

# Loreto Sisters

## Guidance on Responding to a Child Making an Allegation of Abuse

The Church aims to create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. This includes being open and willing to listen to and respond appropriately to allegations of abuse that come directly from children. However, Church personnel should not intentionally instigate a meeting with a child in order to receive a disclosure or take a statement from them – that is the role of Tulsa / HSCT.

However, in the event that a child tells you directly about abuse happening to them, the following general guidelines should be adhered to:

- Remain calm.
- Listen to the child carefully and in a manner that conveys that they are being heard and taken seriously.
- Give the child the opportunity to tell their story in their own time.
- Ask questions only for clarification.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep.
- Explain to the child what you are going to do, i.e. pass the information on to the statutory authorities, explain to them about the limits of confidentiality, etc.
- It is good practice to inform the child's parents/guardians that a report is being made however, the legislation does not require you to. But you/the DLP should consult with Tulsa/HSCT regarding the appropriateness of informing the child's parents/guardians and who should do this.
- If the allegation/disclosure is about Church personnel, explain to the child (and their parents / guardians) that the matter will be reported to the statutory authorities and the provincial.

**It is good practice in this situation to have another adult with you. If this is not possible, see guidance on one to one contact with children and young people in Standard 1.**

This is in line with national legislation and policy as outlined in the Guidance for Reporting Allegations of Abuse.



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