



**RESPONDING TO SUSPICION
OF CHILD ABUSE**

How to act with care, courage and responsibility when a child may be in danger.

Why Your Response Matters

A child's safety can depend on how you react. Children rarely lie about abuse.

But they often delay telling because they fear not being believed, being blamed or getting someone in trouble.

Your response can either open a door to safety or push them back into silence.

When you respond well, you communicate: **"You are safe. You did the right thing. I'm here to help."**

1 When a Child Discloses Abuse

Stay calm. Listen. Believe. Report.

Your composure helps the child feel safe.

Listen without judgment.

Let them speak in their own words.

No pressure for details.

Believe them.

Belief is the first step toward protection and healing.

Reassure them.

Use simple, comforting phrases:

- I'm proud of you for telling me.
- You did nothing wrong.
- I'm going to help keep you safe.

Record what you heard.

Write down the exact words, date, time and observations.

Report immediately.

- Tell your supervisor or safeguarding lead.
- Contact Social Welfare, DOVVSU, or Child Protection Services.
- In emergencies, go straight to the police or hospital.

Key message: Stay calm, listen, believe, report. Do not investigate.

2 When You Suspect Abuse (Without Disclosure)

Children don't always speak, sometimes signs speak for them.

Do:

- Observe and document concerning behaviour or injuries.
- Consult your headteacher, social worker or safeguarding lead.
- Report your suspicion. You don't need proof.
- Continue supporting the child with warmth and stability.

Do NOT:

- Interrogate or ask leading questions.
- Promise secrecy.
- Confront the suspected abuser.
- Ignore red flags or trust your gut over the child.
- Pressure the child to change or retell their story.

Key message: If something feels wrong, report it.
Early action saves lives.

3 What to say and what to avoid

Say

- I'm glad you told me.
- You're not in trouble.
- It's not your fault.
- I'll keep you safe.

Avoid Saying:

- Are you sure?
- Why didn't you tell me earlier?
- Don't tell anyone else.
- You must have misunderstood.

Your words can heal or harm. Choose reassurance.

4 How to report

You only need reasonable concern, not proof.

Report to:

- School Safeguarding Lead / Headteacher.
- Department of Social Welfare (Child Protection Unit).
- Police (DOVVSU).

In Emergencies: Go directly to the police or hospital.

Provide:

- Child's name and age.
- What you heard or observed.
- Any injuries or changes you noticed.
- Your written record of the disclosure (if applicable).

Maintain confidentiality to protect the child.

5 After Reporting, Ongoing Support

Reporting is the beginning of protection not the end.

Continue to:

- Treat the child with kindness and normalcy.
- Protect their privacy.
- Cooperate with professionals handling the case.
- Seek counselling support for the child and yourself if needed.



CALL OUR HOTLINE AND GET HELP:

050 128 9949

AN Innova DDB Ghana



INITIATIVE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

