



### Chapter One Online Reading Volunteers

Chapter One's Online Reading Volunteers program deploys volunteer tutors from corporate organizations to support young readers using an online platform and voice connection for 30 minutes once a week. No visual connection is established between the tutor and child during tutoring and the child remains in the classroom setting, supervised by his/her teacher. Chapter One staff are also regularly present in schools.

Although unsupervised physical meetings between tutors/staff and students do not take place, Chapter One recognizes that it has a clear responsibility to its staff, volunteers and beneficiaries to ensure that conduct and training complies with best practice in relation to Safeguarding/Child Protection. Chapter One therefore undertakes to do the following:

- Ensure all Chapter One staff and volunteers are informed about Safeguarding/Child Protection.
- Train all Chapter One staff and volunteers in the appropriate procedure to follow should they become concerned that a child's safety is endangered
- Ensure that all volunteers pass a criminal background check or Enhanced DBS check before they begin reading sessions.
- Ensure Chapter One staff and volunteers understand what constitutes appropriate behavior in their interaction with children.
- Ensure that all Chapter One staff who come in contact with students directly comply with district policy and complete all necessary background check procedures.
- Ensure Chapter One's Senior Leadership team regularly reviews data on Safeguarding/Child Protection reports.

### Why is Safeguarding/Child Protection important?

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. People involved in schools are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and prevent concerns from escalating.

### What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, institution, online, educational or community setting. Abuse may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and/or neglect.

## What is the purpose of Safeguarding/Child Protection?

Safeguarding is:

- Protecting children from maltreatment with an appropriate measure.
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children have the best outcomes.

Child protection refers to the procedures adults use to protect children at risk of significant harm or who have been harmed.

## Training for Chapter One Staff and Volunteers

Chapter One trains all staff and volunteers in its Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and Procedures before they undertake any reading sessions or, in the case of staff, school visits. All volunteers and staff will agree to comply with Chapter One Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and Procedure.

## Procedure for dealing with a Disclosure/Concern of Abuse

In the event that a child discloses any form of abuse to a volunteer or Chapter One staff member, they will follow this procedure:

1. The volunteer and/or Chapter One staff will report the suspected abuse or neglect directly to the child welfare service agency. This reporting is anonymous and confidential.

### **Click the appropriate link below for hotline numbers by state/province:**

United States: [Child Protective Services hotline \(CPS\)](#)

Ontario: [Child Aid Society hotline \(CAS\)](#)

British Columbia: [Provincial Centralized Screening \(PCS\) hotline](#)

2. The volunteer and/or the Chapter One staff will not share any details about the potential abuse or neglect with anyone within their organization, the school staff, or the Innovations for Learning staff. This information is confidential and between the reporter and the CPS, CAS, or PCS intake operator.
3. After reporting to the CPS, CAS, or PCS hotline, the volunteer and/or Chapter One Staff member will complete the Chapter One Child Safety Incident Form located in the Chapter One eLearning Center. The purpose of this form is to serve as a document that a report has been filed with the appropriate agency. No details shared by the child should be included on this form.

For more information about reporting suspected abuse or neglect, please visit:

United States: [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)

Ontario: [Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services](#)

British Columbia: [Government of British Columbia, Protecting Children](#)

Below are steps you should take if you suspect abuse or neglect:

- As best as you can, document what the child has told you but DO NOT ask probing questions.
- Be reassuring and validate the child, "I understand that may have been scary."
- Refrain from being emotional or showing shock, "I'm glad you were able to tell me. It's not your fault."
- Do not make promises to the child. You might let the child know that you cannot promise to keep this a secret but will make sure to let someone know who can help.
- Allow the child to finish his/her thoughts and then gently end the session. For example, you might say "I see that reading may be difficult for you today. Let's end the session and we'll read again next week."
- When you end the session, immediately report your concerns to the CPS, CAS, or PCS hotline. This information is confidential and anonymous.
- Do not discuss the details with anyone at your organization, the school, or with any Chapter One staff. The reporting must stay confidential and the hotline operator will determine if the alleged abuse needs further investigation.
- When calling the CPS, CAS, or PCS hotline, provide the operator with the information to the best of your ability. They may ask you questions that you cannot answer due to limited information. That's ok, simply tell them what you know.
- Do not judge for yourself if the story the child shares constitutes abuse, is valid, or true. If you are concerned, you must report to the child protection agency. They will make the determination if further investigation is necessary.
- After you have made your report, fill out the Chapter One Incident form and email the form to: [childsafety@chapterone.org](mailto:childsafety@chapterone.org). The Incident form can be found in the Chapter One eLearning Center.

PLEASE DO NOT provide details of the incident on this form. That information is confidential between you and the hotline operator. The Incident form is only used as verification that child protection service was notified.

### **Criminal Record/Enhanced DBS checks**

Chapter One will perform an online criminal background check once each year for all volunteers through a qualified third-party vendor. Participating school districts may require additional background check work be performed.

## Appropriate Tutor/Staff Behavior

Chapter One staff and volunteer tutors will also be trained to understand what constitutes appropriate behavior in their interactions with children. This training will also help to protect them against any malicious or unfounded allegations of inappropriate behavior. The following are the essential requirements for all staff and volunteer tutors to comply with:

- Remember that staff and volunteers are in a position of responsibility and should use language carefully.
- Speak in a manner appropriate for the age group e.g. no swearing, no suggestive or derogatory comments.
- Do not share personal information with students e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, phone number and email address.
- Do not ask children for their personal information.
- Do not arrange to meet a child anywhere outside the school setting.
- Do not offer to send children gifts or money or make promises to them that cannot be fulfilled.
- Do not interact with children under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Staff/volunteers should only take photos of children if they have confirmed that the child has a photo release.