



Child Protection Policy

Background:

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. Staff have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to significant concerns involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact.

Purpose:

- To define the roles and responsibilities of school staff in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- To enable staff to make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection.

Guidelines:

1. All staff are mandated by law to report signs and disclosures of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect.
2. New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures.
3. Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually through online training and via staff meeting agenda.
4. Flowchart: [A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST \(PDF - 270Kb\)](#) Issued to all staff members
5. If staff have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child they must be reported immediately to the Principal, or Assistant Principal
6. **If a belief has been formed** by a staff member that sexual or physical abuse or neglect has taken place then the teacher and/or Principal/Assistant Principal will contact the Department of Human Services (Child Protection) by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification.
7. 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.
8. Members of the Department of Human Services, 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/Assistant Principal or his/her nominee.
9. 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 .
10. Staff must respect confidentiality when dealing with a case of suspected child abuse and neglect and may discuss case details and the identity of the child and their family only with those involved in managing the situation.
11. Further information and reference materials:
12. School Policy & Advisory Guide –
13. <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>
14. Australian Government Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/cfca/pubs/factsheets/a141787/>
15. **Failure to disclose offence**
 - In addition to mandatory reporting and duty of care obligations, **any adult** who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 must report 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 Child Protection or the child is older than 16 when the belief is formed. More information about the offence can be found at <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+famili>

This policy was last reviewed in

2014