

Policy Document

MANDATORY REPORTING

Rationale:

- All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. As teachers, 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.

Aims:

- To ensure that the rights of children 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 of physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.
- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.
- Staff will be reminded of mandatory reporting responsibilities annually.
- Definitions provided to assist licensed children's services and school staff to decide if abuse is occurring and to assist them in deciding whether the impact warrants a report to Child Protection, a referral to Child FIRST services or whether another action is required are provided in Appendix 2 of *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people* (2011)
- If a belief has been formed by a staff member that sexual or physical abuse has taken place the teacher must contact the Department of Human Services Child Protection as soon as possible to make an official notification on: 1300 655 795 or 131 278 (after hours).
- Staff may discuss their concerns with the Principal or Assistant Principal prior to notification but are not obliged to do so.
- Staff are required to follow the directions and expectations of Human Services Child Protection.
- All information and communications must be carefully documented including dates and times.
- All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.
- The principal or nominee must facilitate interviews of students at school by protective workers. Students have the right to have a supportive adult present. This may be Principal, teacher, or other school personnel.
- All incidents are to be monitored by staff guidance officer, primary welfare officer or other personnel as nominated, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse reported.
- While only mandated by law to report incidents of physical and sexual abuse, and neglect, teacher 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 principal.



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Resources:

- *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people: A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools (2010),* Published by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Department of Human Services.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle

Ratification

Ratified by School Council:

School Council President: Glen Noble

Principal: Anne McPhee