



**CARNARVON
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**
"Walk as Children of Light"

CHILD SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY

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CHILD SAFETY

Statement of Commitment

Carnarvon Christian School (CCS) is committed to providing education and care to children and young people to assist them to develop into resilient students who are positively connected to each other and to the communities in which they live and will serve.

Acknowledging our responsibility to God, CCS is committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children and young people at the School. We are dedicated to protecting students from abuse and grooming by implementing robust policies and procedures to deter abuse and/or grooming and to facilitate detection and reporting at CCS.

At Carnarvon Christian School, we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and grooming. CCS regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance. As such we are committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and to maintain safe and supportive physical and online environments for all children and young people at CCS.

Objectives

This Statement provides the framework for:

- The development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing, deter inappropriate interactions and facilitate detection of abuse and grooming within CCS;
- The creation of a safe and supportive School environment and a positive and robust child protection culture;
- The promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within CCS; and
- Complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in WA.

Child-Safe Values & Principles

The following child-safe values and principles guide Carnarvon Christian School's commitment to child safety and form the basis for all child protection policies and procedures at the CCS:

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and their privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child-safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our School community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, direct contact volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.

9. Child protection training is mandatory for all Carnarvon Christian School's staff members . (This training can be an online module)
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse and grooming are simple and accessible for all members of the CCS community.
11. Procedures are in place to ensure all CCS premises are designed to ensure the safety of children.

Standards of Behaviour

Carnarvon Christian School demands the highest standards of behaviour for all stakeholders interacting with children and young people in our School environment. Our Child Safety Code of Conduct clearly outlines expected standards of behaviour and the consequences if stakeholders fail to meet the School's expectations.

Responsibilities

Carnarvon Christian School acknowledges that child protection is everyone's responsibility. At CCS all members of staff and the Board, parents/guardians, volunteers (direct and indirect), external education providers and third party contractors have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children.

Reporting Child Protection Concerns

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for all members of the School community on how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and grooming and how to report child protection concerns to the Principal. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse and grooming incidents to relevant external authorities.

Staff, third party contractors, external education providers, volunteers, students, parents/guardians and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact the School's Principal by phoning 99414533 or emailing office@ccs.wa.edu.au.

In accordance with the WA Registration Standards for Non-Government Schools, all breaches and suspected breaches of the School's Child Protection Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal or the Chair of the CCS Board.

All communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Program Compliance and Review

Carnarvon Christian School is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program and to ensuring the School's compliance with WA Child Protection Law and Regulation. The Program is reviewed annually and updated regularly for overall effectiveness, in light of experience and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards. For more information, refer to the Continuous Review & Improvement section of our Child Protection Program.

CHILD SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY

PREAMBLE

Carnarvon Christian School (CCS) is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse. Carnarvon Christian School explicitly forbids the use of any form of child abuse, corporal punishment or other degrading punishment. Everyone working at CCS is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection and Family Support is a shared responsibility between the CCS, all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of the CCS community.

CCS supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. CCS is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

1. CONTEXT

All adults have a responsibility to care for children and to protect them from any kind of abuse or neglect. The School is responsible to provide a safe physical environment for its children, and provide an educational environment and curriculum which fosters their health spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually and socially.

We are entrusted by parents with the care of their children, who are precious in the sight of God.

This policy outlines the requirements for Child Protection and Family Support at Carnarvon Christian School. It relates to suspected or reported cases of Abuse against students by staff, parents, other students, visitors to the school or by persons outside the School.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Scripture indicates the nurture of children is a great responsibility given to the community with specific responsibility given to their parents.

- a) To Parents: *“Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”* Ephesians 6:4 (NIV)
- b) To the Nation: *“... do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.”* Deuteronomy 4:9 (NIV)

It is the responsibility of staff to love the children in their care. This love will guide the actions and direction of staff as they stand in the place of parents.

- c) *“Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”* 1 Corinthians 13:6,7 (NIV)

When a child is enrolled at Carnarvon Christian School, the School enters into a contract with the parents to assist them with the God given responsibility of nurturing their children. Specifically, the School focuses on the education of the child. The School strives to fulfil this contract and support the family unit **but** not to the detriment of the welfare of the children. In every action related to child abuse the best interest of the child is of paramount consideration.

Governments have the responsibility to punish wrong-doers and endeavour to protect their citizens. The School recognises that the State Department of Child Protection and Family Support (DCPFS) is responsible for child welfare and has a valid role in this process. The School aims to develop a relationship that will enable the School to be involved in the process of supporting families to care and protect their children. In proceeding to act under the Children and Community Services Act 2004, school staff must satisfy themselves that they have a belief based on **reasonable** grounds and to support children in such cases where it occurs according to our policy.

