

MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

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.

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 the Department Of Human Services (DHS) Child Protection.

AIMS:

- To ensure that children's rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of school staff in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Enable staff to identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection.
- Enable staff to make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Duty of care

- 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 it is important to take immediate action.
- In the case of a child who may be in need of protection or therapeutic treatment, or where there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, school staff can discharge this duty of care by taking action which includes the following:
 - Reporting their concerns to the DHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency (as identified above)
 - Notifying the Principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns
- There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert teachers to the possibility of child abuse and neglect.

Policy

- 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 Human Services (DHS) Child Protection.
- All other school staff who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of:
 - Protection, are encouraged to report their concerns to DHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.
 - Therapeutic treatment, are encouraged to report their concerns to DHS Child Protection.
- If staff have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person they are encouraged to report their concerns to DHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.
- In cases where staff have concerns about a child or young person, they should discuss their concerns with the Principal or a member of the school leadership team.

The following pages outline the procedure and legal obligations for mandatory reporting.

Barwon Heads Primary School Procedure for Making a Report

1. School staff should keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:
 - Description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour)
 - Source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person)
 - Actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with Principal, report to DHS Child Protection etc).
2. School staff should discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the Principal or a member of the school leadership team. The individual staff member should then make their own assessment about whether they must or may make a report about the child or young person.
3. School staff should gather the relevant information necessary to make the report. This should include the following information:
 - Full name, date of birth, and residential address of the child or young person
 - Details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns
 - The individual staff member's involvement with the child and young person
 - Details of any other agencies who may be involved with the child or young person .
4. Make a report to the relevant agency.
5. Make a written record of the report which includes the following information:
 - The date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported
 - The name and position of:
 - the person who made the report
 - the person who received the report.
6. Notify relevant school staff and/or Departmental staff of the report.
 - School staff should advise the Principal or a member of the leadership team if they have made a report.
 - In the case of international students, the Principal must notify the International Education Division of the Department on (03) 9637 2990 to ensure that appropriate support is arranged for the student.

- In the case of Koorie students, the Principal must notify the Regional Office to ensure that the regional Koorie support officer can arrange appropriate support for the student.

7. Notify the Victoria Police if there is concern that a criminal offence may have been committed.

Legal obligations

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p><i>Mandatory Reporting</i></p> <p>Mandatory reporters must make a report as soon as practicable if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.</p>	<p><i>Mandatory reporters</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teachers registered to teach or who have permission to teach pursuant to the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</i> ✓ Principals of government and non-government schools ✓ Registered medical practitioners ✓ Nurses ✓ All members of the police force 	<p>DHS Child Protection</p>
<p><i>Child in need of protection</i></p> <p>Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection for any of the following reasons:</p> <p>The child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child.</p> <p>The child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child.</p> <p>The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.</p> <p>The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.</p> <p>The child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.</p> <p>The child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parents are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care.</p>	<p>Any person</p>	<p>DHS Child Protection</p> <p>Victoria Police</p>
<p><i>Child in need of therapeutic treatment</i></p> <p>Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child who is 10 years of age or over, but under 15 years of age, is in need of therapeutic treatment because he or she has exhibited sexually-abusive behaviour</p>	<p>Any person</p>	<p>DHS Child Protection</p>
<p><i>Significant concerns about wellbeing of a child</i> ny person may make a report if they have significant concerns for the</p>	<p>Any person</p>	<p>DHS Child</p>

wellbeing of a child		Protection Child First
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EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's annual review cycle

This policy was last ratified by school Council: (date)

