

## Student Safety

As a volunteer, you may become the trusted adult to whom a child discloses abuse, bullying, fighting, and unsafe behavior. The guidelines below are listed with the hope that, should the situation arise, you will be able to facilitate the disclosure in a caring, supportive, and effective manner. While disclosures of abuse or unsafe situations is rare, it can be very hard for the mentor if they learn their student is going through a tough situation. Be sure to seek your own support with the CIS Program Manager to avoid feelings of frustration, uselessness, or burnout. Let your student know that you'll be sharing information with the CIS Program Manager throughout the year. Remember— CIS Staff are trained professionals who know how to handle these situations.

### Potential Scenarios

- Suspected abuse or neglect— disclosure from the student or a suspicion based on things the student has indicated:
  - o Abuse: physical injury, sexual conduct, mental or emotional injury
  - o Neglect: Failure to remove a child from an inappropriate situation. Failure to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care. Failure to provide a child with food, clothing or shelter
- Reports or observations of bullying.
- Weapons or fighting.
- Fighting on the school campus.
- Violence in relationships (dating, family, gangs, etc.)
- Student discloses thoughts of suicide or seems depressed.
- Student shares information about a friend or family member experiencing violence, abuse, neglect, or unsafe situations.
- Noticing bruises and cuts on the student.
- Anytime you have a gut feeling that something isn't safe— better be safe than sorry.

**You are not a  
detective**  
It's not up to you to  
determine what is true  
or false.

### Remain calm

- Try not to act upset, shocked, or angry.
- You may be the only person the child tells.
- Never say negative things about anyone in the child's family.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Never tell the child you'll keep a secret, even if the child says they won't tell you the story unless you promise not to tell anyone else.

### Reassuring statements

- I believe you.
- Everyone deserves to be safe.
- I'm so sorry this is happening.
- I know that was probably hard to tell me. Thank you for telling me.

**Report any suspected child abuse or neglect within 48 hrs. It's the law!**

If you are not able to contact your Program Manager and the COS and you suspect abuse or neglect, please call the Texas Abuse Hotline at  
1-800-252-5400