

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

All children have a right to be protected from harm and schools and teachers owe a 'duty of care' to all students at the school. Schools have a special responsibility to protect children when they are on school premises and also to intervene when they believe the welfare of a child is at risk outside the school.

Scope and Application

This policy applies to all employees, parents, children, volunteers and visitors of Child Side School. This policy will be reviewed and amended in accordance with Child Side School Policy on Policies and Policy Guidelines and Procedures Contents Schedule.

The use of the word child/children in this policy refers to students in the context of the school environment.

Related Legislation/Guidelines

- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008
- State Records Act 2000
- Records Retention & Disposal Schedule for Non-Government Schools
- Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools
- Multi-Agency Protocol for Education Options for Young people Charged with Harmful Sexual Behaviours

Related Policies/Guidelines/Documents

- Access to Students Policy
- Attempted Child Abduction and Child Abduction Response Procedure
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Child Code of Conduct Kindergarten – year 6
- Young Adolescent Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- General Duty of Care Policy
- Work Health & Safety Policy
- Guiding Children's Behaviour Policy
- Nutrition, Health & Hygiene Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Guidelines for Engaging Volunteers
- Staff Induction Policy
- Staff Recruitment Policy
- Child Side Child Safe and Friendly Organisation Framework
- Child Side Curriculum Map
- 'Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum' Documents

Definitions

Definition of 'teacher'

The definition of teacher in section 124A of the Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008 has been changed to read:

- a. *person who is registered under the Teacher Registration Act 2012, or*
- b. *a person who provides instruction in a course that is -*
 - (i) mentioned in the School Education Act 1999 s11B(1)(a), (b) or (e) and*
 - (ii) prescribed for the purposes of this definition; or*
- c. *A person who instructs or supervises a student who is participating in an activity that is -*
 - (i) part of an educational programme of a school under an arrangement mentioned in the School Education Act 1999 s24(1); and*
 - (ii) prescribed for the purposes of this definition; or*
- d. *A person employed by the chief executive officer as defined in the Young Offenders Act 1994 s3 to teach detainees at a detention centre.*

Only (a) applies to schools. The other subsections relate to other forms of education.

Teacher assistants, school chaplains and school psychologists are examples of people who work with children in schools that are not mandated reporters. However, all people working with children, whether mandatory reporters or not, should continue to report reasonable beliefs about all forms of abuse. These people who work with children also have a great knowledge of the children in their care and can be included in the consultative process with the teacher in the case of sexual abuse. Please note that in the independent school sector, once a teacher has formed a belief based on reasonable grounds, they are required to make the report to DCP, not the school principal. Prior to forming a belief, the teacher may, if they wish, consult with colleagues with specialist knowledge, for example, the principal, psychologist, school counsellor.

Definition of Regular Volunteer

A regular volunteer is one who attends the school or school-related activity at regular periodic intervals during a school year or one who is frequently called upon to assist in diverse capacities. For the purposes of standard 10.5, a regular volunteer is not a member of staff. Members of staff may include people who are not paid.

Definition of Child Maltreatment

Child Abuse and Neglect:

This is maltreatment of a person under the age of 18 years. It is a result of action or inaction on the part of a person who has responsibility of a person to care for a child that results in harm or injury to the child. The harm may include delayed physical and/or intellectual development. The maltreatment experienced may include one or all of the following:

- **Emotional Abuse:** a constant attitude or behaviour by a person or a child that causes emotional harm. It can include rejection or refusal to accept a child, terrorising, bullying, isolation, continued belittlement and exposure to chronic or serious domestic violence. Emotional abuse may be evidenced through disturbed behaviour or the impairment of the child's emotional, intellectual or social development.
- **Physical Abuse:** persistent and /or severe physical harm caused to a child. It includes injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and fractures caused by a range of acts including beating, shaking, illicit administration of alcohol and other drugs, attempted suffocation or excessive discipline.
- **Neglect:** failure of a parent/ care giver to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as his/her development is or is likely to be significantly damaged or injury occurs. These include adequate supervision, healthy food, suitable clothing, medical care and emotional security.
- **Psychological Abuse:** is the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, isolating, neglecting, discrediting, misleading, disregarding, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.
- **Sexual Abuse:** covers a wide range of behaviour or activities that expose or subject a child to sexual activity that is exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level.

