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STATEMENT ON DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE BY A STUDENT TO A VOLUNTEER

Volunteers who work in a one-on-one relationship with students have a unique opportunity to help these students to build feelings of competence, confidence and self-worth. That student may show increasing trust in the volunteer. But with this opportunity also comes responsibility.

If a student has reached the point of feeling very trusting with a volunteer it could happen, should the student be a victim of abuse, that the student makes a disclosure to the volunteer. As well, a volunteer, after working with a student for a period of time, may come to suspect, either from behavioural or physical signs such as injuries, that the student might be an abuse victim, or a child in need of protection. It is therefore important that volunteers are aware of their responsibilities and the correct procedure to follow.

It is a legal obligation of every Ontario resident to report any case of suspected child abuse or child in need of protection to Family and Children's Services. Within the Wellington Catholic District School Board school principals and staff have the responsibility for making the report to F. & C.S. A volunteer, therefore, should ensure that any suspicion of child abuse is relayed to the principal, either directly or through the volunteer's co-ordinator or direct staff supervisor. The board procedure for reporting suspected abuse will then be followed.