessment and investigation in Wood County, Ohio, and the memorandum of understanding shall become a part of this resolution as if fully rewritten herein.

Commissioner Bowlus moved and Commissioner La Hote seconded the foregoing resolution, and the roll being called on its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

DORIS I. HERRINGSHAW, Ed.D. absent DR. THEODORE H. BOWLUS yes CRAIG LAHOTE yes

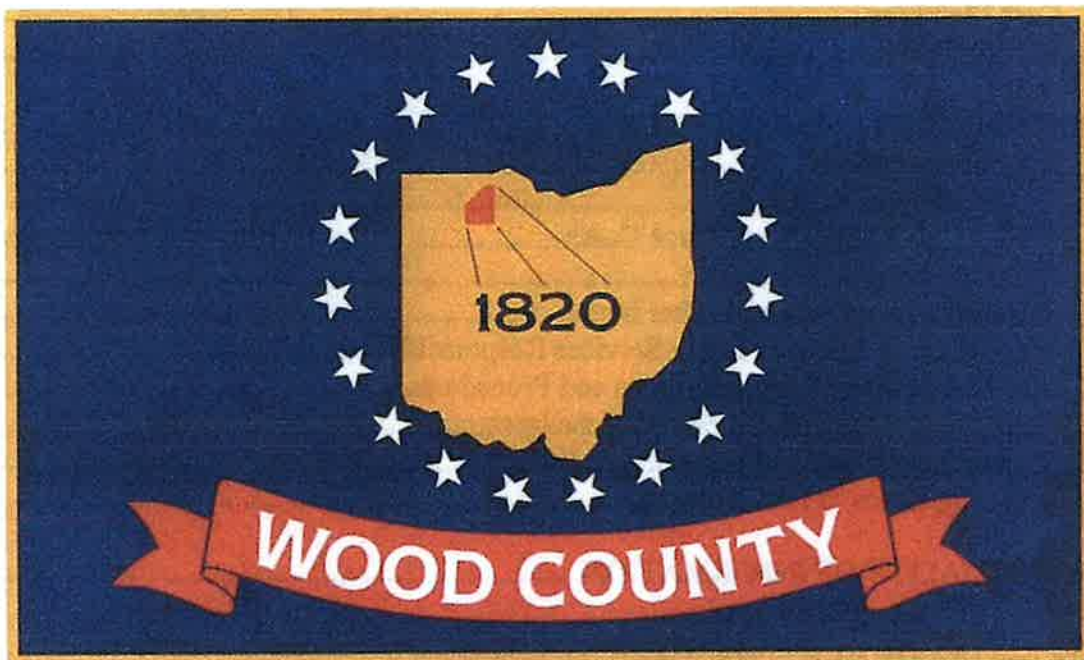
Attest: Jamese Diem  
acting Clerk of said Board

asc;

cc: File; JFS, Kelly Hinkle-Letz; Vicki Adams; Juvenile Court Judge, Wood County Sheriff's Office, Risingsun Police Department, Bowling Green City Police Department, Luckey Police Department, Perrysburg City Police Department, Haskins Police Department, Perrysburg Township Police Department, Walbridge Police Department, Rossford Police Department,

Fostoria Police Department, Northwood Police Department, Pemberville Police Department, Bloomdale Police Department, Bradner Police Department, Lake Township Police Department, Ohio State Highway Patrol, North Baltimore Police Department, Wayne Police Department, Wood County Department of Job and Family Services, Wood County Prosecuting Attorney, Wood County Humane Society and the Wood County Clerk of Courts

**WOOD COUNTY, OHIO**  
**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**Regarding Child Abuse and Neglect**



**Amended October, 2021**

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# **WOOD COUNTY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/CHILD ABUSE PROTOCOL**

## **1. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

This Memorandum of Understanding/Child Abuse Protocol will establish the normal operating procedures for professionals when conducting assessments and investigations of allegations of child abuse and neglect in Wood County, Ohio. The agencies subscribing to this Memorandum of Understanding/Child Abuse Protocol acknowledge that the successful handling of these cases requires the involvement of multiple agencies and disciplines. The purpose of this document is:

- A. In accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.421, to set forth the normal operating procedures and responsibilities to be exercised by each party in the prompt identification, investigation, referring and management of each case of suspected or actual child abuse or neglect.
- B. To outline the roles and responsibilities for handling emergency and non-emergency cases of abuse and neglect.
- C. To set forth the guideline utilized by Wood County's Child Abuse Task Force governing the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child sexual abuse and severe physical abuse.

The goals of the Memorandum of Understanding are: (1) to promote the elimination of all unnecessary interviews of children and when feasible, (2) provide for only one interview of a child who is the subject of any report, (3) to define the roles and tasks of each subscriber, and (4) to coordinate inter-agency planning. This plan is designed as a cooperative agreement among all parties dealing with child victims of maltreatment in order to meet the needs of the victims and their families.

