



LYFORD CAY  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## Child Protection at LCIS

LCIS is committed to the protection and safeguarding of all students. This document outlines policies and procedures regarding child protection. It includes a Code of Conduct and procedures to be followed specific to the nature of the incident. This policy is in compliance with the statute law of The Bahamas - Chapter 132: Child Protection PART VI - CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN SUPERVISION ORDERS. This policy is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection-related laws, regulations and standards.

## Purpose of the Child Protection Policy

An effective whole-school child protection policy is one that provides clear direction to staff and others about expected behaviour when dealing with child protection issues. An effective policy also makes explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practices and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns, referrals and monitoring are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of children.

## Goals of the Child Protection Policy

All members of the LCIS community help keep children and young people safe by:

- contributing to the provision of safe learning environments for children and young people
- taking appropriate action to make sure they are kept safe at school
- communicating to the school and wider community our commitment to safeguarding children

This policy outlines how LCIS will:

- create an environment where children and young people feel secure, have their viewpoints valued, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- continue to develop awareness in all staff of the need for safeguarding student wellbeing in all aspects of their work and their responsibilities in preventing sexual misconduct
- ensure that all staff are aware of the referral procedures and child protection officers within the school
- ensure a child-centred approach which creates a culture of child protection being everyone's responsibility
- provide a systematic means of monitoring all students who have been identified as needing protection from abuse
- ensure that outside agencies are involved as appropriate
- ensure that key concepts of safeguarding are integrated into the curriculum
- ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried
- provide information for parents and guardians outlining the procedures laid down by this policy
- ensure we practise safe recruitment by checking the suitability of all staff and volunteers who work with children

## II. Child Protection Code of Conduct

Lyford Cay International School is committed to the safety and protection of children. This Code of Conduct applies to all faculty, staff, employees, volunteers and students who represent the school and who interact with children or young people.

LCIS is aware of the responsibilities that come with working with children. The LCIS community acknowledges and respects boundaries when working with students and takes the necessary steps to protect children, themselves and the school.

### Contact with students

- Faculty, staff, employees and volunteers are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a child.
- Avoid physical contact with students that could be misconstrued.
- One-on-one meetings with students must be held in a public area, in a room where the interaction can be observed, or in a room with the door left open. Another member of staff must be notified of the meeting.

### Communication with students

- Communication between faculty, staff, employees, volunteers and students that is outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship (teacher, coach, host, etc.) is prohibited. In the case where an employee is also a parent at the school, communication to arrange playdates or other personal events should be done from parent to parent.
- Electronic messaging between a student and a person acting on behalf of the school must use official school channels. Personal email addresses should only be used in case of an emergency.
- Electronic communication that takes place over a school network or platform may be subject to monitoring.
- Faculty, staff, employees and volunteers may not use any form of social media (including but not restricted to Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, TikTok, WhatsApp, Facetime or Instagram) or text messaging to communicate with individual students, except for specific persons in the Advancement Office who are sending messages to a mass audience as a part of their public relations duties or in relation to certain WhatsApp group forums related to field trips. These should be deleted once the field trip has been completed.

### Out-of-school conduct

- Faculty, staff, employees and volunteers may not illegally possess or use drugs and may not provide alcohol, drugs or tobacco products to students.
- Faculty, staff, employees and volunteers may not give inappropriate video, audio or reading material to students.
- Faculty, staff, employees and volunteers may not give nor receive gifts from children without the knowledge of the child's parents or guardians.
- Any off-campus tutoring or meetings with students must be conducted in the presence of others.

- All school staff are in a position of trust and are expected to act in a professional manner at all times and should refrain from posting sensitive information on social media.

### III. Employment Screening

All personnel, staff, teachers, volunteers, and other members of the community whose potential employment or volunteer service involves direct contact with, and/or the potential for unmonitored access to, children (including any individuals who regularly provide transportation to children) are given thorough reference and police checks, including review of criminal and sexual offender records.

Likewise, LCIS asks all routine contractors, vendors and service providers to provide a written guarantee that a background check was completed on any individual sent by the contractor to provide onsite services. Otherwise, such individuals must be continuously supervised while on campus.

