

Recognizing, Reporting and Responding to Child Abuse from a Distance



LUNA
CHILD AND YOUTH
ADVOCACY CENTRE

School staff play a key role in recognizing, reporting and responding to the signs of child abuse. Through distance learning platforms, staff may identify the signs of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect, or may witness domestic violence. We all have a role to play in ensuring children and youth are safe.

We must work together to continue to provide the right types of support to vulnerable children and their families and remain alert to any indicators children may be unsafe at home.

- Have a plan in place for checking on children who were on the school's radar.
- Make phone calls to students and families to check-in. Inability to connect with child (without reason) may be cause for concern.
- Create space for student voice (videos, Zoom, Google Classroom, etc.).
- Send messages to students, reminding them you are there for them.
- Have access to demographic information, addresses, phone numbers, etc.
- Ask open-ended questions when checking in with students:
 - "What is it like being at home?"
 - "What are some sad things that happened this week?"
- Provide words of support:
 - "You are not alone."
 - "I want to make sure you are safe."
 - Adjust your language to be inclusive of students and families.
 - Monitor for signs of distress and refer to necessary supports.

Signs of Child Abuse

Identifying abuse can be difficult to detect on messaging apps, phone calls or video. Therefore, we must be extremely vigilant at looking for signs of potential abuse or neglect, like:

- Unexplained marks or bruises
- Basic needs or care not provided
- Changes in physical appearance
- Child seems frightened of parents
- Reports an injury caused by parent or caregiver
- Changes in mental health (shows signs of anxiety, depression, fear, suicidal ideation, withdrawn, etc.)
- Sending/posting concerning messages or writing about negative experiences
- You can hear aggression, shouting, items being thrown, etc. in the background

Checking in With Parents

Check-in with parents regularly. Develop a resource list for parents when they need support.

When checking in with parents, be aware of warning signs that may indicate they are at risk of maltreating their child:

- Shows little concern for their child
- Sees child as completely bad, worthless or a burden
- Appears indifferent towards or uninterested in their child
- Seems unconcerned or depressed
- Behaves unreasonably or bizarrely
- Abuses drugs or alcohol
- Frequently blames, belittles or berates child

**You have a duty to report suspicions of abuse.
Call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-387-5437.**

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