If a Child Discloses Abuse to You...

**DO:**

- Stay calm and show no signs of shock;
- Listen and respond with empathy in a non-judgmental and open way;
- Consider the disclosure seriously;
- Remain calm, supportive, and reassuring;
- Validate the child’s feelings;
- Mirror the child’s language when appropriate (use and clarify the vocabulary that the child uses);
- Explain what you need to do (report to the director/counselor) and why;
- Allow the child control when feasible;
- Ask open-ended questions to gather information and detail;
- Consider the child’s language needs and whether support in another language is necessary;
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in coming forward and that they are currently safe; and
- As soon as possible following the disclosure, make a written report and write notes from the conversation.

**DON’T:**

- View images of children (rather ask for a brief description and secure a device as possible evidence for law enforcement);
- Take photos (if the child shares an injury, seek medical attention);
- Interview the child, ask leading or unnecessary questions, or provide language for the child;
- Take notes during the disclosure;
- Make promises that may not be able to be honored (such as promising you won’t tell anyone or that this will never happen again);
- Suggest that the child may be to blame in any way for what happened; or
- Ask the child to wait until another person can be present to witness the disclosure.

These guidelines were adapted from the MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE BY EDUCATORS AND OTHER ADULTS: Protocol for international schools, September 2018, by the International Task Force on Child Protection (ITFCP).