The elements of a comprehensive background check include (a/an):

- written application and a “statement of suitability” requiring a signature stating that the applicant knows of no reason or prior circumstance that would preclude him or her from working safely with minor children
- personal interview
- credential check depending on the position being sought
- reference checks
- criminal history background check (local, national, and international options depending on where the applicant is coming from and the position being sought). Note: For applicants from the United States, most states require an Authorisation Form to be filled out and signed by the applicant before a criminal records check can be done.
- statement that all background screening accomplished by or on behalf of LCIS will comply with relevant privacy laws

LCIS reserves the right to conduct background screening and make this explicitly clear to employees and volunteers at any time after employment or volunteer service has begun – and will do so periodically. Any misrepresentations, falsifications or material omissions in the information provided by the applicant, whenever discovered, may result in disqualification from, or termination of, employment or volunteer service from LCIS.

### Best Practices for Child Protection

- Avoid being alone with a child. This includes not transporting children alone in a car. When it is necessary to speak privately with a child, find a space out of earshot but within sight of others.
- The privacy of children in situations such as toileting, showering and changing clothes must be respected. When it is necessary to supervise children in these situations, at least two adults must be present and intrude only to the extent that the health and safety of the children require. Adults must preserve their own privacy in these situations as well.
- Avoid touching areas that are covered by swimming suits: breasts, buttocks and groin.

- When hugging is appropriate, hug from the side over the shoulders, not from the front. Sexual jokes, comments of a sexual nature, kissing, sensual massages or sexual gestures are not appropriate behaviour for an adult staff member or volunteer.
- Whenever supervising overnight activities or field trips, adults should not share sleeping quarters with children other than their own. When sleeping in separate rooms, such as in a hotel, supervising teachers must be readily available and accessible in the case of an emergency.
- Revealing personal information about one's sex life by an adult volunteer or staff member is never appropriate.
- Do not use corporal punishment in any form.
- It is the adult's responsibility to set and respect boundaries. When a child attempts to involve an adult in inappropriate behaviour or conversation, the adult must reject the overture.

## IV. Procedures

### Child Protection Roles

The role of the **Child Protection Committee** is to ensure that there is a comprehensive Child Protection Programme in place at the school and to monitor the effectiveness of the programme annually. Specific tasks include:

- ensure a comprehensive Child Protection Programme is in place for the school
- work within the school's existing structures to ensure the development and adoption of a child protection programme that meets the needs of the school
- support teachers and counsellors in implementing Child Protection lessons
- ensure that Child Protection lessons are taught and assessed annually
- ensure Professional Development training for all employees who come in contact with children, including teachers and volunteers
- ensure parent education programmes support understanding of the objectives and goals of the Child Protection Policy and Programme
- ensure systems are implemented and monitored to educate and involve all school volunteers in the Child Protection Programme

The Child Protection Committee will meet at least twice annually.

The Child Protection Committee consists of:

| Role  | Name                |
|---|---------------------|
| School Counsellor and Designated Safeguarding Lead - Lower School | Rose Taylor         |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead - Upper School                       | Harry Almond        |
| Upper School Counsellor   | Dr Michèle Mindorff |
| Outreach/Nurse - Lower School                                     | Myrtle Henry        |
| Outreach/Nurse - Upper School                                     | Lora Bower          |

| Committee At Large      |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Heads of School         | Isadora Blyden (LS) Frederic Bournas (US) |
| Principal - All School  | David Mindorff                            |
| Designated Board Member | Chair of Board's Risk Committee           |

The **Child Protection Response Team** responds to any incident regarding child protection, safety and wellbeing. The Child Protection Response Team includes:

- School Counsellor
- School Nurse
- Designated Safeguard Lead
- Head of School
- Principal

### Role of the Board

The Board of Directors must ensure a member of the school staff is Designated as the Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The Board of Directors must ensure that there is a job description for the Designated Safeguarding Lead that states all the duties and responsibilities undertaken by the DSL and that the employee has appropriate training for the role. The Board of Directors should ensure that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep children safe. The Board of Directors is responsible for nominating a director to take the lead in overseeing Safeguarding and Child Protection, and this has been determined as the Chair of the Board's Risk Committee. This director is known as the Safeguarding Board member and must also complete safeguarding training.

### Child Protection Response Plan

Please see the flow chart in the Appendix for the flow of action when dealing with any child protection incident.

#### Sexual Assault of a Student

If a student has been a victim of sexual assault, immediately ensure that all staff and students are safe and accounted for and monitored. Every effort should be made to avoid vigilantism.

- Ensure the victim's immediate physical safety.
- If there are apparent life-threatening injuries, render all appropriate medical care and/or access appropriate medical care.
- The immediate message to the victim as appropriate is "I believe you. You are safe. We are going to take care of you. It isn't your fault."
- Notify the Child Protection Response Team and, as soon as all parties are safe, complete the [Child Protection Referral form](#) (create a copy).

