

## Guide for Mandated Reporting

All TVC staff and volunteers are considered mandated reporters by the State of Michigan. This means there is a legal obligation to report any suspected abuse or neglect related to minors. It is not the responsibility of the staff or volunteer to determine the legitimacy of the abuse or neglect- just to report the abuse or neglect immediately. If the reporting is done in good faith, the person reporting is protected by law.

We do not let kids and students know that we are making a mandatory report. If a parent "figures out" somehow this was us, we direct them to their caseworker. There is also helpful wording available below.

### Guide to Reporting

Link to Online Mandated Reporting (Account Registration Required):

<https://newmibridgeslogin.michigan.gov/eai/login/authenticatekey=C4XZA2JpnYrBbJ2nI2b3HyD%2FESR BaUbre4MCmxXqTmU%3D>

In All Cases:

- The person who was told the information or witnessed the event needs to be the person reporting.
  - If this person who witnessed is a volunteer, they need to talk with their staff leader and the staff leader will walk them through the process or make the report for them.
- Fill out a TVC Incident Report:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1NhYCXs7LRp3vs4AxW5WkJzZ33yJ\\_ZW9mMGIYMMKQbOA/viewform?ts=60b7ca28&edit\\_requested=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1NhYCXs7LRp3vs4AxW5WkJzZ33yJ_ZW9mMGIYMMKQbOA/viewform?ts=60b7ca28&edit_requested=true)
- Contact Linda Ervin by phone or email to let her know that a report has been made and get her a copy of the report. If the report is made online, please email Linda an account of the report.
- Contact your direct and let them know a report was made.
- Indicate any known history of abuse/neglect of the child.

### Reporting Process

- Indicate if you directly observed the alleged abuse/neglect or if the alleged child victim(s) disclosed the information to you. If the information was obtained indirectly, describe how and by whom the information was obtained. Do you consider the source reliable?
- Indicate when your specific concerns were observed or heard and the last time you saw the child.
- Indicate where the child is now and any immediate concerns regarding the safety of the child.
- Describe any known supports/resources that the family has or is utilizing to assist with challenges.
- Provide the family's address, if known. If the address is not known, be as specific as possible about the location of the family's home (city, street, cross streets, direction, landmarks, etc.). Include any known defining characteristics of the home (color, ranch, two-story, yard ornaments, vehicles, out buildings, etc.).
- If you do not have any information regarding the family's location, be specific about the place where you observed or heard of the concerning behavior.

- Indicate any additional information that may assist with locating the family members, including parent/caregiver work location, school or daycare location of the child, frequent places visited by the family (park, church, relative home, etc.).
- Provide the contact information of anyone that may be able to provide additional relevant information.

### **Guidelines for Handling Parents/Guardians After Report is Made**

If you are approached by a parent/guardian after reporting suspected abuse or neglect:

#### **For Non-Staff:**

- Sympathize with the parent and situation. Listen and let them know you understand their concerns.
- Tell the parent you are unable confirm or deny their accusation and in any case of reporting we are not allowed to talk about the details of any situation and if they have any further questions you would be glad to take down their information and have a staff person get back with them.

#### **For Staff:**

- Sympathize with the parent and situation. Listen and let them know you understand their concerns.
- Tell the parent you are unable to confirm or deny their accusation or discuss details because this is an open.
- Explain to the parent our job as mandatory reporters. It is not our job to discern if something is true. We are legally obligated to report when we hear of abuse and neglect. If we do not report, we can be held legally responsible for neglecting our duty as mandated reporters.
- Direct any further questions to CPS or their case manager.

#### **Wording for If we've handled the situation incorrectly:**

Please approach this with the intent to listen to the parent's heart and have grace and compassion. Especially because most likely they will be hurt and confused- maybe even processing with fear and anger. Our job isn't to be defensive in any way- especially if we have made a mistake in communication. Our job is to own our mistakes and try our best to explain the process while clarifying the structure of communication.

Here's a sample script you can use if a parent is hurt and/or confused by our mandatory reporting process.

Please use your own judgement in having this conversation with someone in person or over the phone. If your safety is in jeopardy, please connect with your direct to come up with the best plan to move forward. In all cases, these conversations should have at least 3 people in attendance (parent + 2 people from TVC).

(Parent's Name) I'm so sorry this situation wasn't handled in the best way possible. It's always our intention to take care of every member of a family and in this case, we clearly failed and I want to apologize. Please understand that this process of mandatory reporting isn't anything personal and we understand there are always multiple perspectives to every story we hear. I just want to clarify that one of our jobs as volunteers at TVC is to report anything a kid or student says that sounds as if they are in an unsafe situation. We are held legally responsible to report anything we hear and if we do not, we can find ourselves in a lot of trouble. It's not our job to determine whether the statement is true- we just report. I hope you understand that our heart is both with you and your child and we do not take sides on any reporting situation. Again, please try not to take our need to report personally- it's just our legal duty as volunteers at TVC. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help build back our trust with you and your family. It's my every intention to make this right with you and again, I'm truly sorry for our mistakes in this process. We're actively working to make sure this does not happen again.