



SAFE SCHOOL PROGRAM

REPORTING RECOGNIZED AND DISCLOSED ABUSE & NEGLECT

TWO WAYS TO REPORT

 **Online:** www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp
Making a report online will provide an email confirmation of your report.

 **By Phone:** Texas Abuse Hotline - 1-800-252-5400
Reporting by phone must be done if:

- You feel the situation requires action in less than 48 hours
- You prefer to remain anonymous
- You do not have all the information required to complete an online report
- You do not want email confirmation

The *Texas Family Code 261.101* requires professionals to make a report within **48 hours** of first suspecting abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children.

Failure to report could result in imprisonment of up to 180 days and/or a fine of up to \$2,000.

Reporting suspected child abuse only to your principal, school counselor or superintendent will NOT satisfy your obligation by law. You MUST report to DFPS.

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE

- Listen and look at the child
- Control your reaction, do not panic
- Assure the child that the abuse is not their fault
- Praise the child for telling
- Don't correct language
- Ask questions for clarification without leading and never assume
- Never blame
- Look for privacy
- Do not seek help in front of the child
- If a student says something concerning during class or in a group, take the student aside to learn more about what they said
- Be honest, do not promise, explain what is next
- Only share information with those who need to know (CPS, authorities, your principal)

HELPFUL STATEMENTS

- "I believe you"
- "I will help you"
- "It's not your fault"
- "You did the right thing in telling me"
- "I want you to be safe"
- "I cannot keep this a secret, but I will not tell anyone except those who must know to help"

AFTER THE DISCLOSURE

- **REPORT!** First to DFPS or 911 if the child is in immediate danger and then to your school principal
- Write down exactly what the child disclosed in their words
- Sign and date your notes
- Ask the school counselor for community resources if applicable, such as those who specialize in the same type of abuse

SIGNS OF ABUSE

FORMS OF ABUSE	SIGNS IN A CHILD	SIGNS IN A PARENT/CAREGIVER
<p>PHYSICAL</p> <p>Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to a child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent injuries such as broken bones, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanation • Unable to explain injury or explanations given are inconsistent with the injury • Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury • Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body • Lack of reaction to pain • Fear of going home or seeing parents • Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arm or legs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers conflicting, unconvincing or no explanation for the child's injuries • Describes the child in negative ways • Uses harsh physical discipline with the child • Has a history of abusing animals or pets
<p>SEXUAL</p> <p>Any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases • Evidence of injury to the genital area • Pregnancy in a young girl • Difficulty in sitting or walking • Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex • Sexual comments, behavior or play • Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age • Sexual victimization of other children • Runs away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex • Is secretive and isolated • Is jealous or controlling with family members
<p>EMOTIONAL</p> <p>A pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over compliance • Speech disorders • Low self-esteem • Severe depression, anxiety or aggression • Difficulty making friends or playing with other children • Lagging in physical, emotional and intellectual development • Has attempted suicide • Inappropriately adult or infantile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly blames, belittles or berates the child • Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems • Overly rejects the child
<p>NEGLECT</p> <p>The failure to provide for a child's basic needs (excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obvious undernourishment • Lack of personal cleanliness • Torn or dirty clothing • Steals or begs for food • Unattended for long periods of time • Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention • Abuses drugs or alcohol • Is frequently tardy or absence from school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears to be indifferent to the child • Seems apathetic or depressed • Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner • Is abusing alcohol or other drugs



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