The sin of child abuse has horrific consequences and can damage children/families for the rest of their lives. CCS must and will make every reasonable effort to protect children from this. It must be recognised that we all fall short of what the Lord would have us do and therefore all persons allegedly involved in situations where abuse is suspected or disclosed are to be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect because they, too, are loved by the Lord.

Personal relationships and beliefs must not stand in the way of child protection.

Staff who have access to information regarding suspected or disclosed child Abuse are to implement the reporting line, (eg teacher to Principal, Principal to Board Chair). The information is only to be used as a means to afford protection to the child/ren involved. Mandatory reporting can be reported directly to the relevant authority [see 3d following] without first going through the Principal but the Principal should be notified ASAP of the report.

The Principal will if aware:

Report any critical incident, including Mandatory Reporting to the Department of Child Protection and Family Support, to the Chair of Governing Body for Director General of the Department of Education Services within 48 hours of the report being lodged or critical incident occurring.

POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Definitions

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

The term “sexual abuse” in this Policy means the involvement of dependent children or adolescents in sexual activity with another person who is in the position of power. The child is used as a sexual object for gratification of the older person’s needs/desires, or is unable to give consent due to the unequal power in the relationship or is too young to be able to make a reasonable decision because of their age. Sexual abuse does not include sexual activity between consenting peers

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child’s inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) The child is in need of protection,
- (b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm as a result of physical injury”,
- (c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a ‘reasonable belief’ might be formed if:

- a) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- b) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);

- c) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- d) Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or

For further clarification or guidance please see the following Appendixes:

- ⇒ *APPENDIX 1: Examples of Child Abuse*
- ⇒ *APPENDIX 2: Indicators of Abuse or Neglect*
- ⇒ *APPENDIX 3: Identifying Abuse*

4. GUIDELINES

4.1 Responsibilities

The **Board** of CCS has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The **Principal** is responsible for:

- Dealing with reports of child abuse and must not interfere with WADOC/CPFS
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers within the CCS community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.
- Informing DES when required.

Deputy and All Senior Staff member must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

All **Teachers/Staff** share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and CCS's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

- If a teacher suspects that a child has been or is being abused (emotionally, physically, neglect or psychologically) the teacher makes observations and **keep written notes of concerns** that have led them to the belief that a report may be necessary. These notes must be objective and stored in locked filing room.
- The teacher should **discuss the observations with the Principal**. In cases of allegations against the Principal, the Board Chairman should be contacted.
- It is not the role of the teacher to investigate child abuse or neglect matters.
- Where an allegation is made to a staff member other than the Principal, the staff member should immediately report the matter to the Principal.
- Should a disclosure be made in the presence of other students, the teacher should implement protective intervention and pick it up again as a matter of priority in private.

All Non-Teaching Staff (office staff, education assistants, gardeners etc.) must report any suspicion of any form of child abuse (sexual or nonsexual) to the principal.

4.2 Employment of new personnel

CCS undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers which aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share CCS's values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at CCS if they pose a risk to children.

CCS requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with CCS.

Persons applying for a role as a teacher with CCS must be registered with the Teachers Registration Board WA and all staff members must have a current Working with Children Check.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

5 PROCEDURES

5.1 Identifying Abuse

If a child tells you about Abuse:

Staff need to be well prepared so that they can be supportive of the student and clear about their responsibilities at the same time. It is essential that the staff member remains calm and supportive of the student. It is the responsibility of DCPFS (See Appendix 7 regards the role of DCPFS), not the teachers, to determine whether Abuse has occurred or if a child is at risk of harm, and to implement action to be taken. See Appendix 3

5.2 Grooming behaviour

Grooming is a subtle, gradual, and escalating process of building trust with a child and those around the child with the express purpose of engaging in sexual activity with the child. It is deliberate and purposeful. Abusers may groom children and supporting adults for weeks, months, or even years before any sexual abuse actually takes place. The grooming may occur in person or via cyber media.

Distinguishing between appropriate intent and inappropriate intent may be very difficult. A committed offender will employ grooming behaviour from an early stage and because it is so subtle and gradual the child may not even be aware that actual abuse when it occurs, is wrong or harmful.

The groomer will employ manipulation, guilt, shame, bribery, coercion or exploit low self-esteem to manipulate the child and as a result the child becomes increasingly alienated from possible sources to disclose to.

Within an organisational context, holding all staff members accountable to the school code of conduct and challenging boundary violations is one of the most accessible strategies to combat grooming behaviour.