Wood County Department of Job and Family Services (WCDJFS), by and through this Memorandum and the specific protocol and procedures outlined below, shall ensure child safety and not compromise the assessment and investigation while concurrently working with law enforcement in criminal investigations which involve allegation of child abuse or neglect that constitute a crime against the child.

## **2. MANDATED PARTIES**

The County Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.421 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-33-26. In accordance with the applicable rules, the following are mandated as parties to the Memorandum of Understanding/Child Abuse Protocol:

Juvenile Court Judge  
Risingsun Police Department  
Luckey Police Department  
Haskins Police Department  
Walbridge Police Department  
Fostoria Police Department

Wood County Sheriff's Office  
Bowling Green City Police Department  
Perrysburg City Police Department  
Perrysburg Township Police Department  
Rossford Police Department  
Northwood Police Department

Pemberville Police Department  
Bradner Police Department  
State Highway Patrol  
Wayne Police Department  
Wood County Prosecuting Attorney  
Wood County Humane Society  
Wood County Clerk of Courts

Bloomdale Police Department  
Lake Township Police Department  
North Baltimore Police Department  
Wood County Department of Job and  
Family Services ("WCDJFS")

Other Law Enforcement Officers who handle child and abuse cases in the county

#### **A. Review of Memorandum of Understanding**

A copy of this Memorandum of Understanding shall be provided to each agency listed within five working days of the Wood County Department of Job and Family Services obtaining the signature of all parties. The Memorandum will be reviewed annually and amended as needed. Copies of the Memorandum will be available upon request.

#### **B. Failure to Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect**

Failure to follow procedures set forth in the memorandum is not grounds for, and shall not result in, the dismissal of any charges or complaint arising from any reported case of abuse or neglect or the suppression of any evidence obtained as a result of a report and does not give, and shall not be construed as giving, any rights or any grounds for appeal or post-conviction relief to any person. ORC 2151.421(F)(1).

Failure of a mandated reporter to make a report of child abuse or neglect is a crime. Pursuant to ORC 2151.99 and OAC 5101:2-33-26, Wood County JFS-CPS will notify the County Prosecutor or Municipal Prosecutor in writing when any mandated reporter of child abuse or neglect fails to report.

#### **C. Unauthorized Dissemination of Information**

Pursuant to ORC 2151.421(H), the information received in a report of alleged child abuse or neglect is confidential. Any person who permits or encourages the unauthorized dissemination of its contents is guilty of a crime. The identity of referral sources is considered part of the referral, and will not be released or affirmed by Wood County JFS.

When any person commits, causes, permits, or encourages the unauthorized dissemination of information, the Wood County JFS-CPS shall give written notification of such unauthorized dissemination to the County Prosecutor or Municipal Prosecutor.

#### **D. Humane Society**

When the Wood County Humane Society is involved in investigations concerning the maltreatment of animals, the Humane Society officer shall make a report to the Wood County Department of Job and Family Services-Child Protective Services Unit, if the officer suspects maltreatment of a child in the home. The Wood County JFS-CPS will notify the Humane

Society of any concerns of maltreatment of animals discovered while conducting an investigation related to child abuse or neglect.

### **3. DEVELOPMENT OF CHILD ABUSE TASK FORCE**

The Wood County Child Abuse Task Force was created in 2015 to investigate more serious child physical and sexual abuse cases, and other cases that the Child Abuse Task Force and law enforcement agencies collectively may deem necessary. The purpose of the Child Abuse Task Force is to work together and cooperatively with all signatories of this Memorandum of Understanding to ensure the best interests of each child are met and investigations are conducted uniformly throughout the county and to the highest standards of practice.

#### **A. Core Members**

1. The Director of the Wood County Department of Job and Family Services shall assign a designated number of Investigators from the Child Protective Services Unit to the Child Abuse Task Force.
2. The Wood County Prosecuting Attorney shall assign one investigator, one Assistant Prosecutor from the Criminal Division, and one Assistant Prosecutor from the Juvenile Division to the Child Abuse Task Force.

#### **B. Law Enforcement Members**

1. Ideally, each law enforcement jurisdiction will assign one officer to investigate all Task Force cases jointly with the Core Members of the Child Abuse Task Force when an incident occurs in their respective jurisdiction.
2. If there is not an officer assigned to the Task Force by a law enforcement agency, the law enforcement agency shall assign an officer to work with the Core Members of the Child Abuse Task Force when an incident, that will be investigated by the Task Force as outlined below, occurs in their jurisdiction.

### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES**

The purpose of this section is to ensure clarification and mutual understanding of the responsibilities, standards, and procedures for each mandated party and each necessary party to the Memorandum of Understanding/Child Abuse Protocol. This will result in more comprehensive services delivery to child abuse/neglect victims and their families.

