

Dealing With Abuse and Neglect of Students

Whether a child suffers from physical, sexual or emotional abuse or is a victim of neglect, the long-term effects can be enormous. Increased rates of suicide, addiction and mental health disorders of all kinds are directly related to child abuse or neglect. Early identification of child abuse and neglect can occur through disclosure or as the result of reasonable suspicions on the part of educators. Reporting disclosures or suspicions may not only prevent future victimization of children, it may also permit both the victim and the perpetrator to receive the help they need. Early intervention may ameliorate the long-term effects of abuse and break the ongoing cycle of further victimization and harm.

Roots of Empathy Instructors are mandated to comply with their local/regional legislation regarding reporting incidents of actual or suspected Child Abuse and Neglect.

In some jurisdictions, legislation requires direct reporting to the police and/or a children's aid society by the individual who witnesses a disclosure of, or suspects an incident of child abuse, or neglect. In other jurisdictions, the incident or suspected incident may be reported through the principal/Head/other assigned school personnel who has responsibility for the safety and well-being of all students in the school.

If the classroom teacher and Instructor both witnessed the disclosure, one of these individuals must report the abuse or suspected abuse. The other individual would be listed as a witness in the report. If only the Roots of Empathy Instructor heard the disclosure, the Roots of Empathy Instructor must report it. The Roots of Empathy Instructor should notify the classroom teacher and principal of the event, and associated action they will undertake to fulfill the legal requirement.

The Roots of Empathy Instructor must also report the event to the Roots of Empathy Provincial and/or International Office. This report can either be a copy of the legal report (without any identifying information) or a separate written account (without any identifying information) by the Instructor.

In summary, Roots of Empathy Instructors shall:

- comply with their provincial legislation regarding reporting incidents of actual or suspected Child Abuse and Neglect
- notify the classroom teacher and principal/Head/other assigned school personnel if filing a report
- submit a report of the event to Roots of Empathy Provincial and/or International Office.

SAMPLE TEMPLATE

To: Lisa McIntosh, Director of Program Integrity, Roots of Empathy
Email: lmcintosh@rootsofempathy.org

From:

Date:

Re: Reporting on a disclosure in a Roots of Empathy class

On _____ (date), a disclosure or suspicion of abuse/neglect occurred during a
Roots of Empathy class. ROE Instructor _____ (name) was a witness
to the event.

A written report of this event was made to ____

_____ (name of agency/organization) on

_____ (date), in accordance with provincial law.