Grooming behaviour with children may include, but is not limited to:

- Selecting, befriending a child and gaining his or her trust, exploiting the child's vulnerabilities.
- Testing a child's boundaries through telling inappropriate jokes, roughhousing, backrubs, tickling, or sexual games.
- Moving from non-sexual touching to "accidental" sexual touching. This typically happens during play so the child may not even identify it as purposeful, inappropriate touching. It is often done slowly so the child is gradually desensitized to the touch.
- Manipulating the child to not tell anyone about what is happening. The abuser may use a child's fear, embarrassment, or guilt about what has happened. Sometimes, the abuser uses bribery, threats, or coercion.
- Causing the child to feel responsible for the abuse. Children may not notice or may become confused as the contact becomes increasingly intimate and sexual.

Grooming behaviour with adolescents may include additional strategies, such as:

- Identifying with the adolescent. The abuser may appear to be the only one who understands him/her.
- Displaying common interests in sports, music, movies, video games, television shows, etc.
- Recognizing and filling the adolescent's need for affection and attention.
- Giving gifts or special privileges to the adolescent.
- Allowing or encouraging the adolescent to break rules (e.g., smoking, drinking, using drugs, viewing pornography).
- Communicating with the adolescent outside of the person's role (e.g., teacher, or coach). This could include, for example, texting or emailing the teen without the parents' knowledge.

In addition to grooming the child, the groomer will use deflection strategies to remain unchallenged. Some of these strategies may include where the perpetrator

- promotes self and creates a reputation as caring, child-loving, competent, available, trustworthy, truthful
- raises doubts about the motives, mental health, reliability of the child or anyone else who might approach support services with allegations
- fosters dependency as someone the family can rely on
- positively represents child to others so as to be perceived as someone who would never harm the child

5.3 Reporting

Any staff member who has grounds to suspect sexual abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise the Principal about their concern. Any staff member who has suspicions of any other forms of abuse or grooming should consult with the Principal.

The teacher and Principal may wish to consult with the school psychologist or the school nurse. In cases of sexual abuse, the teacher is mandated to report to the DCPFS through the Mandatory Reporting Service (Section 4 C 1). In case of other forms of child abuse and neglect, it is the responsibility of the Principal to decide the appropriate actions and to then inform DCPFS if decided. The district office of CPFS can always be contacted for discussion and advice.

Efforts will be made to offer counselling and support through all local agencies in relation to a reported allegation. Appendix 3 of this document shows a flowchart of this procedure.

A written report form can be downloaded from the mandatory reporting website www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au .

Once you have lodged a report, you will receive a standardised letter. This letter is proof that you have made a report. **You Must Keep This Report in a Confidential Place for 7 Years.**

5.4 Allegations of Improper Sexual Conduct by a Staff Member Against a Student

In situations where a colleague is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level. (Principal or Board)

Full documentation is to be kept – signed, dated and timed, and the Principal must direct the person making the allegation to maintain confidentiality. Such records must be objective and stored in a filing room with restricted access.

Upon receiving the allegation, the Principal shall notify DCPFS promptly and report details of the allegation following the appropriate format.

The Principal should liaise with DCPFS on appropriate reporting procedure for parents or care givers of the student(s) concerned.

The Principal, in consultation with DCPFS, will make an appointment with the staff member against whom the allegation has been made. The principal will also document the risk assessment and safety plan for student.

After consultation with the police and DCPFS the Principal will inform the staff member:

- ❖ that an allegation has been made and the nature of the allegation;
- ❖ the steps the School has taken in accordance with Policy;
- ❖ that a response is not required at the time of this interview;
- ❖ that counselling support is available through local agencies for the staff member;

- ❖ that steps will be taken to severely restrict the staff member's contact with the student involved, and other students, within School hours and/or the nature of continued presence at the School during the Department of Child Protection and Family Support's investigation. These changes to conditions should be given to the staff member in writing, include possible consequences of breaking the rules.

It is the responsibility of Department of Child Protection and Family Support to act promptly to the School's report, determine if Abuse has occurred, and provide feedback as appropriate to the Principal and also the parents/care givers. Principal will seek legal advice and notify insurers.

See Appendix 4 for Mandatory Sexual Reporting Procedures and Appendix 5 for Role of DCP

5.5 Investigating

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this report, all employees or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

The Principal and staff so interviewed must maintain confidentiality. However, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

5.6 Responding

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

6 PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. CCS will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

See Appendix 7 for Relevant Legislation and Authority

While staff cannot agree to a student's request for confidentiality or requests that parents, police or other agencies not be informed when the welfare or safety of the student or other students may be threatened this must be handled sensitively.

Appendix 1: Working with children checks

Information for Schools on Working with Children Checks and External Contractor Work in Western Australia

Does your school engage the services of external contractors to install or fix equipment, maintain grounds or conduct building works?

Institutions like schools are places where child safety is of the utmost importance. Having a range of strategies to create a child-safe and friendly environment is vital.

Screening is one child-safe strategy. You will be familiar with the Working with Children (WWC) Check, as a compulsory screening strategy in Western Australia (WA) for people whose usual duties of work involve contact with a child in connection with one of the 18 categories of child-related work, as defined by the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* (the WWC Act).