## Reporting Procedures for Cases of Child Abuse, Student Sexual Abuse or Sexual Harassment

It is a legal obligation for faculty, staff, and administrators, either as individuals or members of the institution, to report incidents of, or concerns about, physical or psychological violence, aggression, harassment, and physical or sexual abuse. Reporting should be completed by the next school day, or no more than 24 hours later, to a member of the Child Protection Committee. Reporting may be made at any time and is not restricted to work hours.

### Step 1

Any member of staff who has reasonable cause to believe that abuse is occurring or has occurred, must report it to any member of the Child Protection Response Team and complete the LCIS Safeguarding Incident [Referral Form](#) (create a copy).

### Step 2

The Response Team, led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, will gather information regarding the reported incident and in cases of suspected physical, emotional, sexual abuse and/or neglect.

### Step 3

In all cases, follow-up activities will be conducted in a manner that ensures that information is documented factually and that strict confidentiality is maintained. The following procedure will be used:

- interview staff members, ensure that the Child Protection Referral form has been completed, and document any additional information relative to the case
- consult with school personnel to review the child's history in the school
- ensure the relevant Head of School and Principal are informed and kept updated
- determine the course of follow-up actions

### Step 4

Implement the action, as determined by the Team in Step 3.

### Step 5

Before, during and after the process described above, there might be a need for emotional support for staff, students and families involved. This will be provided by the Child Protection Committee, led by the School Counsellor(s).

All physical documentation of the investigation will be kept confidential and will be stored in a designated lockable space, under the supervision of the Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Similarly, electronic records will be stored in a secure database with limited access as determined by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

In most cases, the incident reports remain confidential. The reporting of an outcome or concerns for



the wellbeing of the child should be done in consideration of confidentiality and disclose as little information regarding the incident as possible.

The standard reporting format used by the Child Protection Response Team will include the following:

- historical context - the background history of the reporting
- child's name, date of birth, place of birth, gender, nationality, languages spoken, address, class, attendance details and siblings
- information on parents/guardians - name, nationality, professions, telephone and general practitioner details
- information about the specific report - nature and extent of reported injuries/maltreatment, how the reporter became aware (first-hand witness?), description of the action taken (if any)

If it is determined that the case warrants making a report to local authorities or agencies, this report should be documented using applicable forms.

## Guidelines for Awareness, Training and Prevention

### Parent/Community Awareness

It is vital that the school's commitment to the highest possible standards of safeguarding and child protection for all students is communicated clearly to the variety of stakeholders who come into contact with the school.

- School safety goals and objectives are communicated regularly to all parents.
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures are available on the school portal.
- The school's commitment to child protection is stated clearly in the school's marketing and communications materials – e.g. website ([www.lcis.bs](http://www.lcis.bs))
- New families receive specific information regarding the school's policies and procedures as part of the 'New Parent Orientation'.
- A statement of intent and procedures to be followed are included in the Academic Handbooks.
- Guidance and resources on student safety issues and how parents can talk with their children are available from the School Counsellor and through Parent Academy sessions.

### Staff Training

Annual staff training is conducted to ensure staff feel confident about all aspects of child protection: awareness, types, signs/symptoms, prevention, policies and laws, reporting process, children's curricula, local authority support and resources available. Specifically:

- New staff receive child protection training on these aspects as part of their New Staff Orientation. New Staff must complete 'Child Protection for International Schools' (TES Develop) training.
- The 'Staff Code of Conduct' is provided to all staff annually to give clear expectations and boundaries regarding child protection procedures. Additionally, a member of the Child Protection Committee reviews the Code of Conduct with all staff during teacher orientation week.
- All staff receive regular training, presented by the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) or an authorised online platform annually.

The Child Protection Committee identifies and meets the ongoing training needs of the members of the Child Protection Committee and the Child Protection Response Team, faculty, staff and employees. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should report to the committee about determined needs, and the DSL should contribute to that data.

### Student Awareness

Student awareness of issues affecting their personal safety (including abuse) and strategies for dealing with difficult situations is vital. At LCIS, students are made aware of these through:

- Student-on-student violence policy, including bullying, is publicised and implemented.
- Age-appropriate curriculum based on core elements and evidence-based practices is written and taught to students annually led by the Safeguarding Lead(s)/School Counsellor(s). It includes:
  - students' rights and responsibilities with regard to child protection issues
  - strategies to recognise inappropriate behaviours, respond assertively and report incidents to school personnel and/or family members, and the STOPit app for Grades 5-12
  - statement of intent and procedures to be followed are included in the Academic Handbooks.

