

YOUR ROLE AS A MANDATORY REPORTER

HELP PROTECT CHILDREN AND PREVENT ABUSE

Know Who is at Risk

All children and youth are at risk for abuse

Those who are new to your school, have special needs, or language deficits are especially at risk



KNOW THE FACTS

- Abusers *and* victims may be male or female
- Abusers are usually known to the victims
- Sexual abuse committed by children must be addressed by professionals
- False reports of sexual abuse by children are rare
- You don't need to know all the details to report abuse
- Non-touching and online behaviors can be abusive
- Inappropriate behavior with children should be questioned
- Children who experience abuse cannot be blamed and cannot consent
- Sometimes there are no visible signs abuse is occurring



KNOW THE SIGNS

Educate yourself on the physical, behavioral, psychological, and social indicators of child abuse and the grooming behavior of offenders. Understand that they are only indicators – as such, they are not always present, and they don't always indicate abuse.

*Grooming may include: gift giving, progressive intimacy, boundary violations, trauma bonding, meeting parents' needs, secrets, testing limits, and threats

*Indicators of abuse may include: changes in behavior, avoidance of specific person or places, inappropriate or dirty clothing, injuries to soft parts of body, eating or sleeping disorders, regressive behavior, acting out or withdrawing

* Lists are not comprehensive.



PROTECT THE CHILD

- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child comes first
- Respond to suspicion of sexual abuse even if parents don't want to report concerns, particularly if suspected offender has access to children
- Follow school child protection policy and reporting procedures
- Know and follow local laws pertaining to child protection

Follow expert advice if first responder to disclosure of abuse:

- Do not show shock, anger, or disbelief
- Do not blame or ask questions that seem to blame
- Do not ask leading questions or gather unnecessary details
- Provide victim with some control over next steps, but never promise to keep something secret



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WHAT SCHOOLS SHOULD DO

- Create a reporting protocol before an incident occurs
- Identify child protection designates and other responders
- Seek support from local multidisciplinary team and international experts
- Know your local reporting procedures and child protection [laws](#) and [hotlines](#)
- Maintain confidentiality - never reveal the victim or offender names or details outside the reporting protocol
- Take non-recent or anonymous accusations seriously
- If you are a first responder to disclosure:
 - It is not your job to determine the truth
 - Avoid gathering unneeded details
 - Avoid viewing youth produced sexual imagery (“sexts”)



SUPPORT THE FAMILY AND YOUR COMMUNITY

Heed guidelines of Trauma-Informed Care:

- Avoid re-traumatizing triggers such as repeating details of events
- Identify resources for support and recovery
- Listen without judgement (don’t express shock or outrage)
- Avoid platitudes saying instead, “I’m glad you told me” and “It’s not your fault”
- Allow silence
- Don’t talk about your own trauma or ask too many questions



GET MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Education Portal at:
EdPortal.ICMEC.org

- Access Global Reporting Mechanisms
- Support for counselors, teachers and parents
- More on Reporting & Support including guidelines and forms
- Help creating and working with Multidisciplinary Teams

The information contained herein has been combined by ICMEC and derived from the following sources: [Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit \(NCTSN\)](#), [Responding to Disclosure \(CFC\)](#), [Sexting in Schools and Colleges \(UKCCIS\)](#), [Terminology Guidelines \(ICMEC\)](#), [AISA Child Protection Handbook](#), [Victimization of Expat Children \(IPSCAN, Save the Children\)](#). These source documents are available in full through ICMEC’s Education Portal.



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