Under the WWC Act only those determined to be in child-related work are eligible to apply for a WWC Check in WA. The *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* discusses contractors and supports WA's legislation emphasising that contact with children needs to be a usual part of the role and more than incidental: www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au.

This means that for the most part, contractors working on site at a school, where contact with a child is not required to undertake the usual duties of their work, do **not** require a WWC Check. This is because their work does not meet the definition of 'child-related work' as defined by the WWC Act.

Some examples of when an external contractor is unlikely to require a WWC Check to work on site at a school include:

- Working in a cordoned off area which does not require contact with a child i.e. building works;
- Testing or installing of systems which do not require contact with a child i.e. security systems;
- Pest control, where the use of pesticides would prohibit children from being in the area.

Incidental contact with a child while on the grounds, for example walking past a child in the hallway, does not constitute child-related work.

We recommend that your contracts or policies state that individuals 'comply' with WWC legislation. This means that if a WWC Check *is* required then an application must be made for one. If a WWC Check *is not* required then an application **cannot** be made. There are penalties for making a false declaration on the WWC application form. Where a contractor is ineligible for a WWC Check we recommend they obtain a National Police Certificate, to fulfil screening requirements.

We know you are committed to creating a child-safe and child-friendly environment and already employ a range of strategies to do this. In addition to screening, you also undertake other protocols for contractors coming onto site including a visitor process and code of conduct. For more information on how to determine child-related work and for other useful resources please visit our website: www.workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au.

APPENDIX 2: Examples of Child Sexual Abuse

The term “sexual abuse” in this Policy means the involvement of dependent children or adolescents in sexual activity with another person who is in the position of power. The child is used as a sexual object for gratification of the older person’s needs/desires, or is unable to give consent due to the unequal power in the relationship or is too young to be able to make a reasonable decision because of their age. Sexual abuse does not include sexual activity between consenting peers

Child sexual abuse can take many forms.

CCS Staff were last trained in Mandatory Reporting Legislation in May, 2016.

Examples of sexual abuse include the following but may include other activities:

- vaginal or anal penetration by a finger, penis or any other object (except where carried out for proper medical purposes);
- oral sex;
- any indecent assault, being defined as an assault, a touching without consent, accompanied by an indecent act;
- fondling or touching genitals, breasts, buttocks, or thighs;
- masturbation in the view or presence of children or adolescents;
- displaying pornography to children or adolescents;
- exhibitionism in the view or presence of children or adolescents;
- sexually suggestive behaviour toward children or adolescents;
- taking sexual advantage of the child through misuse of power;
- conversations with a lewd or sexual theme.

Sexual Abuse also includes attempting any of the above acts, or assault with such intent.

APPENDIX 3: Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

In assisting staff to identify suspected cases of child abuse, indicators of abuse or neglect may include, but are not limited to the following:

(None of these indicators, on their own, should be taken as clear evidence of Abuse, professional judgement must be used)

Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

Students frequently show indicators from more than one category; and the examples listed are not necessarily exclusive to a single category of abuse. Any of these indicators may suggest that a student is being abused, neglected or at risk of harm; however, indicators should be considered in the context of the student's age, medical and developmental history, and capabilities. In addition, mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence within families must also be considered.

Physical abuse

- broken bones or unexplained bruises, burns, or welts in various stages of healing
- the child or young person is unable to explain an injury, or explanations given are inconsistent, vague or bizarre
- direct admissions from the parents that they are concerned that they might harm their child
- family history of violence
- marked delay between injury and obtaining medical assistance
- parent who shows little concern about the welfare of their child or the treatment and care of the injury
- repeated presentations of the child to health services with injuries, ingestions or minor complaints (this could also be an indicator of Factitious Disorder by proxy, a rare expression of physical and emotional abuse)
- the child or young person is unusually frightened of a parent or carer, or is afraid to go home
- the child or young person reports intentional injury by their parent or carer
- arms and legs are kept covered by inappropriate clothing in warm conditions
- ingestion of poisonous substances including alcohol or drugs
- avoidance of physical contact by the child (particularly with a parent or carer)

Sexual abuse

- sexualised behaviours inappropriate to their age (including sexually touching other children and themselves)
- knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate to their years
- disclosure of abuse either directly or indirectly through drawings, play or writing that describes abuse
- pain or bleeding in the anal or genital area with redness or swelling
- fear of being alone with a particular person

- child or young person implies that he/she is required to keep secrets
- presence of sexually transmitted disease
- sudden unexplained fears
- enuresis and/or encopresis (bed-wetting and bed soiling)
- an extreme change of behaviour that is not expected or out of character

