Students Not Being in School Creates Barriers to Reporting Abuse

In times of crisis and economic instability, child abuse and neglect rates increase. However, reports of child abuse and neglect in Delaware have declined dramatically. The ability to speak up for kids’ safety is crucial at this time.

**To Report Effectively, Explain how the Suspected Abuse has Impacted the Child**

Examples:
- Child wrote in their journal that they are hungry and haven't eaten in a few days because there is no food in the house.
- During a call or online meeting you can hear a parent yelling and calling the child names and child seems scared and disconnects the call.

**Making a Report is Asking for Help and Services**

If you have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that abuse or neglect is occurring - report. You do not need proof. You are not making an accusation. You are asking for a professional to help a child and their family.

**You May Be the Only Person to Act**

If something does not look safe, sound safe or feel safe – report.

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**Helpful Tips for Protecting Children**

**Continue to let students know you remain a supportive, caring adult in their lives:**

- Check in regularly with students and/or caregivers. Provide encouraging messages.
- Ask questions to engage children. Ex: “Give me one word that describes how you feel today?” “How is learning from home different from learning at school?”

**Signs of Concerns:**

- For students with technology/internet access: lack of virtual attendance or homework not completed over a long period of time.
- If you have had no contact at all with a family after many repeated phone calls/messages.
- If a child communicates they feel unsafe, you see a child in a dangerous environment or you notice a significant change in a child’s mood/behavior.

**Make an extra effort with children who:**

- Have a history of emotional, sexual, physical abuse or neglect, drug use or discussed/attempted suicide.
- Are responsible for the care of other children or live in a highly stressful family situation with limited support systems.
- Require assistance due to physical, mental, behavioral or medical disabilities or delays.

**Legal Responsibilities and Protections:**

- School personnel are mandated reporters. If you have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, you must directly report it immediately to the DFS hotline 1-800-292-9582.
- No administrator or supervisor may impede or inhibit any report.
- When you make a report in good faith you are protected against civil/criminal penalty or adverse employment action.

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**Where To Report**

24-hours/7 days a week

Division of Family Services (DFS) Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline 1-800-292-9582

Make an online report at www.iseethesigns.org

For more information, go to www.pcadelaware.org.

Reference: Prevent Child Abuse Missouri