#### **A. Joint Investigations**

1. **Generally**, Wood County Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services Unit and Law Enforcement will do joint investigations when any of the following apply:
  - a. The reported injury to a child requires hospitalization or a medical examination.
  - b. If the report involves allegations of human trafficking.

- c. If the reported injury is to the extent that the child requires being transferred to another hospital for intensive treatment, law enforcement should be notified immediately upon receipt of the call.
- d. Suspected sexual abuse is reported.
- e. Suspected abuse of multiple victims is reported.
- f. Suspected abuse or neglect is reported which involves a potential criminal offense.
- g. Any neglect that appears to be life threatening.
- h. Any case which may require children being removed from their home.
- i. Any case that involves a child who may of suffered from out-of-home care abuse such as at school, daycare, etc.
- j. Any case that involves:
  - 1. Infants with severe bruises
  - 2. Shaken baby syndrome
  - 3. Children with broken bones
  - 4. Children with burns
  - 5. Satanic abuse cases
  - 6. Cases where bizarre or ritualistic torture is used
  - 7. Deceased children
- k. Wood County Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services Unit may begin an independent investigation, but call upon law enforcement when one of the following applies:
  - 1. Additional information is obtained that makes a case fall within one of the previously mentioned categories.
  - 2. The investigation setting becomes unsafe after the initial investigation has begun.

## **2. Human Trafficking**

- a. Wood County is committed to advancing action bring traffickers to justice while protecting and supporting the victims
- b. Cases involving allegations of human trafficking will be treated as appropriate subject matter for the Child Abuse Task Force.
- c. Procedures of notification and assignment of duties shall be handled through the provisions for the Task Force;
- d. Additionally, the joint investigators/Task Force members will consider the propriety of informing and including federal authorities or agencies in the investigation/prosecution of cases involving allegations of human trafficking.

## **3. Child Abuse Task Force Cases**

- a. Of the above-mentioned cases requiring a Joint Investigation, the following cases shall be investigated by the law enforcement agency and the Child Abuse Task Force:
  - 1. Cases where the child suffered serious physical harm pursuant to ORC 2901.01(A)(5).
  - 2. Cases of suspected shaken baby syndrome.
  - 3. Child death
  - 4. Child sexual abuse involving a report/allegation of sexual conduct pursuant to ORC 2907.01(A), which includes, but is not limited to, vaginal intercourse, anal



intercourse, oral sex, or penetration into the vaginal or anal opening of another with any object.

- b. In consultation with the law enforcement agency, the Task Force may assess a report requiring a joint investigation to determine if the joint investigation should be conducted through the Task Force.

- 1. Procedure

- i. If a report is received by Wood County Department of Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services Unit during business hours, the Investigations Supervisor or the assigned Investigator for Wood County Department of Job and Family Services shall contact the Investigator from the Prosecutor's Office to discuss whether the case should be assigned to the Task Force.
  - ii. If a report is received by Wood County Department of Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services Unit after business hours, the on-call social worker or supervisor shall contact the Investigator from the Prosecutor's Office assigned to the Task Force to discuss whether the case should be assigned to the Task Force.
  - iii. Any case can be reviewed/referred to the Child Abuse Task Force at any time during the investigation if requested by law enforcement. Law enforcement can refer a case to the Task Force by contacting the Investigator from the Prosecutor's Office assigned to the Task Force.
- 2. The following shall be taken into consideration in determining whether the Task Force should investigate a case:
  - i. Whether the report is a child sexual abuse involving an allegation of sexual contact pursuant to ORC 2907.01(B).
  - ii. Any other case agreed upon by the parties of the Task Force based upon the circumstances of the case.

## **B. Child Interviews**

Wood County Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services Unit and law enforcement officers will be the primary individuals who may conduct an interview of the alleged child victim. Wood County JFS-CPS by mandate must always conduct a face-to-face interview with the alleged child victim.

Prior to conducting an interview, the social worker will assess the most appropriate method of interviewing to be used. This will be based on the age of the child, the allegations of the report, and the possible trauma to the child.

Immediate consideration shall be given to the following:

- 1. Assessment of the victim's immediate need for protection and whether the victim is safe from the alleged perpetrator or related harm.
- 2. The need for medical and/or mental health treatment for the victim, family members, and witnesses.
- 3. The need to re-contact and interview the "reporter."

4. The need to preserve physical evidence.
5. The logistics of the victim, witness, and suspect interviews (i.e. time, place, and order).

Any law enforcement officer or social worker who interviews an alleged child victim shall be properly trained in conducting interviews with alleged child victims. When a child victim is less than ten years old, the interview of the child shall be conducted solely by the Wood County Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services Unit, unless a joint interview is considered appropriate after consulting with the Wood County Prosecutor's Office. Wood County JFS-CPS and law enforcement may jointly interview the alleged child victim if the child is ten years old, or older. It is anticipated that the prosecutor may need to meet with the child in order to discuss the prosecution or otherwise prepare the child for court proceedings, to include reviewing the incident or incidents.