Emotional or Psychological abuse

- the parent or carer constantly criticises, threatens, belittles, insults, or rejects the child or young person with no evidence of love, support, or guidance
- the child or young person exhibits extremes in behaviour from overly aggressive to overly passive
- delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development
- compulsive lying and stealing
- high levels of anxiety
- lack of trust in people
- feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves
- eating hungrily or hardly at all
- uncharacteristic seeking of attention or affection
- reluctance to go home
- rocking, sucking thumbs
- fearfulness when approached by a person known to them
- self-harming behaviour

Neglect

- signs of malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food
- poor hygiene: matted hair, dirty skin or severe body odour
- unattended physical or medical problems
- the child or young person states that no one is home to provide care (inadequate supervision, failure to ensure safety)
- child or young person appears constantly tired
- frequent lateness to school or absence from school
- inappropriate clothing, especially inadequate clothing in winter
- alcohol and/or drug abuse present in the household
- frequent illness, low grade infections or sores
- hunger

APPENDIX 4: Identifying abuse

If a child tells the staff member about abuse the staff member should:

- ⇒ Establish clear limits on confidentiality by telling the child that a report will be made to a person who will be able to provide help and protection, and that you will help them throughout the process;
- ⇒ Put your own feelings aside, remain calm and listen as if the information is not sensational;
- ⇒ Provide reassurance that you believe them, that it is right to tell and do not think that they are to blame or make judgements about what has happened.
- ⇒ Listen to students in a private location within the school;
- ⇒ Be supportive and understanding;
- ⇒ Be empathetic to student feelings;
- ⇒ Acknowledge that it is difficult to talk about such things;
- ⇒ Try to identify students' fears;
- ⇒ Let student tell the event in their own words;
- ⇒ If you are unable to answer all the questions of the child, it is OK to let them know that you don't know and that you will find out and let them know as soon as possible.
- ⇒ Once you have established that they have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed, **do not pursue the conversation any further**. This is important to ensure that questions cannot be raised later about possible manipulation of the disclosure;
- ⇒ Allow students the option of your support during any agency interview and reassure them of the availability of continuing support;
- ⇒ Immediately after the conversation with the child, document the conversation that you have had remembering as accurately as you can, the words and phrases used by the child to describe what has happened to them;
- ⇒ Document the disclosure and subsequent discussion and actions;
- ⇒ Explain what will happen next; and
- ⇒ Try and stay with the student after the disclosure to provide a sense of security until necessary steps have been taken to ensure the safety and support.
- ⇒ Accept what is said by the child. Only minimum information is required for action;
- ⇒ Focus on the child's current emotions and don't ask questions about the actual Abuse;
- ⇒ Use appropriate vocabulary when speaking with the child.

Staff must be mindful that they:

- ⇒ Do not push for details or conduct an investigation. Other agencies have this responsibility;
- ⇒ Do not express judgement of the student, perpetrator or family;
- ⇒ Never get angry, upset or show shock;
- ⇒ Never ask questions that may make the child feel guilty or inadequate;
- ⇒ Never ask leading questions, for instance 'Did Daddy hit you?'
- ⇒ Don't put words in students' mouths or interrogate as this could jeopardise the interviewing process of DCP and Police;
- ⇒ Don't promise not to tell when there are clear limits on confidentiality;
- ⇒ Never make false promises;
- ⇒ Don't give a lecture about right and wrong;
- ⇒ Don't say 'forget it', 'you'll get over it' or other such minimalizing statements;
- ⇒ Don't give excessive pity; or
- ⇒ Respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and do not share the information with anyone other than the Principal and either the Department for Child Protection and Family Support or the Police. This includes not engaging in general staffroom discussion about the disclosure.

If a student begins to make a disclosure in a group situation or in a public area use 'protective interrupting' to protect them from sharing the information with too many other people:

- ⇒ Acknowledge that you have heard them and stop them from disclosing any further.
- ⇒ Be supportive and gently indicate that they might tell you about it, in a more appropriate environment.
- ⇒ Quietly arrange to see them as soon as possible, in a situation away from other students.

If you have reason to suspect Abuse:

From time to time staff may suspect child abuse may have occurred or may be about to occur. If a teacher forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has been **sexually abused** or is being **sexually abused**, it is **mandatory** for them to report this belief to the Mandatory Reporting Service on **1800 708 704**.