These behaviours include observation or involvement with inappropriate fondling of a child's body, making a child touch an adult's genitalia, showing pornographic material or sexual acts to a child, and sexual penetration of the child. Harm from sexual abuse may include significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infections and impaired emotional and psychological development.

Policy Statement

Child Side School is committed to a child safe and friendly environment. This commitment is implemented through the 'Child Side Child Safe and Friendly Organisation Framework' with Ten focus areas:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Our commitment also includes prevention, early detection, intervention and promoting protective behaviours for all students through the Child Side Curriculum. The Child Side chosen Curriculum 'Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum' provides an age-appropriate personal safety component enabling students to recognise and report abuse, understand power in relationships, and develop protective strategies, including seeking help. Child Side's Child Protection Curriculum has relevant and specific resources and provides educators across the whole school with a consistent and cohesive approach to protective behaviours. The curriculum has four focus areas:

1. The right to be safe
2. Relationships
3. Recognising and reporting abuse
4. Protective Strategies

Other policies and procedures are in place to ensure the provision of a safe environment in which children are able to learn and work, including procedures ensuring that staff and volunteers are adequately screened, trained and supervised.

All staff including regular volunteers at Child Side School have a Duty of Care to report any disclosures from children or parents, or any of their own observations that may relate to suspected abuse or neglect of children whether the risk is inside or outside of the school.

There is a specific procedure for staff to follow in reporting any disclosures/observations. This must be followed at all times in order to protect the rights of the child. All staff will be reminded of the need to respect the privacy of the individual and to hold all information in strict confidence.

The school's records of complaints, allegations and findings related to grooming and child abuse, whether involving former or current staff or students are detailed, stored securely in locked cabinets in the office and on the school server and will not be destroyed without the approval of the Director General or where their retention becomes impracticable or unduly onerous, are forwarded to the Director General with her permission for retention in accordance with the State Records Act 2000.

Mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse has been introduced and there is a specific procedure relating to this process. Since 1st January 2009, the *Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008* has been in effect and covers mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in Western Australia. This amendment forms part of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

In Western Australia, the mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse are the following professions in both the government and non-government sectors:

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Midwives
- Teachers
- Police officers.
- Boarding supervisors
- Ministers of religion

The school cooperates in the Multi-Agency Protocol for Education Options for Young People Charged with harmful Sexual Behaviours and implements a risk assessment and management plan for any such young person enrolled at the school.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Child Side School Child Protection Policy Guidelines and Mandatory Reporting Procedures
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Version Management

VERSION	DATE REVIEWED	DATE RATIFIED	CHANGES MADE	AUTHOR OF CHANGES	NEXT REVIEW DATE
1	June 2011	14/9/2011	Mandatory reporting separated to another policy	KM	
2	Dec 2014	10/12/2014	Minor name changes- educator	KM	
3	April 2015	15/6/2015	Mandatory reporting incorporated in Child Protection Policy-response to DES requirement. All changes to policy in line with latest guidelines.	KM	
4	April 2018	12/4/2018	Update policy to standard CCS format	LF	
5	Oct 2018	28/11/2018	Referred to Child Safe and Friendly Organisation Framework and 'Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum'	KM	
6	Mach 2021	02/06/2021	Additions required under standard 10 of the Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools	LF	Term 2 - 2022
7	May 2022	22/07/2022	Added the word Volunteers to the Scope and Application. No other changes made	LF	Term 2 - 2022
8	Nov 2022	07/12/2022	Added new mandatory reporters in WA to list, expanded national principals for child safe organisations from 9 to 10, included child and young adolescents CoC's in related policy list.	KM	Term 4 2023

Child Side School Child Protection Policy Guidelines and Mandatory Reporting Procedures

Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive but contains those that will be of most use to staff.

Students frequently show indicators from more than one category; and the examples listed are not necessarily exclusive to a single category of abuse. Any of these indicators may suggest that a student is being abused, neglected or at risk of harm; however, indicators should be considered in the context of the student's age, medical and developmental history, and capabilities. In addition, mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence within families.