Every effort will be made to minimize the number of interviews conducted and the number of physical examinations a child receives for investigation purposes. Duplication of interviews will be avoided. Members of the team involved in the investigation will work together to arrange interviews at such a time that a representative from each agency is available to be present. If possible, all sexual abuse interviews, except prosecution interviews, should be videotaped.

Each case will be reviewed individually in order to determine the most appropriate location for the interview of an alleged child victim. Whenever possible, the child interviews, except prosecution interviews, shall take place at the Wood County Department of Job and Family Services interview room that is equipped with a video monitor. Under no circumstances should a child be interviewed with more than two interviewers and one other person present (such as a support person or representative from the school). Should the interview need to take place at the child's school, when practical the school shall be contacted and an appointment made. In some instances, a counselor or mandated reporter may be requested to follow up with the child to provide support and minimize trauma to the child.

### **C. Removal of a child from his/her home**

If law enforcement and/or JFS-CPS determine that a child cannot safely remain in his or her home, the parents will be requested to make a safety plan. If a safety plan is not feasible, the Wood County Department of Job and Family Services will contact the Prosecutor's Office to determine if requesting an Ex-Parte Emergency Order is appropriate.

In cases in which there is suspected physical or sexual abuse, or law enforcement and JFS-CPS determine that a child cannot remain safely in his or her home, the Wood County Prosecutor's Office should be notified and consulted as early in the investigation as is practical under the circumstances.

### **D. Wood County Job and Family Services Responsibilities**

#### **1. Receiving Reports**

Wood County JFS-CPS maintains a system to receive reports of alleged child abuse/neglect and to initiate appropriate response, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In person, telephone, or written reports may be made to the Wood County Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services Unit during the hours of 8:00am to 4:30pm, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The office is open 8:00am to 6:00pm on Tuesday. The office is located at 1928 E. Gypsy Lane, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402. The telephone number is (419) 354-9669.

After working hours, emergency calls can be made by contacting the Wood County Department of Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services Hotline at (419) 354-9669.

## **2. Making Reports to Law Enforcement Officers**

For cases requiring Joint Investigations (as outlined above), WCDJFS-CPS will contact the appropriate law enforcement agency with reports of child abuse/neglect which are potentially a criminal offense.

For cases that will be investigated through the Child Abuse Task Force, the Investigator from WCDJFS-CPS assigned to the Task Force, or in the case of after-hours calls, the on-call social worker or supervisor, will contact the Prosecutor's Investigator assigned to the Task Force. The Prosecutor's Investigator will then make contact with the appropriate law enforcement agency.

In all investigations, WCDJFS-CPS workers and/or Child Abuse Task Force members shall work cooperatively with law enforcement during the course of suspected child abuse/neglect investigations. This cooperation will include consistent communication with law enforcement to ensure WCDJFS-CPS is accomplishing its mandate to protect the safety of the child and prevent compromising the child protective assessment and investigation.

In instances of law enforcement agencies declining to assist WCJFS in its investigation, WCDJFS-CPS will contact a Wood County Prosecutor or Prosecutor's Investigator to advise as to securing law enforcement's cooperation or conducting an independent investigation.

## **3. Central Registry/SACWIS**

Reports of child abuse/neglect will be entered into the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) upon receipt of the report and all required information shall be added throughout the assessment and investigation.

## **4. Consultation**

The County Prosecutor and/or Juvenile Judge will be consulted as deemed necessary to protect children who are brought to the attention of Wood County Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services.

## **5. Responding to Emergency and Non-Emergency Reports**

Wood County Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services will initiate an investigation of alleged child abuse/neglect in accordance with the procedures specified in Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101: 2-34-32.

- a. **Emergency Reports:** Wood County JFS-CPS will consider the report an emergency when it is determined that there is imminent risk to the child's safety or there is insufficient information to determine whether or not the child is safe at the time of the report. The social worker on call will respond to emergency reports after hours. For emergency reports, the agency will attempt face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim within one hour of receipt of the report.
- b. **Non-Emergency Reports:** For all other reports, Wood County JFS-CPS will attempt a face-to-face or telephone contact within 24 hours with a principal or collateral source to ensure that the child is safe. The agency will make all reasonable attempts to see the alleged child victim within 24 hours of receipt of the report. If this is not possible, the alleged child victim will be seen within 72 hours of receipt of the report.

## **6. Child Sexual Abuse Medical Examinations**

All medical examinations for sexual abuse should be referred to the Children's Advocacy Center at (419) 251-8047.

