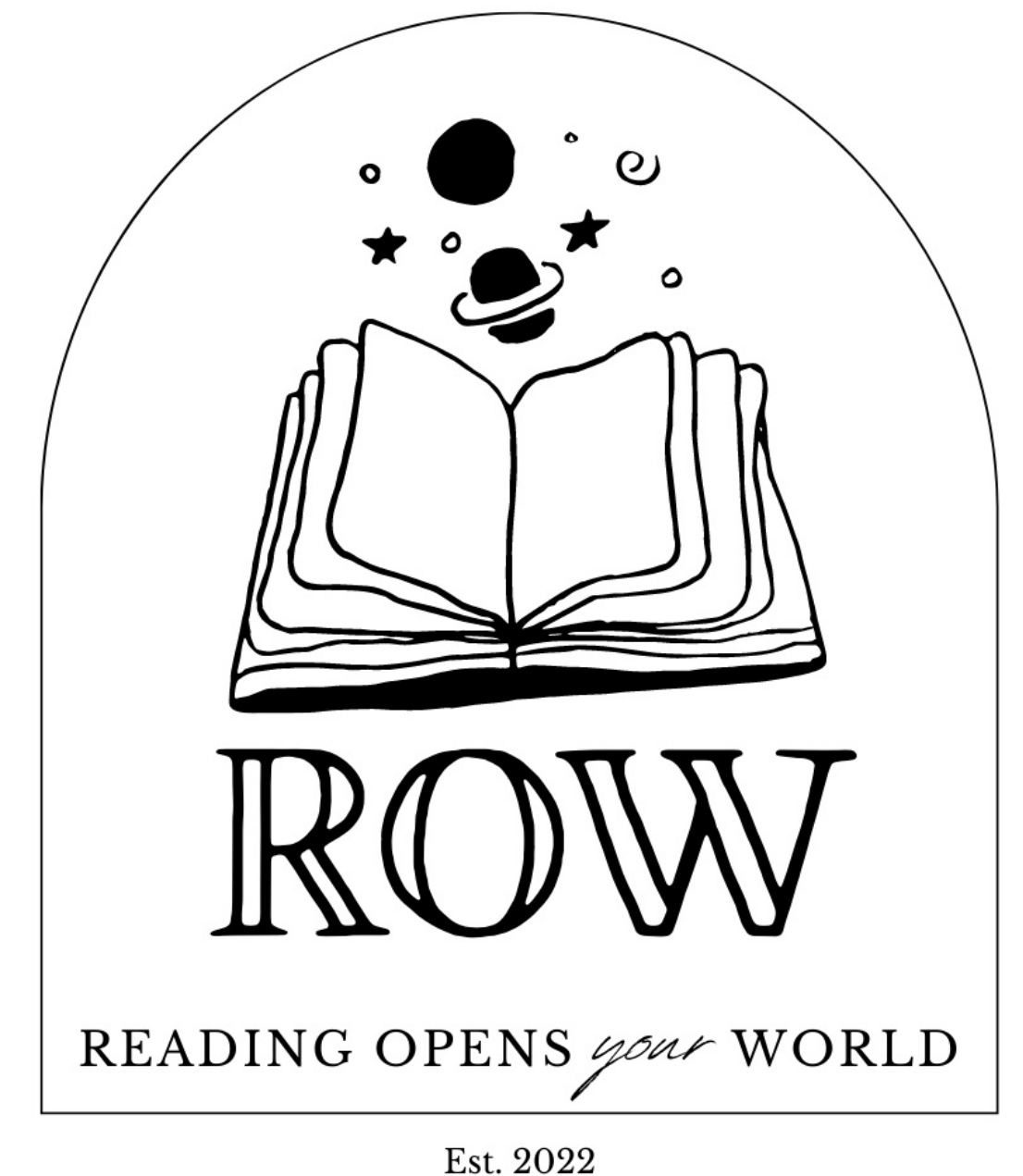


Reading Opens your World Volunteer Mandatory Training

Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting
&
Adult Sexual Misconduct

Empowering volunteers to ensure safety and responsible reporting



ROW prioritizes the safety of students

- All volunteers must be educated on child safety policies.
- Annual safety training is mandatory to ensure continuous awareness and compliance with safety standards.
- Volunteers are required to report any suspected abuse immediately to the school principal.
- Montana Child Abuse Reporting Statute
 - Under Montana law, several persons are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect when they have “reasonable cause to suspect” it is occurring. MCA 41-3-201.
 - Mandatory reporters include most medical professionals, religious officials, social workers, but also school teachers and any other “school officials.”
 - It is not clear whether the term “school officials” is broad enough to include ROW volunteers.
 - *If during your volunteerism with ROW, you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, please report it.*

If a student reports abuse to you while you are volunteering with ROW:

- Always take it seriously.
- Report your concerns immediately to the school principal for further evaluation.
- Never ask a child to show injuries. Refer students mentioning unseen injuries or discomfort to the school nurse or principal.

