



Summary of Duty to Report

We have recently connected again with CAS (Children's Aid Society) regarding the very important role that all members of the community play in the protection of children from abuse and neglect. This role resonates strongly within the Student Transportation industry, where employees, Bus Drivers in particular, are in frequent and direct communication with students each day, and may be in a position to become witness to situations which may cause them to reasonably suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection.

Please take note of the following with regard to the **Duty to Report** to CAS and take some time to review this information with your drivers.

We have spoken to CAS, who have confirmed that anyone who has a reasonable suspicion that a child is or may be in need of protection must contact CAS immediately. If you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is in need of help, you need to make the call. It isn't up to you to investigate or prove the abuse, but it is up to you to reach out and help protect the child.

CAS emphasized the **Direct Duty to Report**, such that you must not rely on anyone else to report on your behalf. This means that members of your staff (e.g. Bus Drivers), who have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, are required under Ontario's Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) to report their concerns directly to CAS, with your support. First-person reporting enhances the accuracy of the information provided to CAS, helps to keep details intact and to ensure that reports are made without delay.

Ontario's CFSA provides for protection for children who may be at risk. Section 72 of the Act states that the public, including professionals who work with children, must promptly report any suspicions that a child is or may be in need of protection to a children's aid society (CAS). The Act defines the phrase "child in need of protection" and explains what must be reported to a CAS. It includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, and risk of harm. It is not necessary for you to be certain a child is or may be in need of protection to make a report to CAS.

Ongoing Duty to Report – Please note, that even if you know a report has already been made about a child, you must make a further report to the CAS if there are additional reasonable grounds to suspect that the child is or may be in need of protection.

In speaking with CAS, it was indicated that you can call CAS and consult a protection worker without identifying the family you are concerned about, if you are uncertain about a path forward and would like some direction.

With sincere appreciation for all that you do each and every day for the safety and wellbeing of the community and of the children that you transport.