## **7. Assistance from Law Enforcement**

WCDJFS-CPS shall request assistance from the appropriate law enforcement agency during potentially dangerous situations, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. WCDJFS has reason to believe a child is in immediate danger of serious harm;
- b. WCDJFS has reason to believe its worker is, or will be in danger of harm;
- c. WCDJFS has reason to believe that a crime is being committed, or has been committed;
- d. An exigent circumstance exists;
- e. The WCDJFS worker must conduct a home visit after regular hours and a law enforcement escort is requested as a standard operating procedure;
- f. WCDJFS is removing a child from their family via an order of the court and the assistance of law enforcement is needed as the Department has reason to believe the family will challenge the removal;
- g. WCDJFS must conduct an assessment/investigation at a known drug house and a law enforcement escort is needed;
- h. WCDJFS is working with a person who has a propensity for violence and the assistance of law enforcement is needed to ensure the safety of all involved;
- i. WCDJFS is working with a family that has historically threatened to do harm to Department staff;
- j. The situation is of such a nature as to possibly warrant criminal action, including all cases involving out-of-home care;
- k. A third party investigation is required.

- l. The situation involves a missing child, the death of a child in which abuse or neglect is suspected as the cause of death, or the death of the child who is in the Department's custody, if abuse or neglect is suspected as the cause of death.
- m. A report of child abuse or neglect is screened in during a disaster, and the assistance of law enforcement is needed to ensure the safety of all involved.

#### **8. Alleged Perpetrator Interviews**

Wood County JFS-CPS must complete investigations within 45 days. The social worker shall keep law enforcement apprised of the 45 day deadline. Should the alleged perpetrator interview become an issue as the deadline approaches, the social worker shall inform law enforcement of this. The social worker and law enforcement should decide whether the alleged perpetrator should be interviewed jointly, separately or if the interview should be waived by the social worker in his/her investigation.

In cases being investigated through the Child Abuse Task Force, if the alleged perpetrator does not reside in the same residence as the alleged child victim, the law enforcement officer and/or the Prosecutor's Investigator should conduct the interview. If the alleged perpetrator does reside with the alleged child victim, then the Task Force members and law enforcement should decide whether the alleged perpetrator should be interviewed jointly, separately, or if the interview should be waived by the social worker in his/her investigation. Alleged perpetrators should not be interviewed by more than two individuals at a time. All parties will communicate to coordinate and keep one another informed of alleged perpetrator interviews.

#### **9. Handling and Coordinating Third-Party Investigations**

Wood County JFS-CPS shall request a third party investigation when a report of child abuse or neglect alleges misconduct by or through one of the following:

- a. Any institution, facility, or family foster home which is licensed, approved, or certified by Wood County Job and Family Services.
- b. Any Ohio Job and Family Services or Wood County Job and Family Services staff.
- c. Any authorized person who is representing the agency and who is providing services for payment or as a volunteer.

Wood County JFS will refer an investigation to an outside agency for any case which involves an allegation against a Wood County Job and Family Services staff member or in any case which it determines there is or is the appearance of an irreconcilable conflict. A third party investigation shall consist of an investigation by Wood County JFS-CPS, or by an outside agency, and the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction. A verbal request will be made by the social worker to law enforcement within 24 hours of the receipt of the report. Both JFS-CPS and law enforcement shall make a written report of their findings. Both reports shall be maintained in the case record.

#### **10. Handling and Coordinating Out-of-Home Abuse Investigations**

Cases alleging child abuse/neglect which occur in an out-of-home care setting such as school, day care, foster home, etc. will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Law enforcement will be contacted prior to any action being taken on the case. Wood County JFS-CPS and law enforcement will work cooperatively to determine if child abuse/neglect has occurred.

#### **11. Handling Cases which Involve a Missing Child**

Wood County JFS-CPS will investigate any case involving a missing child in which circumstances indicate possible abuse or neglect.

Wood County JFS-CPS will assist law enforcement in interviews of children in other instances if requested.

#### **12. Handling Cases which Involve a Disabled Infant**

Wood County JFS-CPS will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency when reports of disabled infants with life threatening conditions are received. The agency and law enforcement will work collaboratively in investigating these allegations. The agency will follow Ohio Administrative Rule 5101: 2-36-07 when a report of a disabled infant is received. WCDJFS shall gather and maintain all of the following information for each appropriate health care facility in Wood County:

- a. The name, address, and telephone number of each facility;
- b. The name, title, and telephone number of the contact person for allegations of withholding medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions;
- c. The name and chairperson of each facility's committee for the review of allegations of withholding medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions;

In cases involving allegations of withholding medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions, in addition to the other procedures established in Ohio Administrative Rule 5101: 2-36-07, WCDJFS shall involve a qualified medical consultant within 24 hours as required and consult with the prosecutor's office regarding the pursuit of any necessary legal remedies.

#### **13. Private Custody Disputes**

Wood County JFS will not become involved in private custody disputes unless they involve a report of child abuse or neglect.

