



Recording and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Waterloo Co-operative Preschool will take appropriate measures to protect the children in its care.

The forms of harm covered under the term child abuse are physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, child neglect and or clear risk of harm. In an individual case there could be only one form of abuse or a combination of types of abuse.

Child abuse is a serious occurrence by definition of the Childcare and Early Years Act (CEYA). It is the legal responsibility of every person including parents, volunteers, students, or support staff that has contact with a child in a Childcare Centre to report the suspicion of child abuse to the Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region. Persons failing to report the suspicion of child abuse are subject to legal action and a fine, if convicted.

[Child and Family Services Act. 1984, section 68 (2) (3) (4) and section 81 (1) (b)].

Duty to Report Suspicion of Child Abuse

Reference Child and Family Services Act: Section 68 (1), (2), (3) and (4), and Section 37 (2)

Reference Ministry of Education serious occurrence policy.

Possible Abuse by Persons other than Waterloo Co-Operative Preschool Staff Members

A. Staff/Volunteer Responsibilities

- Care should be taken to ensure that the suspicion of abuse is based on reasonable grounds. Note, however, that they are not required to seek proof of abuse.
- A staff member/volunteer who suspects child abuse shall not discuss his/her concerns with other staff members (except the Supervisor), the parents of the child or the child. This function is to be handled by Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region who will determine next steps.
- Personal or disclosing information will not be disclosed publicly.
- The person discovering the situation will document verbatim what the child says, they will not prompt them, ask leading questions, make assumptions or add words to the child's statement.
- Staff should continue to maintain their relationships with the parents as outlined in the appropriate job description.

B. Supervisor Responsibilities

- The Supervisor shall not discuss the teacher's/volunteer's observation with the parents or attempt to obtain additional evidence through discussions with the parents, children or other staff members. These tasks are the responsibility of the Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region workers who investigate cases of possible child abuse.
- The Supervisor shall provide this Policy to anyone who needs to file a report and will support anyone who is obligated to report especially if they are unsure of their duty to report.

- If a staff or volunteer does report an instance the Supervisor needs to be informed as soon as possible.
- If the Supervisor has grounds to file a report she shall immediately report her objective observations to Family and Children Services.
- Interpretation of this information should be left to the Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region investigation. Concurrent with the report to the Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region, the Supervisor and educator or volunteer shall document their involvement in memorandum form.

Possible Abuse of a Child by a Staff Member

- If a staff/student/volunteer suspects another person in the center of abusing a child who participates in services provided by Waterloo Co-Operative Preschool, they have an obligation to call Family and Children's Services.
- The staff/student/volunteer making the allegation will follow the reporting procedure outlined previously.
- No internal investigation is to occur until authorities have been contacted – authorities will determine if an investigation is indicated or if the Preschool can proceed according to their own policies and procedures.
- The person suspected of abuse will not be told by anyone about the suspicion, the intention to report or that a report has been made until after consultation with a child protection worker and/or police officer and/or legal counsel for direction.
- The Supervisor will consult with a child protection worker and/or police officer and/or legal counsel as to what, if anything, should be done to protect a child(ren) receiving service from Waterloo Co-Operative Preschool from further contact with the alleged abuser.
- Allegations of abuse against a staff person/student/volunteer are considered a serious occurrence. The Supervisor will file a report via the Ministry of Education's Child Care Licensing System website within 24 hours. Notification will be posted in a visible location on Preschool grounds, with non identifying information. Reports to all regulating bodies are to be completed.
- The Supervisor will immediately notify the President of the Board of Directors, who in consultation with the Supervisor, Family and Children's Services and/or the Police and/or legal counsel will determine what action, if any, will be taken with respect to the job responsibilities of the staff person against whom allegations have been made. Any student/volunteer/volunteer suspected of child abuse will be required to refrain from any duties at the Preschool until the investigation is completed.
- Following consultation, the Supervisor will meet with the person against whom allegations have been made to discuss any changes in duties, responsibilities etc. The Supervisor will follow up with a written confirmation of any decisions and the reasons for such, a copy of which is to be given to the person against whom an allegation is made, and a copy to be retained on file.

The following resources may be helpful in supporting you, as well as your staff and providers, in understanding this duty to report:

- [Report child abuse and neglect | Ontario.ca](#)
- [Duty to report – Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies \(oacas.org\)](#)
- [Professional Advisory Duty to Report \(college-ece.ca\)](#)
- [Duty to Report - Professional Advisory | Ontario College of Teachers \(oct.ca\)](#)

It is important that everyone working in the child care sector understand the importance of their obligations under the CYFSA(Child Youth and Family Services Act).

Revised: January 2024 by Tracey Marques and BOD.

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