

QUICK START: Responding to Suspicion, Allegation, or Disclosure of Abuse

The material appearing on the Education Portal is intended for informational purposes and should not be considered legal advice or used as such.

If the child or youth is in immediate danger report to local law enforcement and/or a child services agency directly and via a local hotline. You can find country specific hotline numbers and information [here](#).

In cases of online sexual exploitation use local reporting hotlines and the international tip line at report.cybertip.org.

Activate your organization child protection protocols for documenting and investigating any suspicion or incidents of abuse. Law enforcement officers will generally not advise you on incidents and are duty bound to investigate criminal activity. Know and abide by the local laws and reporting procedures of your location. Retain records and share confidential material appropriately. Do not view digital evidence of sexual exploitation of children or youth. If it is needed as evidence, such as if an adult is involved, turn off the device and secure it. It is illegal in most countries to view sexual images of children or youth. If you have viewed it accidentally as part of disclosure, document this and seek counseling if needed.¹

In the case of historic abuse, whether months or years have passed and even if you do not you have full knowledge of all the details, it is important to make a report. Seek support or counseling if you are the victim. In many cases tip lines and hotlines can act on this information, but you should also reach out to current administrators and/or accrediting agencies (usually noted on websites) if the incident happened in a school, sports club or educational facility or included a member of staff, volunteer or another student. Any information you can share about the incident is useful to law enforcement building a case and to administrators strengthening their child protection policies.

Relevant sections of the Education Portal related to suspicion, allegation or disclosure of abuse are:

- [Global Reporting Mechanisms](#)
- [Support Resources](#)
- [Risk Management](#)
- [Awareness](#)
- [International & National Law](#)
- [Responding to Disclosure \(Committee for Children\)](#) – First Responder Interview Guidelines

¹ Sexting in Schools: Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people UKCCI