

YOUTH PROTECTION REPORTING PROCEDURE

If you become aware of an incident of child abuse happening to a member of your Scout unit, this information must be reported at once to the Scout Executive, Rick Stritzinger.

During normal business days, please call Old Colony Council (781) 828-8360. Evening or weekends, Mr. Stritzinger can be reached on his cell phone, (413) 329-7877.

The Massachusetts Law dealing with reporting suspicion of child abuse is Chapter 119, section 51-A.

Your Scout Executive will provide advice on what should be done next and which agency will follow up on the report. Normally, investigations of child abuse are referred to the jurisdiction where the alleged incident occurred. Use a piece of paper or the other side of this sheet to make some notes to assist yourself in remembering what was reported to you and when you became aware of the incident. These notes may be helpful later.

Keep information about the victim and suspect confidential at this time. Follow the suggestions of the Scout Executive.

WHAT TO DO WHEN A CHILD REPORTS

When children tell an adult that they have been sexually or physically assaulted, it is often difficult and painful for the adult to listen. The following are some hints on what to do:

1. Believe the child. It is difficult enough to tell you the story, do not sidestep the description of the assault. Children are perceptive and will pick up on your discomfort. They may avoid giving a detailed account in an effort to avoid upsetting you. As the child's advocate, you must be able to hear the events he or she has lived through. Do not push if the child does not want to give details.
2. Stay calm. Shock, anger, disbelief, fear, guilt are all normal reactions, especially if offender is someone known to you. Right now, the child needs you to stay calm.
3. Reassure the child. Tell the child that you are glad he or she told you. Let the child know that it must have been hard to tell (especially if the child had been cautioned to keep the experience a secret) and emphasize that whatever happened, it was not the child's fault. Do not make promises that you can not keep.