Physical abuse Indicators

- broken bones or unexplained bruises, burns, or welts in various stages of healing
- the child or young person is unable to explain an injury, or explanations given are inconsistent, vague or bizarre
- direct admissions from the parents that they are concerned that they might harm their child
- family history of violence
- marked delay between injury and obtaining medical assistance
- parent who shows little concern about the welfare of their child or the treatment and care of the injury
- repeated presentations of the child to health services with injuries, ingestions or minor complaints (this could also be an indicator of Factitious Disorder by proxy, a rare expression of physical and emotional abuse)
- the child or young person is unusually frightened of a parent or carer, or is afraid to go home
- the child or young person reports intentional injury by their parent or carer
- arms and legs are kept covered by inappropriate clothing in warm conditions
- ingestion of poisonous substances including alcohol or drugs
- avoidance of physical contact by the child (particularly with a parent or carer)

Emotional or Psychological abuse Indicators

- the parent or carer constantly criticises, threatens, belittles, insults, or rejects the child or young person with no evidence of love, support, or guidance
- the child or young person exhibits extremes in behaviour from overly aggressive to overly passive
- delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development
- compulsive lying and stealing
- high levels of anxiety
- lack of trust in people
- feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves
- eating hungrily or hardly at all
- uncharacteristic seeking of attention or affection
- reluctance to go home
- rocking, sucking thumbs or self-harming behaviour
- fearfulness when approached by a person known to them

Neglect Indicators

- signs of malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food
- poor hygiene: matted hair, dirty skin or severe body odour
- unattended physical or medical problems
- the child or young person states that no one is home to provide care (inadequate supervision, failure to ensure safety)
- child or young person appears constantly tired

- frequent lateness to school or absence from school
- inappropriate clothing, especially inadequate clothing in winter
- alcohol and/or drug abuse present in the household
- frequent illness, low grade infections or sores
- hunger

Sexual abuse Indicators

- sexualised behaviours inappropriate to their age (including sexually touching other children and themselves)
- knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate to their years
- disclosure of abuse either directly or indirectly through drawings, play or writing that describes abuse
- pain or bleeding in the anal or genital area with redness or swelling
- fear of being alone with a particular person
- child or young person implies that he/she is required to keep secrets
- presence of sexually transmitted disease
- sudden unexplained fears
- enuresis and/or encopresis (bed-wetting and bed soiling)

Myths about Child Abuse and its Prevalence

An accurate understanding of the dynamics underlying child abuse is important because the impact of any form of abuse on the victim can be life changing. Common outcomes associated with abuse include drug abuse, suicide, eating disorders, low self-esteem, psychosomatic illness and self-mutilation. There are many myths about sexual abuse. Some of the common ones are:

- sex between children and adults is not damaging if it is in the context of a loving relationship;
- it is not the abuse which causes the problem but the effects of the intervention by others;
- those abused turn into abusers;
- children frequently lie about sexual abuse;
- sexual abuse is more common in lower socio-economic areas and families;
- only men sexually abuse children;
- sexual abusers are readily identified by 'normal' people.

The following myths pertaining to sexual and other forms of abuse relate particularly to schools:

- there will not be a problem here because all the volunteers/employees are female;
- there will not be a problem here because the young people come from privileged backgrounds and will complain if there is an issue of abuse;
- if we get the selection procedures right we will eliminate the possibility of abuse;
- we use Police Clearances and Working with Children Checks here so we are covered;
- it is one of the other children's parents/brothers/sisters to whom I am entrusting the child/ren, so it will be OK;
- we did not need to screen Mr Smith because he is a friend of the teacher, president etc;
- my workers, volunteers and casuals are youth themselves so there is no risk;
- we are pretty good at identifying people here who are a bit 'odd'.

Facts about Child Abuse

Children or young people are more often abused by a parent or carer. Adults who were abused as children are at greater risk of developing psychological and emotional problems later in life, and repeating the pattern of abuse with their own children.

A child abuser can be a member of the family (father, step-father, mother etc.) or someone close to the family or the child (church member, teacher, community group leader). A child abuser usually spends a lot of time grooming the child with the child being made to feel that they are in some way complicit in the acts, thus making disclosure a difficult process.

