

Disclosures (cont.)

Disguised Disclosures

- “I know someone who is being touched in a bad way.”
- “What would happen if someone told you that he was getting hit and wanted it to stop?”

The child may be talking about someone she or he knows, but is just as likely to be talking about himself or herself. Encourage the child to tell you what he or she knows about the “other child.” Then ask whether something like what is being said has ever happened to him or her.

Disclosures With Strings Attached

- “I have a problem, but if I tell you about it, you have to promise not to tell.”

Many children believe something very negative will happen if they break the secret of abuse. The child may have been threatened by the offender to ensure his or her silence. Let the child know that there are some secrets that you just can't keep. Assure the child that your job is to protect the child and keep him/her safe. Let the child know you will keep it as confidential as possible but that you are required by law to make a report.

What To Do When a Child Discloses

1. Find a private place to talk with the child
2. Reassure the child
3. Listen openly and calmly
4. Write down the facts and words as the child has stated them
5. Report the disclosure to the designated reporter in your school/system/agency or your local child protection agency or law enforcement entity
6. Respect the child's need for confidentiality... by not discussing the abuse with anyone other than those required by school/agency policy and the law.

Marietta City Schools

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MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE

Who are mandated reporters?

* **Child service organization personnel'** means persons employed by or **volunteering** at a business or an organization, whether public, private, for profit, not for profit, or voluntary, that provides care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to children.

O.C.G.A. 19-7-5(b)(5)

(This definition also applies to individuals who “volunteer” to be a mentor and are asked by or recognized by school staff to serve in that capacity.

What do I need to know?

A report is to be made immediately and in no case, later than 24 hours from the time there is a reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused.

Remember.....

Suspicion of abuse is all that is necessary to file a report. If you are not sure whether a report should be made, you should contact DFCS. The law protects you if you make a report in good faith. Not making a report is a criminal offense.

As a mandated reporter, what are the next steps I must take when I suspect abuse?

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, make an **immediate** direct report to the Department of Family Children Services (DFCS) by call 770-319-3739 or, after hours or on week-ends/holidays, call 1-855-422-4453.

After making this call, notify the principal or staff member in charge of the program or facility as soon as possible that the report was made.

What if the child is in imminent danger?

Call 911!

TYPES

OF

ABUSE

Physical Abuse

The non-accidental physical injury of a child. Physical abuse is the most visible and widely recognized form of child abuse.

Indicators:

- Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
- Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- Shrinks at the approach of adults
- Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver

Neglect

The failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs.

Indicators:

- Is frequently absent from school
- Begs or steals food or money
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Abuses alcohol or drugs
- States that there is no one at home to provide care

Sexual Abuse

The exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child. Sexual abuse is most commonly perpetrated by an individual known to the victim, rarely is the offender a stranger. One-third of all sexual abuse is perpetrated by another child. Sexual abuse includes touching offenses: fondling, sodomy, rape; and non-touching offenses: child prostitution, indecent exposure and exhibitionism, utilizing the internet as a vehicle for exploitation.

Indicators:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a sexually transmitted disease
- Runs away
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver

Emotional Abuse

A pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. It frequently occurs as verbal abuse, but can also include the following: rejection, terrorizing, shameful forms of punishment, withholding physical and emotional contact; developmentally inappropriate expectations.

Indicators:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- Inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example)
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- Has attempted suicide
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent

Commercial Sexual Exploitation Of Children

The buying, selling or trading of sex acts with a child.

If you suspect a child is a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, please contact the Georgia Care Connection Office at 404-602-0068.

(Calling the GCCO links the family to supportive services but does not fulfill mandatory reporting of child sexual exploitation as required by law.)

Indicators:

- Branding or tattooing: victims branded by their pimp with tattoos that include a male name or initials, street name, gang or money symbols; these are often found on legs, neck, chest, hands or arms (this is one of the ways that pimps maintain physical and psychological control over emotionally vulnerable girls)
- An older boyfriend or male friend or relative
- Withdrawn and uncommunicative
- Possession of large amounts of money (girls turn money over to the pimp)
- Poor personal hygiene and/or inappropriate dress
- Runaway or lack of adult supervision/support

Disclosures

When a child tells you that he or she has been abused, i.e. **makes a disclosure**, you should always take the statement seriously, regardless of how credible the child's statement seems.

Indirect Disclosures:

- "There was no one home to help me with my homework."
- "I don't like it when my mother leaves me alone with my uncle."

A child may talk in these terms because he or she hasn't learned more specific vocabulary, feels ashamed or embarrassed, has promised not to tell, or for a combination of those reasons.