### **E. Law Enforcement Responsibilities and Procedures**

## **1. Alleged Perpetrator Interviews**

Wood County JFS-CPS must complete investigations within 45 days. The law enforcement officer assigned to the investigation should be mindful of the deadline and discuss time constraints with the social worker. The social worker and law enforcement should decide whether the alleged perpetrator should be interviewed jointly, separately or if the interview should be waived by the social worker in his/her investigation.

In cases being investigated through the Child Abuse Task Force, the procedure set forth in Section D.8. of this Memorandum of Understanding shall apply.

## **2. Child Interviews**

When law enforcement receives a report of sexual abuse involving a minor, JFS-CPS must be contacted immediately. Depending on the nature of the sexual abuse report, the case may be investigated through the Child Abuse Task Force.

Interviews with alleged child victims shall be conducted as outlined above.

If law enforcement requests assistance with interviewing a child witness, JFS-CPS will assist and conduct a child forensic interview.

If a child is less than ten years old, the child should be interviewed only by the Wood County JFS-CPS unless the parties deem a joint interview appropriate after consulting with the County Prosecutor's Office.

## **3. Other Witness Interviews**

Law enforcement is primarily responsible for interviewing other potential witnesses to any child abuse investigation. Law enforcement may request assistance of WCDJFS-CPS in interviewing child witnesses.

In Child Abuse Task Force investigations, law enforcement should coordinate interviews with the Prosecutor Investigator assigned to the Task Force. The Prosecutor Investigator will keep the WCDJFS-CPS Investigator assigned to the Task Force informed of all witness interviews. If possible, interviewing any witness with more than two investigators present should be avoided. Should the need arise for WCDJFS-CPS Investigator to be involved in an interview of a witness, the law enforcement agency and the Task Force will collectively determine whether law enforcement or the Prosecutor's Investigator will assist with the interview, keeping in mind each individual's experience.

## **4. Child Sexual Abuse Medical Examinations**

All medical examinations for sexual abuse should be referred to the Children's Advocacy Center at (419) 251-8047.

## **5. Handling and Coordinating Cases which Involve a Child Death**

Cases involving a child death will be jointly investigated by law enforcement and the Child Abuse Task Force. These include, but are not limited to, cases of alleged withholding of appropriate nutrition, hydration, medication, or medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life threatening conditions, the death of a child where abuse or neglect is suspected as the cause of death, the death of a child who is in the Department's custody where abuse or neglect is suspected as the cause of death, or in any case when there is a possibility of a criminal charge being filed. The Child Abuse Task Force and law enforcement will share all information obtained in the investigation and provide written reports as may be required and requested. The Child Abuse Task Force and law enforcement will cooperate in any manner requested by the County Prosecutor or the Courts.

## **6. Responding to Requests for Assistance from WCDJFS-CPS**

Wood County Law Enforcement Agencies shall escort WCDJFS staff when requested pursuant to Section D.7. of this Memorandum of Understanding.

## **7. Emergency Response**

Wood County Law Enforcement Agencies shall respond, in cooperation with WCDJFS, to emergency reports involving child abuse or neglect within one hour of the receipt of the report, in an attempt to contact the alleged child victim (ACV) face to face.

## **8. Review of Memorandum**

The Wood County Sheriff and each Chief Municipal Officer shall provide copies of this plan to their deputies/officers to ensure awareness of the plan.

## **9. Removal of Children**

Law enforcement shall exercise their duty to remove children pursuant to ORC 2151.31, in consultation with WCDJFS and will immediately place the child under the care of WCDJFS. The preferred practice shall continue to be consultation with the County Prosecutor's Office and the Juvenile Judge before making any removal decisions.

# **F. Prosecution Responsibilities and Procedures**

## **1. Filing Charges**

At the conclusion of the investigation and case review, it is the function of the prosecutor's office to initiate such court proceedings as may be necessary and proper under the juvenile and criminal laws of the State of Ohio.



The Wood County Prosecutor's Office is generally charged with the ultimate responsibility for determining which cases are to be prosecuted through the criminal justice system, including Common Pleas, Juvenile, and Municipal Court, although it does not have authority to prosecute misdemeanors in Municipal Court. The attorney assigned to these specialized cases shall have demonstrated a sincere interest in the plight of child victims and a high degree of skill in the trial of serious cases.

The Prosecutor's Office further commits to a policy of joint, regular review of cases, prior to institution of criminal proceedings unless exigent circumstances exist, in accordance with the spirit and intent of this protocol.

If criminal charges are indicated, the prosecutor involved will initiate the proceedings, or direct the appropriate party to initiate proceedings, and maintain primary responsibility for the victim/witness preparation from the time charges are filed.

The prosecutor's office involved will, to the best of its ability, regularly inform those involved in the process of the status of the case and its ultimate disposition.