On the whole, abusers are the least obvious people in our community. Many child sex abusers, for example, hold positions of trust within the community with easy access to children and their families. Occupations that some convicted child sex offenders have held include bus driver, entertainer, teacher, scout leader, librarian, principal, church leader, judge.

Child Side Playgroup and School – Child Protection Policy – 7 December 2022

A recent study carried out by Huddersfield University, UK found that 52% of children were sexually abused in community-based organisations. These included sports and voluntary groups and also private tuition classes.

In Australia, a case of child abuse is reported every 2.5 minutes.

Sexual abuse is more common among girls, other types of abuse are slightly more common among boys (Child Protection, Australia (2010 – 11), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).

Two-thirds of substantiations for abuse or neglect are for children aged 9 years old and under (Child Protection, Australia (2010 – 11), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).

UNDERSTANDING MANDATORY REPORTING

Definition of sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is defined by the Act in section 124A as:

'Sexual abuse' in relation to a child, includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- (a) The child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence; or*
- (b) The child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or*
- (c) There is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.*

This legislation is not intended to capture all sexual activity involving children and young people. Reference should be made to consent laws in Western Australia.

Definition of child

The definition of 'child' is defined in section 3 of the Act as a person who is under the age of 18 years. In the absence of positive evidence as to age, a child is a person who is apparently under 18 years of age. Young people aged 18 and over are considered to be adults and are not covered by this legislation. However, schools still owe a duty of care to all students at the school. In these instances, police should be informed of any assault or crime against the young person.

When does a mandatory reporter make a report?

Mandatory reporters must report a belief, based on reasonable grounds in the course of their work, paid or unpaid, that child sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring. This means that teachers working outside of the school grounds are also required to report when working in either a paid or unpaid capacity. For example, tutoring, volunteer teacher at youth centre, working as a Sunday school teacher.

Failure to make a report can incur a penalty of up to \$6,000.

A mandatory reporter can form the necessary belief, based on reasonable grounds, by noting the presence of indicators, disclosures, injuries, signs, symptoms and behaviours that heighten concerns about child sexual abuse. Information on the indicators of sexual abuse is covered in the first section of this document.

Teachers may wish to consider the following questions to assist them in deciding if their belief is based on reasonable grounds:

- Can you describe the reasons why you believe a child has been, or is being sexually abused?
- What has the child said or done to suggest they are being sexually abused?
- Have you observed, or been told about, the presence of any of the 'possible indicators' of sexual abuse?

- Did the child disclose sexual abuse? What did they say happened? Who did they disclose to and when?
- What other behaviours have you observed and/or interactions with the child are of concern to you? What is the frequency and severity of the behaviour? How long has it been occurring?

How does a mandatory reporter make a report?

A centralised Mandatory Reporting Service has been established to receive all reports of child sexual abuse in Western Australia. This service is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

There are two ways to make a report - verbal or written.

A verbal report is preferred in the first instance, particularly if the teacher has formed a belief that the child is still at risk of being abused, as it allows the Mandatory Reporting Service to respond quickly, ask clarifying questions and gather as much information as possible. However, it must be followed by a written report as soon as is practicable, usually within 24 hours. To make a verbal report, the Mandatory Reporting Service can be reached on 1800 708 704.

Failure to follow up a verbal report with a written report as soon as is practicable may result in a fine of \$3,000. A written report form can be downloaded from the mandatory reporting website www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au.

If you do not have access to a computer, the form can also be mailed out to you. Once you have completed your written report, it can be returned using any of the following methods:

Email to: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Fax to: 1800 610 614

Post to: PO Box 8146

Perth BC WA 6849

Once you have lodged a report, you will receive a standardised letter. This letter is proof that you have made a report so it is important that you keep it.

Once the report has been lodged, the Mandatory Reporting Service will assess the immediate risk to the child, and determine the need for further child protection assessment and investigation. A copy of the report is sent to the WA Police. The police determine if they need to be involved on a case by case basis.

The mandatory reporter will receive a feedback letter advising them of the DCP District Office it has been referred to, or whether no further action was recommended by the Mandatory Reporting Service.

Confidentiality and Legal Protection

The identity of the reporter is required to be kept confidential, except in limited circumstances. Section 124F(2) protects a reporter's identity from being disclosed. Disclosure of a reporter's identity carries a maximum fine of \$24,000 and 2 years imprisonment.

