

4. WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD TEACHERS TAKE?

1. AS SOON AS TEACHERS FEEL UNEASY ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON AND SUSPECT MALTREATMENT THEY HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT CONSTRUCTIVELY ON THEIR CONCERN. AS MOST CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IS NOT IDENTIFIED ON THE BASIS OF A SINGLE EVENT IT MAY BE USEFUL FOR TEACHERS TO KEEP BRIEF WRITTEN WORKING NOTES ON THE BASIS OF THE CONCERN BY CITING DIRECT OBSERVATIONS, NOTING THE DATES, THE PRESENCE OF ANY PHYSICAL OR BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS, AND INJURIES, IF ANY TO ASSIST IN IDENTIFYING ANY CUMULATIVE RISK TO A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON.
2. IF A TEACHER DETERMINES THAT THERE IS A STRONG SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT A DECISION ABOUT AN APPROPRIATE COURSE OF ACTION MUST BE MADE.

IN SITUATIONS WHERE A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON HAS DISCLOSED SEXUAL ABUSE OR PROBABLE NON-ACCIDENTAL INJURIES ARE REVEALED/DISCOVERED, THERE IS AN EXPECTATION THAT CSV CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES WILL BE PROMPTLY CONTACTED THROUGH THE RELEVANT CSV REGIONAL OFFICE (SEE ATTACHED LIST) OR THE 24 HOUR CHILD PROTECTION CRISIS LINE [03] 860 6611 OR [008] 135 135 (STD FREE).

IN OTHER SITUATIONS, WHERE THERE IS A BASIS FOR CONCERN TEACHERS CAN SEEK ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE FROM:

- SCHOOL BASED PERSONNEL SUCH AS THE PRINCIPAL, OTHER TEACHERS INVOLVED WITH THE CHILD AND HIS/HER FAMILY, THE STUDENT WELFARE CO-ORDINATOR AND/OR THE SCHOOL SUPPORT CENTRE
- CSV CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
- OTHER AGENCIES AS APPROPRIATE.

FOR EXAMPLE; LOCAL SERVICES SUCH AS COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES, FAMILY SUPPORT AGENCIES OR SEXUAL ASSAULT CLINICS

CONFIDENTIALITY MUST BE MAINTAINED DURING THIS PROCESS.

- 3. IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS A CENTRAL CO-ORDINATING POINT IN THE SCHOOL THE PRINCIPAL OR NOMINEE MUST BE NOTIFIED OF ANY REFERRALS TO CSV CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES AND THEREAFTER SHOULD ASSUME THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE REQUIRED COMMUNICATION AND LIAISON WITH CSV CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES. IN MOST CASES THE PRINCIPALS NOMINEE SHOULD BE THE PERSON MAKING THE REFERRAL.**

- 4. IN SITUATIONS IN WHICH THE INVESTIGATION OF CSV CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES RESULTS IN ACTION BEING TAKEN IN THE CHILDREN'S COURT TO PROTECT THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON SCHOOL PERSONNEL MAY BE REQUIRED TO PREPARE A REPORT FOR THE COURT AND/OR GIVE EVIDENCE. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES THE PRINCIPAL OR NOMINEE SHOULD CO-ORDINATE THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE AND THE GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR TEACHER REPLACEMENT WILL APPLY.**

- 5. WHERE THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON BEING PLACED UNDER A COURT ORDER WHICH CSV CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES SUPERVISES THE ALLOCATION CSV WORKER WILL LIAISE WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL AS APPROPRIATE REGARDING THE SCHOOLS ONGOING CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUPPORT OF THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CASE.**

- 6. TEACHERS MUST RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY WHEN DEALING WITH A CASE OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND MUST ONLY DISCUSS CASE DETAILS AND THE IDENTITY OF THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON AND HIS/HER FAMILY WITH THOSE WITH A BONA FIDE INVOLVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SITUATION.**

7. **THERE MAY BE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH A TEACHER BELIEVES THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE SCHOOL DO NOT LEND THEMSELVES TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROTOCOL. ADDITIONALLY HE/SHE MAY EXERCISE HIS/HER RIGHT PURSUANT TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICES ACT 1970, TO CONTACT CSV PROTECTIVE SERVICES DIRECTLY AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN AND THAT AN ALTERNATE COURSE OF ACTION MUST BE TAKEN TO PROTECT THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON AND/OR THE TEACHERS CONFIDENTIALITY.**

TEACHERS AND OTHER SCHOOL STAFF HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR CARE WHO MAY BE ABUSED OR NEGLECTED.