## **2. Victim Assistance**

The Wood County Prosecutor's Office Victim Assistance Coordinator will:

- a. Notify the victim and/or non-offending family member of all pending court actions.
- b. Communicate concerns of the victimized parties to the prosecution.
- c. Maintain a safe waiting area prior to testifying.
- d. Provide or arrange transportation to and from court when necessary, for court preparation and testimony.
- e. When appropriate, provide the victim with a visit to the courtroom to familiarize the child with the courtroom environment and inform the child of who will be in the courtroom and each person's function during testimony.
- f. When appropriate, collaborate with social service agencies to see that the victim and family members are receiving some therapeutic intervention or continuing counseling.
- g. Intercede on behalf of employed parents or caretakers with his/her employer when court appearances for support are necessary.
- h. Encourage and assist in preparation of the Victim Impact Statement made either by the victim or family member at sentencing.
- i. Encourage and assist in applications for the Victims of Crime Compensation Program.
- j. Inform the victim of prisoner's release or enroll the victim in the VINE program.
- k. Provide continuous support throughout prosecution.
- l. Provide an open line of communication with the prosecution team, law enforcement, and social service agencies.

## **3. Vertical Prosecution**

To the extent possible, the Wood County Prosecutor's Office commits to a policy of "Vertical Prosecution" in all cases falling under the terms of this protocol. Under such a procedure, an Assistant Prosecutor shall handle a case from its inception to conclusion, thereby lessening the number of persons that the minor is required to deal with during the criminal justice process.

#### **G. Responding to Other Reports**

Wood County Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services will notify law enforcement in the appropriate jurisdiction of reports of individuals who aid, abet, induce, cause, encourage, or contribute to a child or ward of the Juvenile Court becoming dependent, neglected, unruly, or delinquent, or leaving the custody of any person, department, public or private institution without the legal consent of that person, department or institution or are involved in any other criminal activity.

Wood County JFS-CPS will notify the law enforcement agency in the appropriate jurisdiction of reports of individuals who act in a way tending to cause a child or ward of the Juvenile Court to become an unruly or delinquent child.

Wood County JFS-CPS will report information about missing or runaway children to the law enforcement agency with appropriate jurisdiction and provide any assistance and cooperation needed, including access to all information the agency may possess that would assist in dealing with this matter.

#### **H. Referring Cases to Prosecutor**

Wood County JFS-CPS shall refer abuse/neglect cases to the Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Juvenile Court action necessary to protect the child(ren). Law enforcement shall refer abuse/neglect cases to the County Prosecutor or Municipal Prosecutor for criminal action. Wood County JFS-CPS shall prepare and present cases when necessary and submit required documentation as requested to the Court and/or Prosecutor's Offices.

Wood County JFS-CPS will request consultation with the County Prosecutor and Municipal Prosecutor on domestic violence cases which involve children as victims whenever it will assist in providing more comprehensive services to the family.

### **5. CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION**

In accordance with Section 2151.421 of the Revised Code, and the applicable sections of the Administrative Code, each report and investigation of alleged child abuse/neglect is confidential and may be shared only when dissemination is authorized for the reasons stated in the Ohio Administrative Code rule, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code, Ohio Rules of Juvenile Procedure, Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure, or by court order.

The identity of the reporter or referral source shall be considered a part of the report, and shall not be released or affirmed by the Wood County JFS-CPS except as described below.

The reporter will be informed that a subpoena for court testimony may be issued if court intervention is necessary. The Wood County JFS-CPS is authorized to release the identity of the reporter to Ohio Department of Job and Family Services staff with supervisory responsibility for Wood County JFS-CPS, another public children's services agency investigating a child abuse or neglect report involving a principal of the case, law enforcement officials, and the County Prosecutor's Office when investigating an allegation of child abuse or neglect or a person making a false report of child abuse/neglect.

The Wood County Job and Family Services: Child Protective Services is authorized to disseminate information only to those who are specifically indicated in Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-33-21. A copy of this rule is available at Wood County JFS-CPS for any person or agency who requests a copy.

## **6. CROSS-REFERRAL OF INFORMATION**

Cross referral of information between parties of the Memorandum of Understanding provides for a structured system to exchange information necessary for the completion of an investigation, case management, and provision of services to family members where abuse or neglect has occurred.

### **A. Conditions under which information shall be disseminated**

Unless otherwise prohibited, exchange of information shall take place, in addition to those previously addressed circumstances when:

1. Information is requested by the Wood County JFS-CPS and the agency is currently providing protective services to the child or the family.
2. Information is requested by a law enforcement official currently investigating an allegation of abuse or neglect.
3. Information is requested by a member of the Child Abuse/Neglect Protection Team for the purpose of team consultation. Where necessary, the member may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, and information will not be released without first consulting with the Wood County Prosecutor's Office.
4. Information being disseminated is necessary for the Wood County JFS-CPS and law enforcement to conduct an investigation of reported child abuse or neglect.
5. The agency or department head is satisfied that the dissemination of information will be related to the goals of Children's Protective Services, will be used only for the purposes for which it is made available, and will be handled according to Federal and Ohio laws, Ohio Administrative Codes and local policies concerning confidential information.
6. Information being requested pertains to reports of missing children.
7. Information being disseminated is necessary for the prosecution of child abuse cases.

