



***The following message is sent on behalf of Halton Regional Police Service and the Halton Children's Aid Society***

Dear Halton Families,

We recognize that home is the safest place for our community to be right now. For some children, however, home is not a safe place. Halton Regional Police Service's Child Abuse and Sexual Assault (CASA) Unit, Halton Children's Aid Society (Halton CAS), and the Halton District School Board (HDSB) are asking that you remain vigilant in reporting suspected child abuse.

While physical distancing measures have been in place, there has been a significant drop in reports of suspected child abuse/neglect. In April 2020, there was a 74% decrease in calls regarding suspected child abuse to the Halton Regional Police Service compared to the same time period last year. Similarly, the Halton CAS has observed a 59% percent decrease in calls.

Most reports of suspected child abuse come from third-party sources, including schools, daycare providers, coaches, and other parents. With physical distancing measures in place, there is little opportunity for children to interact with or reach out to those they trust.

**During this stressful time for many families, the HRPS, and Halton CAS are reminding the community that they are here to assist and support children, youth, and families 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

The HRPS, Halton CAS, and the HDSB are asking that everyone remains mindful of the welfare of their neighbours, their children's friends and classmates, and their relatives. It is critical that you check in on those around you on a regular basis. Be on the lookout for signs of:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse

It is also crucial that you speak to your children about what to do if a friend confides in them that they are not safe at home. Explain to them that:

- They will not get in trouble for telling you
- They can help their friends who cannot help themselves

Victims or friends/family of victims are encouraged to contact the Halton Regional Police Service, Halton Children's Aid Society, or other community resources if child abuse or neglect is happening. **If you have any concerns regarding the well-being of children, please report it.**



## **Help is available!**

The following is a list of valuable support services and resources in Halton Region for victims of child abuse:

- **Halton Regional Police Service Child Abuse & Sexual Assault Unit** 905-825-4777
- **Halton Children's Aid Society** 905-333-4441 or 1-866-607-5437
- **Kids Help Phone** 1-800-668-6868 (24-hour crisis line)
- **Radius Child & Youth Services** 905-825-3242 (Oakville) or 1-855-744-9001
- **Halton Women's Place** 905-878-8555 (north) or 905-332-7892 (24-hour crisis line)

**If you have immediate concerns about a child's safety call 911.**

As always, if you have any questions please reach out to your school's Principal.