### Facilities and Security

School leadership ensures that all facilities are secure and appropriate to respect the safety and wellbeing of students in accordance with national laws.

Students may not leave the campus during the school day unless teachers and/or administrators receive written or oral notification from parents and/or guardians. The procedure for leaving the campus early involves three steps:

- Parent/Guardian notifies the classroom teacher/advisor prior to departure.
- Parent/Guardian 'signs out' child at the administration desk.
- Parent/Guardian picks up the child from the main administration office.

Off-site facilities such as field trip destinations are reviewed in terms of safety and security.

Crisis procedures are reviewed annually, and drills are regularly conducted.

## V. Glossary of Terms Related to Child Abuse and Protection (Worsteling, *Definition of Terms* 2018)

### **Definition of Terms**

Child Protection is a broad term used to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In this document, the term "child protection" applies to the protection of children in international schools. Please note that this definition also includes self-harm.

Child Protection Policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to protecting students from harm (to self and from others) and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of students. It serves to create a safe and positive environment for children and to demonstrate that the school is taking its duty and responsibility seriously. This handbook considers that schools will provide appropriate child safety classes supported with a well-defined curriculum to increase children's ability to understand abuse prevention.

Child protection concerns include suspected, alleged, self-disclosed, or witnessed abuse of a child by anyone associated within or outside the school which must be investigated and followed by appropriate action.

### **Child Abuse**

According to the World Health Organization, child abuse constitutes, “all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.”

A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional (e.g. school) or community setting; children may be abused by individuals known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. Often children may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, further complicating the problem.

Most child abuse is inflicted by someone the child knows, respects or trusts. International school communities have unique characteristics of which school personnel must be aware in terms of the individuals who are around children.

School personnel should be knowledgeable of the potential reasons why children may not be able to talk about any victimisation they might have experienced.

This document focuses on four main categories of abuse and provides basic information about the physical and behavioural signs associated with each type.

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, punching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, biting, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing intentional physical harm to a child (These symptoms could also indicate harm to self, such as cutting and suicide ideation).

#### **Signs of physical abuse:**

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Being aggressive towards others
- Being very passive and compliant
- Chronic running away

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve: conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; that they are inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person; age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children; causing children frequently to feel frightened; or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

### **Signs of emotional abuse:**

- Physical, mental and emotional development is delayed
- Highly anxious
- Showing delayed speech or sudden speech disorder
- Fear of new situations
- Low self-esteem
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Lying

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production or viewing of pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Children involved in commercial sex work are victims of sexual abuse, whether they perceive themselves as victims or not.

### **Signs of sexual abuse:**

- Pain or irritation to the genital area
- Vaginal or penile discharge
- Difficulty with urination
- Infection, bleeding
- STDs
- Fear of people or places
- Aggression
- Regressive behaviours, bed wetting or stranger anxiety
- Excessive masturbation/Sexually provocative
- Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting

- Being unusually quiet and withdrawn or unusually aggressive
- Suffering from what seem physical ailments that can't be explained medically
- Showing fear or distrust of a particular adult
- Mentioning receiving special attention from an adult or a new "secret" friendship with an adult or young person
- Refusal to continue with school or usual social activities
- Age-inappropriate sexualised behaviour or language

## **NEGLECT**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or physiological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

### **Some indicators of neglect:**

- Medical needs unattended
- Lack of supervision
- Consistent hunger
- Inappropriate dress
- Poor hygiene
- Inadequate nutrition
- Fatigue or listlessness
- Self-destructive
- Extreme loneliness
- Extreme need for affection
- Failure to grow
- Poor personal hygiene
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug or alcohol abuse

## **LONG-TERM IMPACT OF UNMITIGATED CHILD ABUSE**

The impact of child abuse can persist for a lifetime after the abuse has been committed. Some victims of abuse are resilient and thus manage to function and survive. Much research has established the relationship between long-term child abuse and lifetime health and well-being, especially if the children do not get appropriate support to help them cope with the trauma.

The most important point to consider is that children often are exposed to multiple forms of abuse and suffer a myriad of symptoms. Furthermore, all forms of abuse have the potential for long-term impact on the victims and can affect the victim's ability to function as a human being. Abuse challenges the self-value, self-esteem, and sense of worth of its victims, rendering them hopeless, helpless and unable to live a complete life.

