

Attempted Child Abduction and Child Abduction Response Procedures

Child Side School has strategies and processes in place to minimise the likelihood of needing to use the Child Abduction Response Procedures. These procedures are preventative as well as responsive and refer to suspicious adult behaviour, attempted child abduction and suspected child abduction.

Other policies linked to this one include:

- Playground Supervision Policy
- Emergency Management Plan
- Critical Incident and Crisis Management Policy
- Child Protection Policy

“Child Abduction is the act of carrying off or detaining a child against his or her will by unlawful force.”
(Police definition)

In the event a person is identified as acting suspicious within the school vicinity and a decision is made to issue a Protective Behaviour Alert the following procedure is to be implemented;

- All incidents are to be reported to Police via 131 444 (not to local Police)
- AISWA is to be advised including a description of the person (if available) but not specific details of vehicle registration numbers or what the person may have said to the child.
- A public alert is then to be distributed to the school community inserting the following line **This matter has been reported to WA Police. The matter should be regarded as unsubstantiated until further advice from WA Police. Anyone with information regarding this matter is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.**
- The WA Police Media Unit are to be advised of the intent to warn parents, including the actual warning that is being distributed to parents, via police.media@police.wa.gov.au.

The actions in these procedures are recommended by the Western Australian Police (Sexual Assault Squad) and determine the actions that are taken by the police in the event of an attempted or successful abduction.

Typically this plan would be initiated by a child reporting an incident to an Educator or a parent.

The following process needs to be followed when an incident is reported.

1. **Child** makes a report. Reports may be of an attempted abduction, attempted assault or actual assault, stalking behaviour (with or without a camera), or behaviour of a sexual nature such as an adult exposing themselves to the child/children.
2. **Educator** who receives the report should immediately inform the Senior Educator, passing on all information reported by the child/children. The information would include what actually

happened and descriptions of any persons involved. Please use the 'Eyes on the Street Incident Report' to record this information. SEE APPENDIX A Educators who believe that a matter is sexual in nature may also need to submit a formal Mandatory Report. **EDUCATORS ARE NOT TO SPEAK WITH THE MEDIA OR WITH ANY PEOPLE NOT DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE ISSUE.**

3. **Senior Educator** should:

- as soon as practicable call the Police (131 444) to lodge a formal report or (000) if it is an emergency. When an incident is reported to the Police, please ensure that an Incident Report Number or CAD Reference Number is given and noted. This will ensure that any police staff can locate the incident details. Senior Educator should ask the attending police officers if they believe that the incident should be reported to other schools.
- The school would then contact the parents if they have not already been informed. -The Chair of the Governing Council should also be advised of the situation.
- Niki Preston (the Personal Assistant to the Executive Director of AISWA) also needs to be notified by email npreston@ais.wa.edu.au and cc to ndavidson@ais.wa.edu.au so that other Principals of other AISWA schools in the area, the Catholic Education Office and the regional office of the Department of Education can be informed. AISWA will assist with any calls to the Association by the Media or will, if requested, provide assistance to the School.
- DES must also be informed if it is considered a 'critical incident' as per Registration Standards 2016.
- The School Psychologist may be contacted to assist the child/children and families concerned. (AISWA Psychology Service)

4. **Media:** AISWA recommends that the school does not make the first contact with the media. The Executive Director should be contacted through her PA on 9441 1611 or npreston@ais.wa.edu.au for assistance in dealing with the media.

5. **Contacting Parents:** The school may also need to advise the School Community of the incident by letter (sample letter attached to this policy). The decision to send a letter, following an attempted abduction event, is considered to be good practice by WAPOL (Western Australian Police) as it keeps parents and caregivers informed however it is recommended that the Senior Educator liaise with the investigating Police before sending a letter to the school community as this may assist in assessing the risk to others and the advice to be given to parents. Whilst the Police want parents and students to be vigilant, they do not want a letter to cause unnecessary alarm. The Senior Educator may not wish to send a letter home if recent events have been such that the letter would serve no real benefit and perhaps cause unnecessary fear in the school community.

