

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect

Reporting any suspected or witnessed child abuse or neglect of a minor is **required** by Indiana law for anyone over the age of 18.

Child abuse or neglect should be reported to Child Protective Services (CPS). They operate a 24-hour, 7-day a week hotline: **1-800-800-5556**.

There is also a local number for every county listed at the CPS website <http://www.in.gov/dcs/2372.htm>.

You may also contact your local law enforcement agency to report abuse or neglect. Callers can remain anonymous and are immune from all civil and criminal liability, provided they have made the report in good faith.

Fewer than one in ten children will report the abuse. Yet, most of these children carry the emotional scars and guilt of the abuse for the rest of their lives.

A child may tell a trusted adult about sexual abuse. If you are the adult, your reaction may be key in beginning the healing process for the child.

Believe the child. Preteen children rarely make false accusations about sexual abuse.

Remain calm. Don't panic. Listen. If you respond in a judgmental way, the child may refuse to tell more.

Ask open-ended questions, such as "What happened next?" Don't ask leading questions and don't press for details.

Thank the child for having the courage to tell you about the situation.

Tell the child that it is not the child's fault. Remember that the adult is always responsible for his or her behavior.

Think about situations in which a child may tell you about abuse, and have a response planned in case it happens. That way you can control your emotional response better and be ready to help the child.

For more information on Child Abuse Laws and Resources visit: http://www.pcain.org/indiana_laws.asp

What is Child Abuse?

One of the best ways you can help prevent child abuse is to understand what it is and how you can stop it. Below are definitions and examples of the different types of abuse recognized by the Indiana legal system.

What Is Physical Abuse?

Physical abuse is the intentional infliction of physical injury or allowing another to do so. Some physical indicators include unexplained bruises, welts, burns, lumps, fractures, cuts, abrasions; dental/oral injuries.

What Is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse is the use of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or older child in a position of power, or permitting another person to do so. Physical indicators include any venereal disease; bruised/dilated genitals or rectum; pregnancy under 16 years of age; difficulty/pain in walking or sitting; foreign matter in bladder, rectum or urethra; torn, stained or bloody underclothing; recurrent urinary tract infections.

What Is Neglect?

Neglect is the chronic failure to meet child's basic needs for food, clothes, shelter, medical care, education or supervision. Physical indicators can include flat, bald spots on infant's head; dirty and/or smelly child; torn, dirty or inappropriate clothing for the weather; developmental lags; underweight child.

What Is Emotional Abuse?

Emotional abuse is the chronic attitude or acts of a caretaker which are detrimental to the child's development of a sound and healthy personality. Some indicators include eating disorders; elimination problems; sleep problems; sadistic or masochistic behavior; suicidal acts; reports emotional abuse.

What can I do if I suspect that children are being abused?

Call your the Child Protective Services (CPS) hotline, 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week. 1-800-800-5556. Indiana law requires the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect. If you do not report suspected child abuse and neglect, you can be charged with a Class B misdemeanor. You can remain anonymous and are immune from all civil and criminal liability, if you've made the report in good faith.

Youth Safety

When Working with Youth

- Purdue expects adults to be positive role models for minors.
- As a program staff member or volunteer, you are the eyes and ears of the program or activity.
- You can protect children by behaving appropriately and monitoring the behavior of other program staff members and program participants.
- As the program staff member or volunteer, you should avoid behaviors that could cause harm or be misinterpreted.

REMEMBER: IF YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED OR NEGLECTED YOU MUST REPORT IT!

Responsibilities under Purdue's policy:

Report suspected child abuse or neglect to police (call 911 in an emergency) or Child Protective Services (800-800-5556).

AND

Report child sexual abuse by Purdue faculty, staff, students, volunteers, contractors, or other covered persons in accordance with the Anti-Harassment policy.

OR

You can report anonymously on Purdue's Whistleblower Hotline website or by calling 866-818-2620.

Behaviors To Avoid

- Do not engage in any sexual activity with minors.
- Do not make sexual comments to minors.
- Do not tell sexual jokes to minors.
- Do not share sexually explicit material with minors (or assist in any way to provide access to such material).

What Can You Do to Protect Yourself and the Youth that You are Supervising?

• **Do not be alone with a single minor.**

Most sexual abuse incidents happen in one adult and one child situations. If you eliminate one adult and one child situations, you reduce the risk of abuse.

• **Do not meet with minors outside of established times for Program activities.**

—If one-on-one interaction is required, meet in open, well illuminated spaces or rooms with windows observable by other adult from the program, unless the one-on-one interaction is expressly authorized by the program director, dean, department chairperson or is being undertaken by a health care provider.

—To meet with a minor outside of established times for program activities, get written parental authorization. This meeting must include more than one adult from the program.

—Watch for older children or adults who take younger children to secret places or hideaways.

—Watch for older children or adults who have younger favorites with whom they want to spend time exclusively.

—Program directors should consider ensuring that adults supervise older children serving younger children.

—Program directors, other trusted adults, or parents should be able to observe a program activity at any time.

• **Do not invite individual minors to your home**

—Any exceptions require authorization by the program director and written authorization by a parent or guardian.

—Do not engage or allow minors to engage you in romantic or sexual conversations or related matters, unless required in the role of resident advisors, counselors, or health care providers

—Do not engage or communicate with minors through email, text messages, social networking websites, internet chat rooms, or other forms of social media at any time except and unless there is an educational or programmatic purpose and the content of the communication is consistent with the mission of the program and the university.

—Touching should generally only be in the open and in response to minor's needs, for a purpose that is consistent with the Program's mission and culture, and/or for a clear educational, developmental, or health related purpose, such as the treatment of an injury.

—Many children are taught that it is not okay to touch any part that covers where the child wears a bathing suit. These are the private areas.

—If you must touch a child, ask if it is okay to touch first.

—Children have the permission and power to say "No" to any unwanted or uncomfortable touch. Any resistance from the minor should be respected.

• **If restraint is necessary to protect a minor or other minors from harm:**

—All incidents must be documented and disclosed to the program director and the minor's parent or guardian.

—Do not touch minors in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate.

—Do not engage in any abusive conduct of any kind toward, or in the presence of, a minor including but not limited to verbal abuse, striking, hitting, punching, poking, spanking, or restraining.

—Watch for other adults who make children uncomfortable by ignoring their personal space limits.

—Beware of adults who want to touch, tickle or wrestle with a child when the child does not want physical contact or attention.

—Do not use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs when responsible for a minor's welfare.

—When transporting minors in a program, more than one adult from the program must be present in the vehicle, except when multiple minors will be in the vehicle at all times through the transportation.

—Avoid using personal vehicles, if possible.

—Do not possess or use any type of weapon or explosive device.

—Failure to comply with the Purdue policy may lead to disciplinary action and/or revocation of the opportunity to use college facilities and land.

—Therefore, the entire program or activity may be restricted based on the actions of a single program staff member. In addition, if you are accused of sexual abuse of a minor, you will be subject to the appropriate investigations and actions by the criminal justice and social services systems. These actions are separate and apart from the college policy and process.

—Remember that child sexual abuse thrives in an environment where adults are inattentive, in denial, or afraid to take action. We must actively work to prevent it.

—We must actively work to create a safe environment for children.