

MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

RATIONALE

All children have a human right to feel safe and to be safe. All teaching and support staff have a legal and moral obligation 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.

Amsleigh Park Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 870 and the Child Safe Standards. Mandatory Reporting is vital to ensuring that any instances of child abuse are reported according to the Child Safe Standards.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- ***Statement of School Philosophy***
- ***Child Safety Policy***

All staff who are Victorian Institute of Teaching (**VIT**) registered teachers (including principals) or who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT are 'mandatory reporters'. This means that in the course of undertaking their professional duties, they must report to the Department of Health and Human Services (**DHHS**) Child Protection a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual abuse or physical injury and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. They must report as soon as practicable after forming the belief.

There may be times when two or more mandated staff members, for example a teacher and a principal, have formed a belief about the same child or young person on the same occasion. In this situation it is sufficient for only one of the mandated staff members to report to Child Protection. The other staff member is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all of the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to Child Protection.

Non-mandated staff members

Any person, who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, may report their concerns to Child Protection. This means that any person, including non-mandated school staff, is able to make a report to Child Protection or Victoria Police when they believe that a child or young person is at risk of harm and in need of protection, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

GOALS

- ❖ To provide information to the school community and ensure that students' rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.
- ❖ To define the roles and responsibilities of school staff in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- ❖ To enable staff to identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection.
- ❖ To know the process for making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection.
- ❖ To comply with reporting obligations under child protection law and criminal law.
- ❖ To adhere to DET Policy on Mandatory Reporting which can be found at:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

GUIDELINES

- ❖ As part of mandatory reporting obligations members of the Teaching Service, 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 Human Services (DHHS) - Child Protection. (Please see Appendix 1 for steps in making a report)
- ❖ If staff form a 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' (this is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation) that a child is being abused then they should make a report to the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS).
- ❖ If a staff member has concerns about a child or young person they should discuss their concerns with the Principal, Assistant Principal or a member of the school Leadership Team.
- ❖ The Principal or Assistant Principal will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.
- ❖ Staff are encouraged to keep their own notes as part of these conversations. (Highlighted as a separate point)
- ❖ All reports, notes, discussions and information should be kept confidential.
- ❖ All other school staff who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection or therapeutic treatment or have significant concerns, are encouraged to report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection, Victoria Police or Child FIRST. Staff **do not require** the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to Child Protection, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so.
- ❖ New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures.
- ❖ Staff will be reminded of their mandatory reporting responsibilities and must complete the annual online training as per DET requirements and give their certificate of completion to the Assistant Principal.
- ❖ Types of child abuse include physical, sexual and emotional abuse; neglect and medical neglect; family violence and human trafficking (including forced marriage). Other reports to DHS Child Protection may be needed for risk-taking behavior, female genital mutilation, risk to unborn child or a child or young person exhibiting sexually-abusive behaviours.
- ❖ Staff should consult the Step by Step Guide to Making a Report to Child Protection or Child FIRST: http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/Flowchart_Mandatory_Reportin_g_Sep_2010.pdf to assist them with making a report.
- ❖ The school must comply with any visits/interviews requested by DHS.
- ❖ Members of the Department of Human Services, or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification are able to interview staff and children only in the presence of a Principal class member or his/her nominee.
- ❖ The school will continue to monitor students who are at risk or have had a mandatory report made.

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

- ❖ This policy will be adhered to in all instances where mandatory reporting is required.
- ❖ This policy will be reviewed every three years as part of the school's cyclic review.

STATUS:

Reviewed: July 2016

Ratified: August 2016

Next Review: July 2018

CERTIFICATION

- This policy was first endorsed by School Council at the meeting held on Monday 17th August, 2015

APPENDIX

Making a mandatory report:

A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST

Protective concerns

- You are concerned about a child because you have:
- received a disclosure from a child about abuse or neglect
 - observed indicators of abuse or neglect
 - been made aware of possible harm via your involvement in the community external to your professional role.

At all times remember to:

- record your observations
- follow appropriate protocols
- consult notes and records
- consult with appropriate colleagues if necessary
- consult with other support agencies if necessary

STEP 1	RESPONDING TO CONCERNS	STEP 2	FORMING A BELIEF ON REASONABLE GROUNDS	STEP 3	MAKING A REFERRAL TO Child FIRST	STEP 4	MAKE A REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION
	<p>1. If your concerns relate to a child in need of immediate protection; or you have formed a belief that a child is at significant risk of harm*.</p> <p>Go to Step 4</p> <p>2. If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services.</p> <p>Go to Step 3</p> <p>3. In all other situations</p> <p>Go to Step 2.</p> <p>* Refer to Appendix 2: Definitions of child abuse and indicators of harm in the Protocol – <i>Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people</i></p>		<p>1. Consider the level of immediate danger to the child.</p> <p>Ask yourself:</p> <p>a) Have I formed a belief that the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm? YES / NO and</p> <p>b) Am I in doubt about the child's safety and the parent's ability to protect the child? YES / NO</p> <p>2. If you answered yes to a) or b)</p> <p>Go to Step 4</p> <p>3. If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services.</p> <p>Go to Step 3</p>		<p>Child Wellbeing Referral</p> <p>1. Contact your local Child FIRST provider.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See over for contact list for local Child FIRST phone numbers. <p>2. Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details.</p>		<p>Mandatory/Protective Report*</p> <p>1. Contact your local Child Protection Intake provider immediately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See over for contact list for local Child Protection phone numbers. For After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services, call 131 278. <p>2. Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details.</p> <p>* <i>Non-mandated staff members who believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection are able to report their concerns to Child Protection</i></p>