There are exceptions where a reporter's identity is permitted. Even where disclosure is allowed, consideration will be given to ensuring the reporter's safety has been taken into account. Examples of when a reporter's identity may be revealed include:

- The Mandatory Reporting Service must send a copy of every written report to the WA Police;
- The WA Police may need to reveal a reporter's identity in order to investigate or prosecute a suspected offence;
- A Department for Child Protection officer may need to reveal the reporter's identity when certain child protection, family law or adoption proceedings are taking place;
- The reporter may have provided written permission for their identity to be disclosed.

A mandated reporter who is normally governed by a code of confidentiality or secrecy, professional ethics, standards or principles of conduct (eg. Doctor/patient) is protected from a breach to this code if they are making a report in good faith. The legislative requirements of the Act override internal school policies, professional codes or confidentiality requirements.

A mandated reporter is also protected from liability. If a report is made in good faith, they will not incur any civil or criminal liability by making a report.

Where to go for information and assistance

The Department for Child Protection is the agency responsible for the new legislation regarding the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse. The Mandatory Reporting Service has been established by the Department to receive and investigate reports of sexual abuse.

The Department for Child Protection has established a website www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au. Information on this website includes frequently asked questions and a copy of the report to download.

The Mandatory Reporting Service can also be contacted through the following ways:

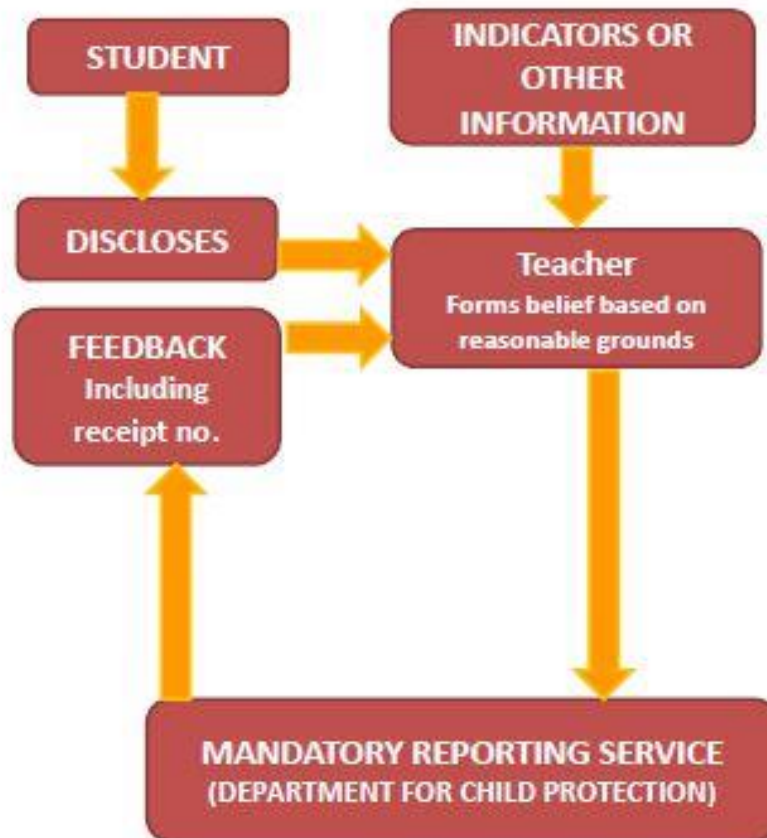
Telephone: 1800 708 704

Email: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

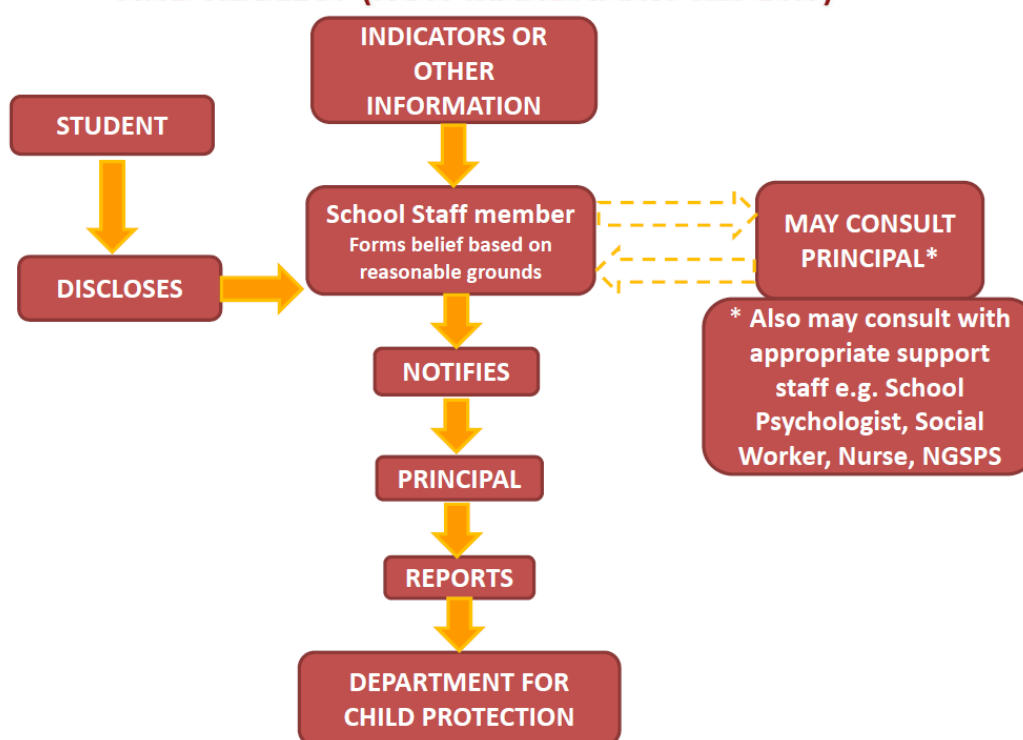
Fax: 1800 610 614

Post: PO Box 8146, Perth BC, WA 6849

MANDATORY REPORTING PROCEDURE



NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE – CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (NON-MANDATORY REPORT)



CHILD PROTECTION NOTIFICATION STEPS

STEP 1

The individual staff member makes observations and keeps notes of concerns that exist that have led them to the belief that a report may be necessary.

OR

A student discloses abuse or neglect:

- Disclosure of abuse or neglect from someone with a responsibility to care for the student
- Show indication of abuse or neglect

Note: It may assist educators to think in terms of reporting a behaviour or a series of behaviours and concerns rather than reporting an individual family.

STEP 2

The teacher's observations or the child's disclosure should be discussed, in the first instance with the senior educator and /or school administrator.

Note: It is vital to remember that confidentiality is paramount and that disclosure of this information should only be discussed with those in the school who are required to know.

STEP 3

The senior educator and school administrator will then follow the following reporting procedures:

Department FOR CHILD PROTECTION (DCP)

- Report all disclosures or strong concerns to the DCP of abuse or neglect arising from the actions or inactions of parents/caregivers and maintain a written record of this communication and subsequent actions.
- The DCP will then decide how to proceed.

- The Senior Educator and administrator should be mindful of planning for the student's continuing needs in the school environment.
- The DCP is required to provide feedback to people making reports on child abuse. The Senior Educator and administrator should seek undertakings from DCP that they will be kept informed within the bounds on confidentiality.
- The school's initial contact with DCP will be through the Duty Officer at the Local District Office closest to the school (in white pages). All calls from school concerning students are taken very seriously and it may be appropriate if the emergency occurs after hours to explain to the switchboard operator that it is an emergency so they can speak to the duty officer promptly.

NOTE: The Duty Officer at the local DCP office can also be used initially in a consultative role if the Senior Educator and Administrator are unsure of what action to take.

The Senior Educator and Administrator should be aware that the powers of the DCP under the Child Welfare Act 1947 includes:

Apprehension of children in need of care and protection (without warrant)

Interviewing the child: DCP has the authority to interview the child at school before contact is made with the parent/caregiver. The child should have the option of having support at the interview from a staff member of their choosing.

Removal of children from the school: DCP officers may remove a child from the school if they have the permission of the parent/caregiver or if they have apprehended the child. The Senior Educator and Administrator should satisfy themselves that all conditions have been met before this occurs and document all conversations.