### **B. Types of information which shall be disseminated**

The information which shall be disseminated will include the existence of prior reports, the dates of the report(s), the confirmed allegation(s) of each report, the child and other principals involved in the report, and the case disposition. The results of any interview or videotaped interview will only be shared with law enforcement, prosecutors, or the court as requested. The information shared will be that which is appropriate and necessary for the parties to the Memorandum of Understanding/Child Abuse Protocol to meet their respective responsibilities.

#### **C. Procedures for disseminating information**

As required by Revised Code 2151.421, peace officers shall refer reports of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Wood County JFS-CPS, as previously indicated.

The Wood County JFS-CPS shall provide the appropriate law enforcement agency a summary of each investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect as previously indicated unless law enforcement waives the same in writing.

The law enforcement agency shall provide the Wood County JFS-CPS with a summary of each investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect including interviews in writing.

The Wood County JFS-CPS shall provide the County Prosecutor or Municipal Prosecutor with a summary of an investigation when requested.


#### **D. Time frames for disseminating information**

The dissemination of information shall be in writing and provided to the party requesting the information as soon as possible but always within 5 working days of the request.

In an emergency situation, information shall be immediately released to mandated parties of the Memorandum of Understanding/Child Abuse Protocol.

*[Remainder of page intentionally left blank; signature pages follow]*

Wood County Department of Job and  
Family Services

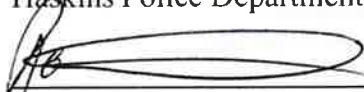


Wood County Prosecutor

Bloomdale Police Department

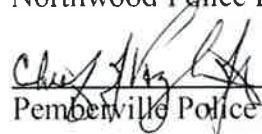
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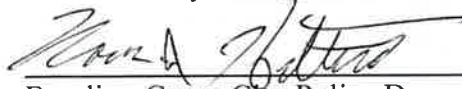
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Wood County Clerk of Courts

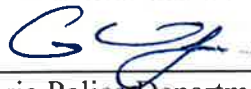


Juvenile Court Judge

Wood County Sheriff's Office



Bowling Green City Police Department



Fostoria Police Department

Lake Township Police Department

North Baltimore Police Department

Ohio State Highway Patrol

Perrysburg Police Department

Risingsun Police Department

Walbridge Police Department

Wood County Humane Society



Wood County Department of Job and  
Family Services


  
Wood County Prosecutor

Bloomdale Police Department

Bradner Police Department

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Wood County Clerk of Courts

Juvenile Court Judge

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Wood County Sheriff's Office

  
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Walbridge Police Department

Wood County Humane Society



Wood County Department of Job and Family Services

  
Wood County Prosecutor

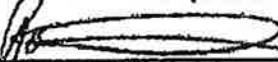
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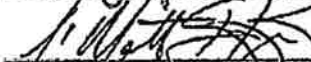
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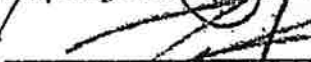
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Wood County Clerk of Courts

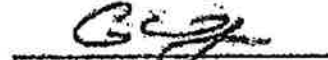
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Wood County Sheriff's Office



Bowling Green City Police Department



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Walbridge Police Department

Wood County Humane Society

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Wood County Department of Job and  
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Wood County Prosecutor

Bloomdale Police Department

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Wood County Clerk of Courts

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Walbridge Police Department

Wood County Humane Society





Wood County Department of Job and Family Services



Wood County Prosecutor

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Rossford Police Department

Wayne Police Department

Wood County Clerk of Courts

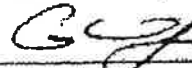
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Bowling Green City Police Department



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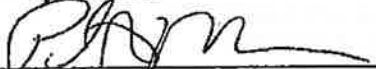


Wood County Humane Society

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Wood County Department of Job and  
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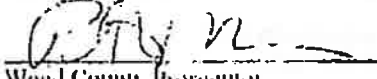
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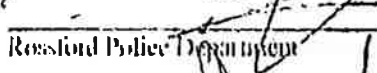
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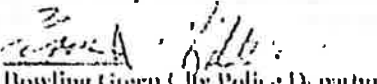
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Wood County Humane Society

Wood County Humane Society



NO WRONG DOOR  
Help Wherever You Turn

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Wood County Department of Job and  
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Wood County Prosecutor

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Wood County Clerk of Courts

Juvenile Court Judge

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