For further information refer to *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*

Contact Numbers

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Eastern	(03) 9265 2400
Northern	(03) 9488 9488
Western	(03) 9291 6500
Southern	(03) 9794 3555
RURAL REGIONS	
Barwon South Western	5225 1000
Gippsland	5127 0400
Grampians	5337 8444
Hume	5761 2100
Loddon Mallee	5440 3111

Office for Children and Licensed Children's Services:

METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Eastern	(03) 9265 2400
Northern	(03) 9412 5333
Western	(03) 9275 7000
Southern	(03) 9096 9555
RURAL REGIONS	
Barwon South Western	5225 1000
Gippsland	5127 0400
Grampians	5337 8444
Hume	5761 2100
Loddon Mallee	5440 3111

Important information for government schools

Principals of Victorian Government schools must report all incidents to the Emergency and Security Management Unit on **03 9589 6266.**

Victorian Government schools should contact the Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit (SCIAU), Student Wellbeing Division, for advice and support when responding to allegations of student sexual assault or inappropriate sexual behaviours.

The SCIAU can be contacted on **03 9637 2934** or **03 9637 2487.**

Victorian Government School Principals should refer to the flowchart – *Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault Compulsory Actions for Principals* at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/childprotection/childprotection.htm>

Department of Human Services Child Protection

METROPOLITAN REGIONS		METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Intake Unit		Regional Office	
Eastern	1300 360 391	Box Hill	(03) 9843 6000
North and West	1300 664 977	Preston	1300 664 977
		Footscray	1300 360 462
Southern	1300 655 795	Dandenong	(03) 9213 2111

RURAL REGIONS			
Intake Unit		Regional Office	
Barwon South Western			
	1800 075 599	Geelong	(03) 5226 4540
Gippsland	1800 020 202	Traralgon	(03) 5177 2500
Grampians	1800 000 551	Ballarat	(03) 5333 6530
Hume	1800 650 227	Wangaratta	(03) 5722 0555
		Wodonga	(02) 6055 7777
Loddon Mallee	1800 675 598	Bendigo	(03) 5434 5555

After hours Child Protection Emergency Services (AHPES)	
Statewide number for all emergency child protection matters outside of normal business hours (24 hours, 7 days a week):	131 278
Victoria Police	000

Catholic Education Offices	
Catholic Education Office, Melbourne	(03) 9267 0228
Catholic Education Office, Ballarat Diocese	5337 7135
Catholic Education Office, Sale Diocese	5622 6600
Catholic Education Office, Sandhurst Diocese	5443 2377

Independent Schools Victoria	
Other	(03) 9825 7200

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association, Inc.	(03) 9481 0800
Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit	(03) 9247 6666
Centre Against Sexual Assault	1800 806 292
Gatehouse Centre, Royal Children's Hospital (for specialist counselling and medical assistance)	(03) 9345 6391
Child Safety Commissioner	(03) 8601 5884
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency	(03) 8388 1855

CHILD FIRST

Local Catchment Area	Contact
Barwon South Western	Greater Geelong, Queenscliff, Surf Coast 1300 551 948
Western	Colac – Otway, Corangamite 5232 5500
	Warmambool, Moyne, Glenelg, Southern Grampians 1300 889 713
Gippsland	East Gippsland 5152 0052
	Wellington 5144 7777
	La Trobe, Baw Baw 1800 339 100
	South Gippsland, Bass Coast 5662 5150
Grampians	Northern Grampians, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Yarrambat, Horsham 1800 195 114
	Ararat, Pyrenees, Hepburn, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Moorabool 1300 783 341
Hume	Wodonga, Towong, Indigo 1800 705 211
	Alpine, Benalla, Mansfield, Wangaratta 1800 705 211
	Greater Shepparton, Strathbogie, Moira 1300 854 944
	Mitchell, Murrindindi 1800 663 107
Loddon Mallee	Greater Bendigo, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander 1800 260 338
	Buloke, Goonawarra, Swan Hill, Mildura 1800 625 533
Eastern Metropolitan	Yarra Ranges, Knox, Maroondah 1300 369 146
	Monash, Whitehorse, Manningham, Booroondarra 1300 762 125
North and West Metropolitan	Nilumbik, Whittlesea, Banyule, Yarra and Darebin (03) 9450 0955
	Brimbank, Melton 1300 138 180
	Hume, Moreland 1300 786 433
	Hobson's Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley and Wyndham 1300 775 160
Southern Metropolitan	Casey, Cardinia, Greater Dandenong (03) 9705 3939
	Aboriginal children and families (Casey, Cardinia and Great Dandenong) (03) 9794 5973
	Frankston, Mornington Peninsula 1300 721 383
	Kingston, Bayside, Glen Eira, Stirlington, Port Phillip 1300 367 441