

CHILD SAFETY RESPONDING & REPORTING OBLIGATIONS INCLUDING MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY & PROCEDURES

RATIONALE

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. In schools, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidences involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact, and to report instances that we believe involve physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. School staff have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care. If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care they should take immediate action.

AIM

To ensure that children's rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.

IMPLEMENTATION

- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report; signs or risks of harm, disclosures of abuse or neglect, or a reasonable belief a student is subjected to sexual abuse or physical harm.
- Mandatory reporters, who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, must report their concerns to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection.
- All other staff members who form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person:
 - is in need of protection, should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police
 - is displaying sexually abusive behaviours and is in need of therapeutic treatment should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection.
- If staff have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person, they should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.
- In cases where staff have concerns about a child or young person, they should also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team/Student Support Centre.
- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.
- Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually. All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal class, or Student Support team.
- The Principal class or Student Support team will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.

- If a belief has been formed by a staff member that a mandatory report must be made, the appropriate documentation is completed and kept securely
- Members of Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification, will interview staff and children only in the presence of a Principal class member or his/her nominee.
- All reports, records, documentation and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.
- All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.
- While only mandated by law to report incidents of physical and sexual abuse, and neglect; teachers are also encouraged to report incidents of emotional abuse or neglect.
- Students, who disclose to staff a desire to harm themselves or others, must be reported by staff to the Student Support Centre Facilitator

REPORTING CRIMINAL SEXUAL ABUSE

Failure to disclose offence: Any staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was last updated on 26.10.18 and is scheduled for review in November 2019.

Approved By School Council. Date: 19 November 2018