

Child Protection Reporting Policy



Purpose

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.

Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence

Guidelines

- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse and neglect to the Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Protection.
- All other school 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.
- Staff should make a report to Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Protection when there is a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from harm.
- Staff should make a referral to a Child First team when there is a significant concern for a child's well being but there is no belief the child needs protection.

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 staff are reminded to:

- Record your observations
- Follow appropriate protocols
- Consult notes and records
- Consult with appropriate colleagues if necessary
- Consult with other support agencies if necessary

Implementation

- 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.
- If a belief is formed that a child is in need of protections, the teacher / Principal will contact the Department of Human Services as soon as possible to make an official notification on:
Loddon/ Mallee Intake 1800 675 598 or after school hours crisis line 131278.
- Proof is not required to form a belief; it is not the responsibility of teachers or Educational personnel to determine if child abuse or neglect exists: that is the responsibility of DHS or the police.
- If teachers are unsure whether or not to make a report they should discuss their concerns with the Principal or ring DHS for advice.
- If a belief has been formed by a staff member that sexual or physical abuse has taken place a "Mandatory Reporting Information Sheet" available from the Principal must be completed and filed in the Principal's office.

- If members of the Department of Human Services, or associated support or intervention services visit the school following a notification, they will interview staff and children only in the presence of a Principal class member or his/her nominee.
- Teachers must respect confidentiality when dealing with a case of child abuse and neglect and must only discuss identity and case details with those with bona fide involvement in the management of the situation
- Teachers should seek parental consent before sharing information where this is possible and where this does not place the child at risk.
- Teachers should only share information as authorised by the Children Youth and Families Act 2005. I.e. where a child is subject to Child Protection investigation, Child Protection intervention or a Children's Court Protection Order. In other cases they should abide by the Information Privacy Act 2000.
- Staff should monitor all incidents and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.
- The Principal/ teacher should keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.
- Where a disclosure of an alleged sexual assault is made to a staff member, the staff member must inform the Principal as soon as possible. It must be on the same day. Principals should follow the required Departmental procedures for responding to allegations of student sexual assault
- 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 to the Principal.

Evaluation:

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

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

May 2016

RED CLIFFS PRIMARY SCHOOL



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MANDATORY REPORTING INFORMATION SHEET

Teacher making the report: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Contact Name at DHS: _____

Name of Student: _____

Address: _____

Class Teacher: _____ Year Level: _____ DOB: _____

Phone Numbers: _____

Siblings: _____

Description of Concern: _____

Teacher Signature:

Principal Signature: