



## **PGYSA IMPACT Policy on Suspicion of Child Abuse and How to Report**

(Adapted from Commit to Kids and Canadian Centre for Child Protection)

### **What do you do if you have concerns about possible child abuse or child sexual abuse?**

The responsibility to report means that a person who has knowledge or information that a child is being or is at risk of being abused must report it to someone:

- If the information relates to potential abuse of a child by the child's parent or guardian, the person must report it to child welfare or police.
- If the concern involves potential abuse by any other person, the individual should report it to the child's parent or guardian and may also be obligated to report it to child welfare and/or police.

### **Reporting information about potential child abuse allows:**

- An authority, like child welfare or police, to determine whether it is necessary to investigate.
- The parent(s) or guardian(s) to proactively take steps to protect their child.

Mandatory reporting legislation removes any personal or professional dilemma from becoming a barrier to reporting. It is not uncommon for people to minimize or deny what a child tells them during a disclosure. People are often concerned about being wrong and causing problems.

### **It is also important to note that people are responsible for reporting concerns, and they do not have to prove the abuse.**

Remember, reporting may disrupt existing or future sexual abuse from occurring against other children, as well. If a person learns about past child sexual abuse that is no longer occurring, it's still important to report the abuse. The offender may still have access to other children and those children may be at risk.

### **How do you report misconduct/concerning behaviour?**

While obvious sexual acts are easier to identify and address, behaviour that doesn't meet the threshold of abuse still needs to be acted upon. Misconduct is considered adult behaviour towards a child that is inappropriate and that breaches reasonable boundaries:

- If you observe or hear about concerning behaviour or an inappropriate situation between an adult and your child or another child within the organization, report your concerns to the organization.
- If you have contact with the child outside the organization (e.g., you know the child's parents), you should still report to the organization and report your concerns to the child's parents.
- In some circumstances, particularly if your concerns are not addressed or you become aware of more information, you may wish to consider involving the appropriate authorities.

Flagging the concerning behaviour to the organization should trigger a review to correct and stop the possible misconduct. It will also allow an organization to address any behaviour that's not consistent with its policies and procedures. Flagging concerning behaviour to a parent may help the parent address the issue with the organization and discuss it with their child if appropriate.