

PRACTICAL GUIDE · CHECKLIST

Report to the KESB

When, how and with which information to report a risk to the KESB, the Swiss child and adult protection authority. For professionals, institutions and private individuals in Switzerland.

Acute danger to life and limb? Don't report and wait – call 117 or 144 immediately. The report to the KESB follows afterwards.

Who may report, who must report?

	Children	Adults
Right to report	Anyone, if a child's physical, psychological or sexual integrity appears to be at risk (Art. 314c para. 1 Swiss Civil Code, ZGB). People bound by professional secrecy may report if it is in the child's interest (para. 2).	Anyone, if a person appears to be in need of help (Art. 443 para. 1 ZGB). Professional secrecy remains reserved.
Duty to report	Professionals in medicine, psychology, care, supervision, education, training, social counselling, religion and sport who have regular contact with children – unless bound by professional secrecy – if there are concrete indications and they cannot remedy the situation within their own work (Art. 314d para. 1 ZGB). The duty is also fulfilled by reporting to their superior (para. 2).	People acting in an official capacity (Art. 443 para. 2 ZGB).
Cantonal	The cantons may provide for further duties to report (cantonal implementing law). Ask your KESB.	Likewise.

Before reporting

- ☐ Observations recorded in writing with date, place and situation – facts kept separate from assessments.
- ☐ Statements by the child or person concerned noted word for word, without leading questions.
- ☐ Own options examined: conversation, support, involvement of specialist services.
- ☐ Discussed internally with the superior or the team (four-eyes principle).
- ☐ If in doubt: anonymous case consultation with the KESB or a child protection service – without naming names.
- ☐ Clarified whether and how the parents or the person concerned will be informed beforehand.

What the report should contain

- ☐ Your details: name, function, institution, contact.
- ☐ Person concerned: name, date of birth, address; for children also the parents or legal guardians.
- ☐ What you have specifically observed or heard – when, where, how often.
- ☐ Why you assume a risk and how urgent you consider it.
- ☐ What has already been done and with what result.
- ☐ Other professionals and services involved.
- ☐ Whether the parents or the person concerned know about the report.

Phrasing it well

- Describe rather than judge: “On 3 October Lea had a bruise on her upper arm” instead of “Lea is being beaten”.
- Factual and respectful – the people concerned can later see the file.
- Use your KESB’s reporting form if there is one.
- Anonymous reports are generally not recommended: follow-up questions are then not possible.

What happens after the report

- The KESB must follow up every report. It investigates, talks to those concerned and to professionals and first looks for consensual solutions.
- A report does not automatically mean a measure. Many investigations end without an official measure.
- The people concerned can ask to see the file – your report and your name are usually visible there.
- Anyone who reports in good faith need not fear legal consequences.

As of October 2026. This checklist does not replace legal advice. Procedures and forms differ from canton to canton. Sources: Art. 314c, 314d and 443 ZGB; fact sheet “Meldung an die KESB” of the canton of Appenzell Ausserrhoden.