



A Guide for Teachers and Staff: How to Handle a Student's Disclosure of Abuse or Neglect



1 Remain Calm and Supportive

- Stay composed: Your reaction can impact how the student feels about sharing more.
- Stay calm, listen, and avoid showing shock.
- Use active listening: show empathy by listening without interrupting.

Say something like:

"I'm here for you."

or

"Thank you for telling me."

and

"Can you tell me more about what happened?"

2 Do Not Ask too Many Questions

- Leave the questioning to professionals: do not press for details or ask leading questions as this can interfere with official investigations.
- Only gather essential information: just focus on what the child is sharing and document their exact words, if possible.

Say something like:

"It's not your fault, and I will get the right people to help keep you safe."

3 Legal Duty to Report Abuse

- Follow the SD44 guidelines for reporting abuse or neglect, which includes informing the principal and calling MCFD 1-800-663-9122

[Reporting Suspected Child Youth Abuse \(sd44.ca\)](https://sd44.ca/Reporting-Suspected-Child-Youth-Abuse)

- Report to MCFD as soon as possible. Delaying could put the child at greater risk.
- Use factual documentation: write down exactly what the student said without altering their words. Stick to facts, not opinions or assumptions.

Say something like:

"thank you for trusting me with something so important. I want you to know that I can't keep this a secret because my priority is making sure you're safe. I'll need to share this with people who will help."

Maintain confidentiality: Only share the information with those directly involved in handling the situation.

Remember, supporting students through difficult disclosures can be emotionally challenging, so be sure to prioritize your own well-being by seeking guidance and support for yourself.