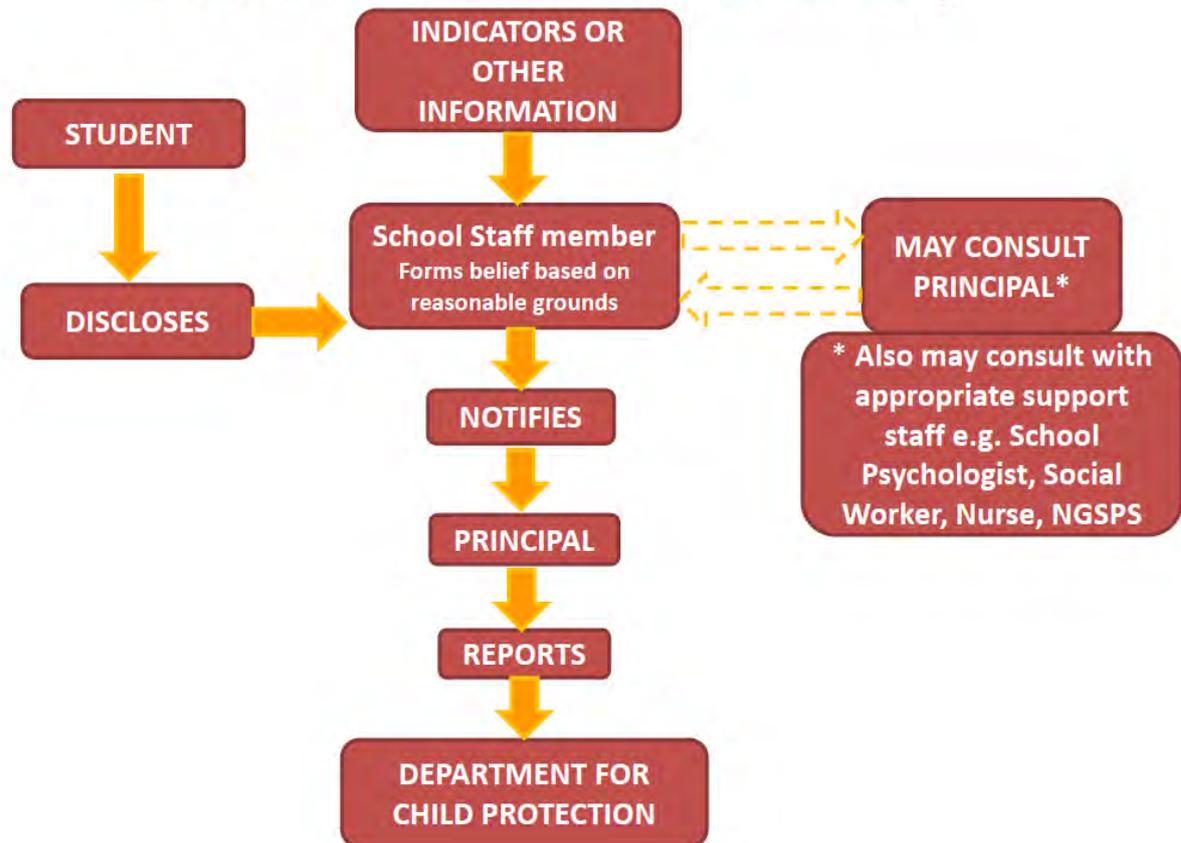
If a teacher or staff member forms a reasonable belief that a child is being abused or has been abused in the form of Emotional, Psychological, Physical or Neglected abuse, it is not mandatory to report this. The staff member should consult the Principal in order to decide what action to take. Staff need to be aware of the indicators of child abuse. Appendix 2 lists some general and specific indicators of child abuse.

If someone reports Abuse to you:

Staff or students who in good faith make an allegation of improper conduct of a sexual or abusive nature by a person against a student, will not be prejudiced in any way. Assure them you will do everything you can to assist.

If anyone reports actual or suspected **sexual** abuse to a mandatory reporter, they must report this belief to the Mandatory Reporting Service as soon as practicable.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE – CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (NON-MANDATORY REPORT)



APPENDIX 5: Mandatory Procedures in Relation to an Allegation or Reporting of Sexual Abuse

Teachers are mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse. (under 18 years old)

Mandatory reporters must report a belief, **based on reasonable grounds** in the course of their work, paid or unpaid, that child sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring. This means that teachers working outside of the school grounds are also required to report when working in either a paid or unpaid capacity. For example, tutoring, volunteer teacher at youth centre, working as a Sunday school teacher.

A mandatory reporter can form the necessary belief, based on reasonable grounds, by noting the presence of indicators, disclosures, injuries, signs, symptoms and behaviours that heighten concerns about child sexual abuse. Information on the indicators of sexual abuse is covered in *APPENDIX 1* of this document.

A centralised Mandatory Reporting Service has been established to receive all reports of child sexual abuse in Western Australia. This service is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There are two ways to make a report - verbal or written.

A verbal report is preferred in the first instance as it allows the mandatory reporting Service to ask clarifying questions and gather as much information as possible. However, it must be followed by a written report as soon as is practicable, usually within 24 hours. To make a verbal report, the Mandatory Reporting Service can be reached on 1800 708 704.

A written report form can be downloaded from the mandatory reporting website www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au .