### **Long-term impact of child abuse:**

- Poor educational achievement
- Inability to complete responsibilities
- Inability to live according to plan/ability
- Inability to care for self
- Inability to coexist, cooperate or work with others
- Lack of self-confidence, prone to addiction
- Inability to express love / or accept love
- Inability to lead family, constant health problem
- Prone to mental health problems
- Low self-esteem, depression and anxiety
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Attachment difficulties
- Eating disorders
- Poor peer relations, self-injurious behaviour (e.g., suicide attempts)

In addition to knowing the signs of victimisation, below are some early warning signs to look out for in potential offenders:

### **Signs of offenders (students):**

- Unusual interest in sex, sexualizing inanimate objects and activities
- Does not stop sexual misbehaviour when told to stop
- Uses force and coercion in social situations
- Unusual intensity when discussing sex and sexuality
- Socializes with children much younger
- Gives gifts, requires secrecy in relationships

### **Signs of offenders (adults):**

- Has “favourite” student or child
- Attempts to find ways to be alone with children
- Inappropriate language, jokes and discussions about students/children
- Sexualised talk in the presence of students/children
- Gives private gifts or has private chats on Facebook/internet

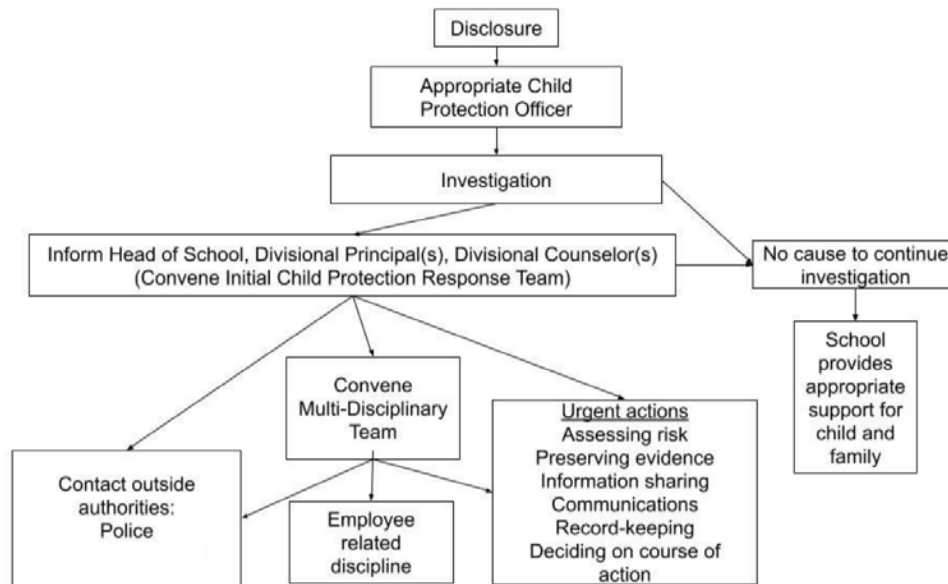
Students should be informed that behaviours that include having sex and internet/cell phone sharing of photos have legal implications.” (Worsteling, *Definition of Terms* 2018)

Citation reference:

Worsteling, C. (Ed.). (2018). Definition of Terms. In *AISA Child Protection Handbook for Teachers, Administrators, and Board members* (3rd ed., pp. 15–19). essay, the Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA).

## VI. APPENDIX

Please refer to the [Emergency Response and Crisis Management Plan](#) for procedures related to student and school health and safety.



**Head of School is responsible to notify School Board and School's legal representative when the long term fiscal position, strategy, or reputation of the school may be impacted or if there is a risk of serious legal exposure to the School.**

**Child Protection Officer is responsible to update receiver of initial disclosure and Divisional Student Support Team as appropriate to support student(s).**

### **Guidelines for responding to a child's disclosure**

- Do not let a child swear you to secrecy before telling you something. You may need to report, which the child will view as breaking your trust with them.
- If a child asks to speak with you, try to find a neutral setting where you can have quiet and few interruptions.
- Do not lead the child in telling. Just listen, letting him/her explain in his/her own words. Don't pressure for a great amount of detail.
- Respond calmly and matter-of-factly. Even if the story that the child tells you is difficult to hear, it is important not to register disgust or alarm.
- Do not make judgmental or disparaging comments about the abuser – it is often someone the child loves or with whom he/she is close.
- Do not make promises to the child that things will get better.
- Do not confront the abuser.
- Respect the child's confidence. Share with the Child Protection Officer, but remember your responsibility to confidentiality.