Types & Signs of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse

Child Sexual Abuse

Neglect

Emotional Abuse/Mental Injury

Threat of Harm

Physical Abuse

- Physical abuse is characterized by non-accidental, intentional injuries caused to another person.
- Physical abuse can result in:
 - Skin injuries, such as burns, bruising, swelling, scrapes, welts
 - Fractures or sprains
 - Internal injuries
 - Head injuries
 - Death

Child Sexual Abuse

- Child sexual abuse involves any sexual contact or like behavior with a child.
- Forms of child sexual abuse include:
 - Physical sexual abuse
 - Non-physical sexual abuse
 - Voyeurism
 - Exposing oneself
 - Sexual solicitations or sexual talk
 - Exposure to sexual material or inappropriate content

Neglect

- Neglect is the chronic failure to meet a child's essential physical and emotional needs.
- Neglect is the most common type of abuse.
- Neglect includes:
 - Lack of food, clothing, attention to hygiene, shelter and/or medical care
 - Inadequate supervision
 - Insufficient social and educational opportunities

Emotional Abuse & Mental Injury

- Emotional Abuse and Mental Injury is defined as maltreatment that results in impaired psychological and social growth and development.
- Emotional Abuse and Mental Injury is often difficult to detect due to its subtle and non-physical nature.
- Emotional Abuse and Mental Injury is characterized by a pattern of behavior that may include:
 - Verbal abuse, such as ridicule, rejection, berating of a child.
 - Terrorizing a child by threatening them directly, their family members, loved ones, possessions or pets.
 - Ignoring a child or refusing to interact with them.
 - Social isolation so the child cannot develop other relationships.

Threat of Harm

- Threat of Harm is verbal, non-verbal or written expression or indication implying injury to a person or their property.
- Threat of Harm exists when a child's health or welfare is endangered by a caregiver.
- Such threats can cause emotional distress and fear.

Abuse of Children with Disabilities

- Children with disabilities face a greater risk of abuse compared to their peers.
- Some children with disabilities may lack the education on healthy personal and sexual boundaries and methods of self-protection.
- Children with disabilities may have difficulties expressing themselves clearly or communicating their needs.
- The abuser may think the child won't tell anyone about the abuse or the child won't be believed.

Recognizing Signs of Abuse & Immediate Reporting

- Alertness of Behavior Changes
 - Volunteers should observe any sudden changes in behavior or appearance that may indicate abuse or misconduct.
- Immediate Reporting
 - Any concerns regarding abuse or misconduct should be immediately reported to the school principal.
 - Under no circumstances should a volunteer contact a student's parent/guardian.
 - Volunteers must keep all information strictly confidential.
- Other resources
 - Montana Child Abuse Hotline 1-866-820-5437

If you see something, say something!

Adult Sexual Misconduct

Defining Adult Sexual Misconduct & Examples

- Adult Sexual Misconduct involves any inappropriate sexual behavior directed towards a child. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature ~ verbal comments, flirting, sexual advances, request for sexual favors, any unwanted physical contact, remarks about a person's sex/gender/orientation.

Grooming Behaviors and Warning Signs

- Child Grooming is establishing an emotional connection and gaining trust with a child to lower their inhibitions with the object of sexual abuse. Some examples are:
 - Inappropriate sexual talk or behavior directed at or expressed in the company of students
 - Overly personal messages, notes, texts, yearbook inscriptions
 - Risqué jokes or degrading or provocative remarks
 - Suggestive teasing or innuendos
 - Students singled out for favors/gifts
 - Secretive or flirtatious behavior

Perpetrators of Adult Sexual Misconduct Work Diligently to Hide by:

- Appearing above reproach
- Developing close ties to family and school
- Working to develop loyalty in the student
- Claiming to be acting out of concern
- Denying and minimizing their actions toward a student

Inappropriate Behaviors to Avoid

- Physical Contact Boundaries
 - Avoid front hugs, back rubs or patting butt
- Inappropriate Communication
 - Refrain from sexual jokes or comments, private online messages or “sexting”, showing porn or risqué content, oversharing of personal information/poor boundaries.
- Supervision and Safety
 - Never be alone with a student in a locked room.
 - Do not engage with students off school grounds in non-school activities.

Appropriate Volunteer Conduct

- Respectful Communication
 - Volunteers should always communicate respectfully and appropriately in public settings to foster positive interactions.
 - Use of appropriate humor and non-personal compliments.
- Consent for Physical Contact
 - Volunteers should only give side hugs with explicit consent to ensure student comfort and maintain respectful boundaries.
- Positive Encouragement
 - Encouragement and positive reinforcement help motivate and support students.

Steps for Reporting Concerns

- A volunteer who observes signs or concerns or becomes aware of potential Adult Sexual Misconduct or Child Abuse, should immediately report it to the school principal.
- Do not contact the child's family or guardians.
- Maintain strict confidentiality to protect all parties.
- Other resources
 - Montana Child Abuse Hotline 1-866-820-5437

If you see something, say something!

Thank you Volunteers!

We'd like to sincerely thank you for your dedicated time, care and commitment helping and protecting the children of our community.

Thank you for reviewing this important information and thank you for volunteering!