

PAC Chat #3

Your Duty to Report

Volunteering is a valuable way to spend your time, and doing it at a school is a way to be relevant and intentional in the lives of impressionable young minds! If you are helping at the school, many students will automatically see you as a person they can trust. Sometimes this comes with some unfamiliar territory, and you may see or hear things that are hard to deal with.

We've talked about:

-Things you should keep to yourself, and things that you SHOULD report...things that are "a matter of safety and security" that you might see or hear that you should report to the teacher in charge or the school administrator in order to keep everyone safe.

In addition, in BC any person has a legal duty to report suspected or potential child abuse or neglect.

- **If you think a child or youth under 19 years of age is being abused or neglected, you have the legal duty to report your concern. Report your info when you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection. Abuse or neglect may include: a child is physically or emotionally harmed, sexually abused or exploited, due to action or inaction of the parent, a parent or caregiver does not adequately care for or protect the child from others, or is deprived of necessary health care.**

OK, that's some heavy stuff. How might that info come to you? How should you react? What are next steps?

- **You may get the info from the student or a friend of the student...**

-A student that is not of driving age tells you they drive themselves to ball practice after school.

-A child in your reading group flinches every time you reach towards them.

-When you ask a student how they got hurt, they say they deserved it, or that their parent/guardian didn't mean to leave a mark.

-A student uses graphic sexual language or makes sexual remarks/gestures.

- **You might see something that causes some concern...**

-Bruising (old and new), burns, new wounds, old scars, clumps of missing hair, pulled out fingernails, an overly negative reaction or flinching to someone reaching towards them, touching them on the shoulder, or a slightly raised voice.

*Take a look back to PAC Chat #2 and see which of the examples would fall into the duty to report category

- **Your reaction is important**

-Remain calm, keep your voice modulated, affirm with the student that the school is a safe place and if they need to talk to someone you are available, or you can find them someone who they would feel comfortable talking to.

-Ask some questions to clarify (but not leading questions) and take note of any details offered.

- **Report to the school administrator immediately and privately. They will help fill any gaps in the information to forward to the intake worker. You will need to report to a child welfare worker by calling the PCS (Provincial Centralized Screening) team at 1 800 663-9122 and they will help you assess your information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.**