If you do not have access to a computer, the form can also be mailed out to you. Once you have completed your written report, it can be returned using the following methods:

Email to: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Fax to: 1800 610 614

Post to: PO Box 8146

Perth BC WA 6849

Once you have lodged a report, you will receive a standardised letter. This letter is proof that you have made a report. **You Must Keep This Report in a Confidential Place for 7 Years.**

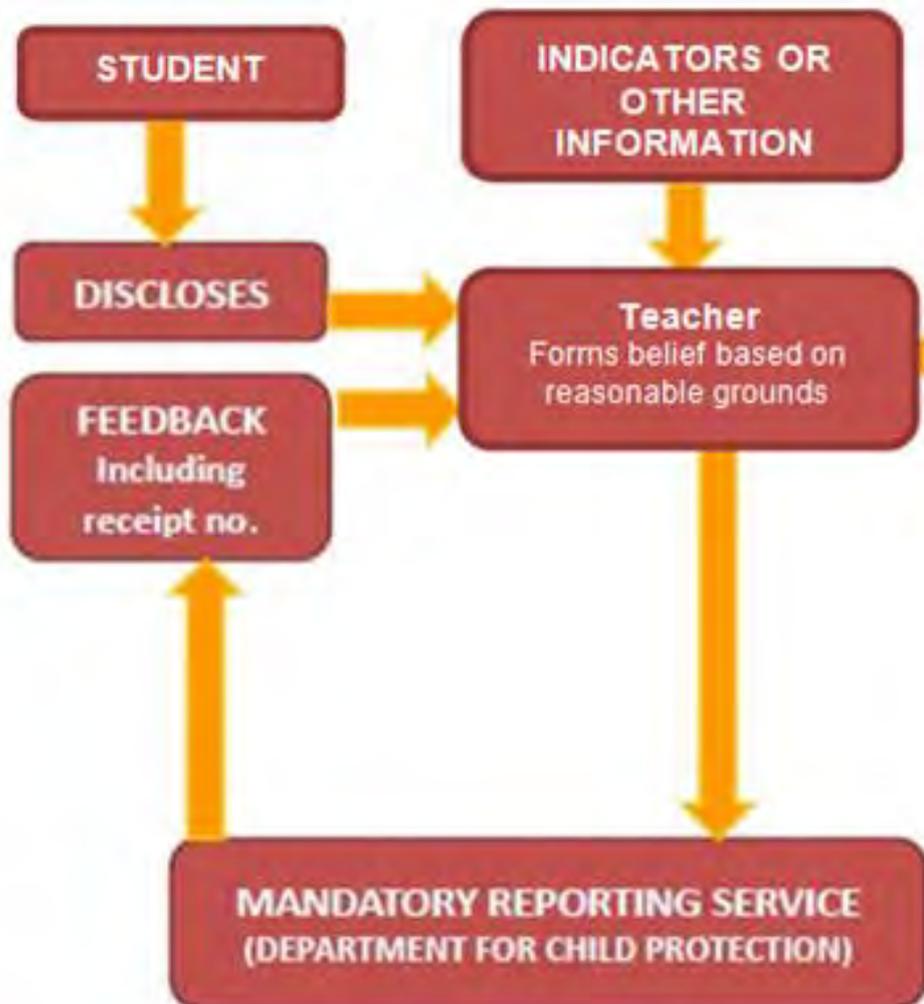
Once the report has been lodged, the mandatory reporting Service will assess the immediate risk to the child, and determine the need for further child protection assessment and investigation. A copy of the report is sent to the WA Police. The police will then decide whether they need to be involved on a case by case basis.

The mandatory reporter will receive a feedback letter advising them of the District Office it has been referred to, or whether no further action was recommended by the Mandatory Reporting Service. Appendix 4 of this document shows a flow chart of this procedure.

Confidentiality and Legal Protection

The identity of the reporter is required to be kept confidential, except in limited circumstances. Section 124F(2) protects a reporter's identity from being disclosed. Disclosure of reporter's identity carries a maximum fine of \$24,000 and 2 years imprisonment.

MANDATORY REPORTING PROCEDURE



APPENDIX 6: The Role of the Department of Child Protection and Family Support

DCPFS has the statutory authority and trained personnel to interview children and investigate reports of abuse and neglect. DCPFS assists and supports families to protect their children from harm.

Scripture assigns to Governments the responsibility of punishing wrong doers and endeavouring to protect their citizens. This School supports the role Government plays in protecting children through DCPFS. The School aims to develop a relationship with DCPFS that will enable it to be involved in the process of protecting children.

In proceeding to report any suspected abuse, the reporter must specify the grounds for the belief that a child has been abused.

The Children and Community Services Act (2004) forms the statutory basis for the role of DCPFS for the investigation of cases of suspected child abuse.

Child Abuse is maltreatment of a person under the age of 18 years.