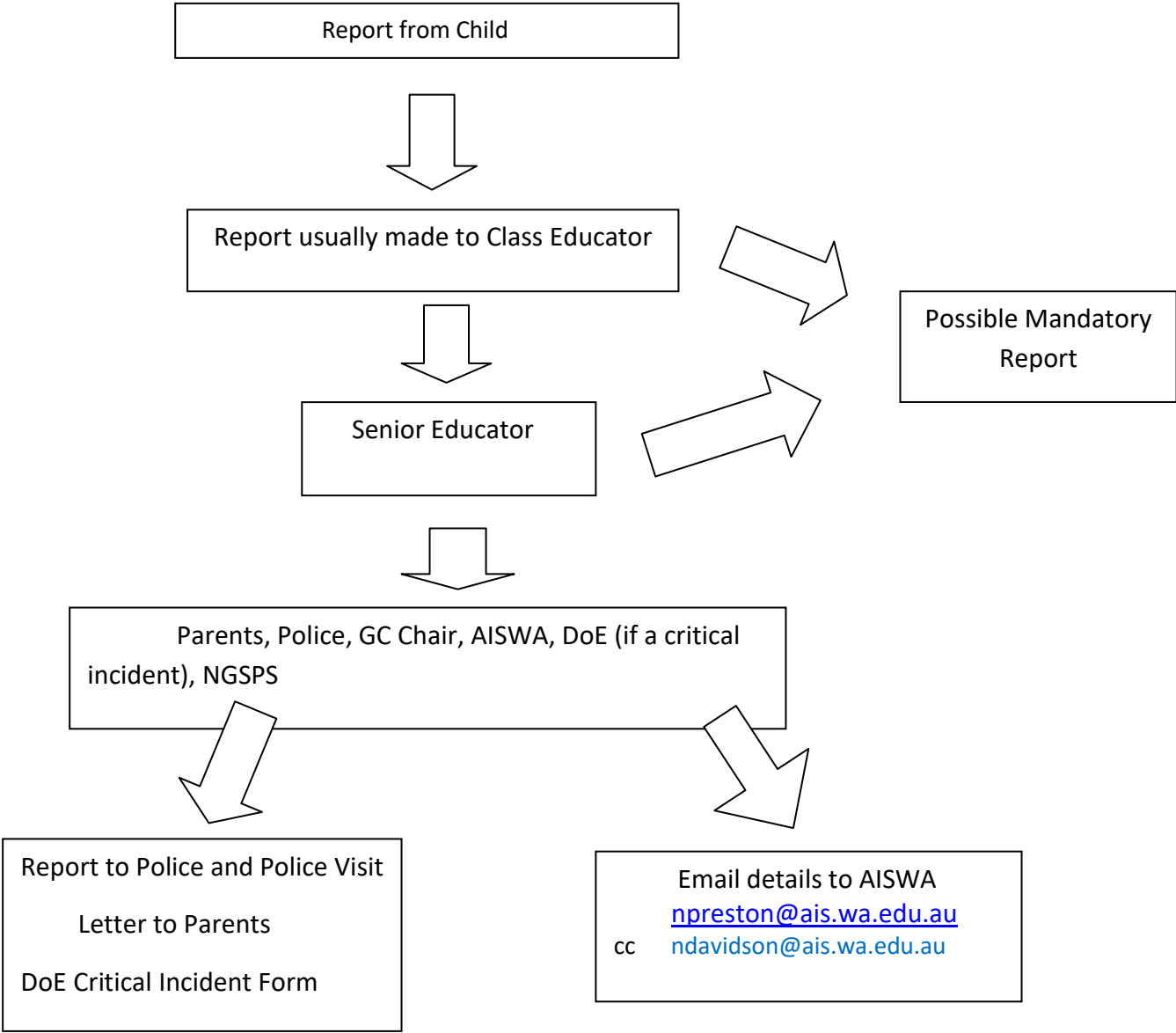
NOTE THAT WHEN GIVING DETAILS OF AN EVENT TO PARENTS IN A LETTER THAT VEHICLE REGISTRATION DETAILS MUST NOT BE PASSED ON. THESE DETAILS SHOULD ONLY BE GIVEN TO POLICE.