Medical examination: DCP may require that a medical examination occur as soon as possible so that bruising, marking and other symptoms can be recorded for future reference. This would normally take place at PMH or the Community Child Health Services Centres. This examination can only take place if permission has been obtained from the parent/caregiver or the child has been apprehended.

Police

Strong concerns and disclosures of abuse and neglect from a person who is not the parent/caregiver should be advised to the police. The Senior Educator and Administrator should also notify DCP as they can offer support to the student and family, and risk assess other children in the community.

Parents/Caregivers

The Senior Educator and Administrator should report all strong concerns and disclosures of abuse and neglect only on the advice of the Police and of the DCP.

STEP 4

If following a report, a family approaches the school, it is recommended that **any interview be conducted with a minimum of two school members** present (eg Senior Educator and Administrator) to provide support.

NOTE: It is important to remember that the focus of the meeting should be the welfare of the child.

STEP 5

The Senior Educator and Administrator should undertake ongoing support for all involved. The need for ongoing support could be necessary as the teacher continues in their role with the student and the DCP's role may continue for a while.

RESPONSE TO DISCLOSURE TO ABUSE OR NEGLECT

There may be times when a student makes a disclosure of abuse or neglect. Staff should be aware of the immediate needs these of these students and what to do in these circumstances.

- Use 'protective interrupting' if students begin to disclose in class or in a public area;
 - *Acknowledge that you have heard them and stop them from disclosing any further
 - *Be supportive and gently indicate that they might tell you about it in a more private situation; and
 - *Quietly arrange to see them as soon as possible, in a situation away from other students.
- Establish clear limits on confidentiality
- Listen attentively and let the child tell their story
- Listen to students in a private location within the school
- Be supportive and understanding
- Be empathetic to student feelings
- Acknowledge that it is difficult to talk about such things
- Try to identify students fears
- Let students tell the event in their own words
- Accept what is said – only the minimum of information is required
- Reassure the student that it is right to tell, that they are believed and that they are not to blame
- Be calm and non-judgemental
- Tell students that a report will be made to a person who will be able to provide protection
- Allow students the option of support during any agency interview and reassure them of the availability of continuing support through advocacy and support services
- Document the disclosure and subsequent discussion and actions
- Explain what will happen next
- Try and stay with students until necessary steps have been taken to ensure the safety and support.

STAFF MUST BE MINDFUL THAT THEY DO NOT:

- Push for details or to conduct an investigation. Other agencies have this responsibility
- Express judgement of the student, perpetrator or family
- Get angry, upset or show shock
- Blame students
- Put words in students' mouths or interrogate as this could jeopardise the interviewing process of DCP and police
- Promise not to tell when there are clear limits on confidentiality
- Give a lecture about right and wrong
- Say 'forget it', 'you'll get over it' or other such minimising statements
- Give excessive pity, or
- Engage in general staffroom discussion about the disclosure.
- DO NOT confront the person alleged by the child to be responsible for the abuse

STAFF MUST BE AWARE THAT A DISCLOSURE CAN AROUSE IN THEM STRONG FEELINGS OF SHOCK, ANGER AND HELPLESSNESS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONTROL THESE FEELINGS; THEY CAN BE WORKED THROUGH AFTER THE DISCLOSURE.

Children left at school

It is imperative that the school exhausts all avenues in attempting to contact the child's family and emergency contacts.

In some cases, the Senior Educator or Administrator may decide to drive the child home to establish contact with the family.

If the school is unable to make any contact with the child's family, the Senior Educator or Administrator should contact the Local District Office of DCP and explain it is an emergency. After hours, the Crisis Care Line, also operated by the DCP, is to be contacted.

Record Retention

All records of complaints, allegations and findings related to grooming and child abuse, whether involving former or current staff or students are to contain as much detail as possible and are stored securely in the lockable cabinet in the administration office to protect them from misuse, modification, unauthorised access or disclosure.

All related records are to be retained and will not be destroyed without the approval of the Director General or where their retention becomes impracticable or unduly onerous, are forwarded to the Director General with her permission for retention.

Multi-Agency Protocol

If a child is enrolled at the school under a Multi-Agency Protocol the school leadership team will conduct a risk management assessment and follow the risk management process.