When a parent receives a letter about the possibility of a person approaching children, it can cause great anxiety and ongoing fear- particularly if a report is unsubstantiated. The Senior Educator may wish to follow up with the relevant police officer to find out the outcome of the investigation and then it may be appropriate to send parents a brief letter to provide closure about the matter

6. **Record Keeping:** Along with the notes taken by the Educator and the Senior Educator (Eyes On The Street Incident report), it is essential that the school records the name/s, contact number and incident report number or CAD reference Number given when the police attend on the Accident/Incident Report Form (see Appendix 1 –Sickness And Accident Policy)

PLEASE NOTE THAT IN THE EVENT OF A SUCCESSFUL ABDUCTION, UNLESS A CHILD IS TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM SCHOOL, THE POLICE WILL NOT ADVISE THE SCHOOL UNTIL PARENTS AND ALL OTHER RELEVANT AUTHORITIES AND AGENCIES HAVE BEEN CONTACTED.

FLOW CHART SHOWING PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED IN CHILD ABDUCTION RESPONSE PROCEDURES



APPENDIX 2 SAMPLE LETTER 1

Dear Parents,

The safety and security of all students at Child Side School is of the utmost importance to me and therefore I endeavour to keep parents informed of anything that may impact on your child's safety.

Key phrases re the incident should be place here:

I am writing to inform parents about a reported incident in the nearby community.

'Today, whilst walking to school a student has reported to have been followed spoken to ...

Alleged to have occurred (use terms such as alleged rather than definitive terms). Police are investigating this report. (this last line is crucial)

In light of this incident, we urge all students to take care when travelling to and from school, and to report anything suspicious to parents, the School and the Police – call 131 444 to report an incident to Police (only use 000 in an emergency) or 1800 333 000 to reach Crime Stoppers.

Here are some simple behaviours to help your child stay safe. Please discuss these with your child and ask your child to:

- Always travel in company
- Walk on the right hand side of the road so that he or she always faces oncoming traffic
- Wherever possible, leave space between themselves and the roadway
- Stay in areas that are well lit
- Stay in view – avoid going into areas that are hidden from view (such as parkland bush or behind shopping centres) and plan to avoid such locations
- Be alert-earphones and headphones can reduce their awareness considerably
- If you have a mobile phone, have it turned on and ready to dial an emergency number
- If a passing vehicle stops nearby, never get too close
- Run from a situation if you feel at risk
- Give this advice to your brothers and sisters, especially if they are younger
- Report suspicious behaviour to your parents, school and the police
- If you can get it safely, try to photograph or remember the number plate of the car
- Report number plates of cars and the clothing or distinguishing features of individuals to police.

To get the latest community safety information from police, visit WA Police on Facebook www.facebook.com/WA.Police or online at www.police.wa.gov.au.

If you have any queries regarding this matter, do not hesitate to contact the School or discuss your concerns with your child's Educator.

Yours sincerely

Senior Educator

APPENDIX 3 SAMPLE LETTER TWO

Dear Parents,

I am writing to give further information following the recent letter/report of a student/s being approached by a person/vehicle near our school on <date> and in <location>.

As you know, we take all reports like this very seriously in the first instance and notify parents and, if necessary, the Police.

In this case, the police have investigated the report/s and I am happy to say that they have advised me there is no information about this matter that suggests there is an ongoing threat to the children in our school.

If you have any queries regarding this matter, do not hesitate to contact the School or discuss your concerns with our child's teacher.

Yours faithfully,

Senior Educator