It is the result of action or inaction on the part of a person who has responsibility to care for a child resulting in harm or injury to the child.

The harm may include delayed physical and/or intellectual development.

The maltreatment experienced is normally described in five categories.

Each category of maltreatment is described by a range of indicators.

- **Physical**
- **Sexual**
- **Emotional**
- **Psychological**
- **Neglect**

Descriptions of these indicators have been taken from the Department for Child Protection and Family Support document *"Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – A Guide for Professionals"*.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has experienced severe and/or persistent ill-treatment. It can include, but is not limited by injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and fractures caused by a range of acts including beating, shaking, illicit administration of alcohol and other drugs, attempted suffocation, excessive discipline or physical punishment.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse covers a wide range of behaviour or activities that expose or subject a child to sexual activity that is exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level. These behaviours include observation or involvement with inappropriate fondling of a child's

body, making a child touch an adult's genitalia, showing pornographic material or sexual acts to a child, and sexual penetration of the child. Harm from sexual abuse may include significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infections and impaired emotional and psychological development.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is a sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including, but not limited to, threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, confusing, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to have a reduced capacity to experience a range of emotions, to express emotion appropriately and to modulate their emotional experience. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to be fearful, withdrawn and/or resentful, distressed and despairing.

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse is the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including, but not limited to, threatening, isolating, neglecting, discrediting, misleading, disregarding, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. These include adequate supervision, adequate food or shelter, suitable clothing, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial care and emotional security. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic, and can result in detrimental effects on the child or young person's social psychological, educational or physical development and/or physical injury. Neglect should be considered in the context of physical, emotional or psychological abuse.

APPENDIX 7: Child Protection Concern Referral Form



Department for Child Protection and Family Support

Form441
08/13

Child Protection Concern Referral Form

(not to be used by Mandatory Reporters to report sexual abuse that is occurring or has occurred after 1 January 2009)

If you have concerns for the immediate safety or wellbeing of this child/ren please contact the local district office or Crisis Care Unit to report your concerns

(Please attach any additional information not included in this form)

Name: Centralised Duty Team (Murchison District)
Telephone: (08) 9965 9500
Online: www.childprotection.wa.gov.au
Email: CPFrontdesk_CS-MURC_Murchison@dcp.wa.gov.au

Referrer Details

Name: **Fax:**
Phone: **Organisation:**
Email: **Date of Referral:**

Child/ren Details

Surname	First name	DOB/ Age	Address	Contact Phone	ATSI/CaLD

Parents/ Carers

Name	Relationship to child/ren	DOB/ Age	Address	Contact Phone	ATSI/CaLD

What is your involvement with the family?

How long have you known the family?

Are there any other services involved with the family?

What is the Reason for Referral?

What has happened to the child/ren that worries you? (What happened, what did you see, who told you or what did the child say, is this the first time, are there any injuries- where, what size/ colour? etc.)

Have you discussed your concerns with the Family? Are they aware of this referral? If yes how did they respond and if no, why?

Who do you believe is responsible for causing the harm?

What is your expectation of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support in response to your concerns?

What are you worried will happen to the child/ren if no one takes action?

What do you think is going well for this family and/or child/ren?

What do you need to see happen to be satisfied the child/ren will be safe in the future?

APPENDIX 8: Relevant Legislation and Authority

The following Acts can be viewed at www.slp.wa.gov.au

- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008
- Criminal Code Act (1913)
- Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006
 - (changes to s204B of The Criminal Code)
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004

After hours

Department of Communities WA
Concern for a child's wellbeing – 1800273889

Child Abuse Services WA
9223 1111/1800 199 008

Crisis Care
1800 199 008 (a 24 hour telephone service for people in crisis and needing urgent help)

Lifeline
131144

WA Police Service Child Abuse Investigation Unit

If the matter is urgent and the safety of a child is at risk, call 000. If you are a victim of child abuse or paedophilia, or if you have information about someone else being abused, you should contact police on **131 444**, or you can ring Crime Stoppers on **1800 333 000** or go to your local police station.

The websites below contain information on cyber predators that for both parents, teachers and students may find informative.

www.constablecare.org.au

www.esafety.gov.au

www.shadowsafe.com.au

www.afp.gov.au

www.netalert.net.au

The National Association of the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)

NAPCAN is an Australian organisation that seeks to resource and network child welfare professionals and practitioners working to prevent child abuse and neglect from happening before it starts, through the provision of parenting brochures, training, support networks and information. www.napcan.org.au

Protective Behaviours WA (Inc) is a preventative life skills program that assists people of all ages to develop the skills to help them deal with difficult or hostile situations. The program has a voluntary committee made up of representatives from government and non-government agencies as well as interested members of the community. AISWA is a group member of Protective Behaviours and is able to purchase resources at a discount for interested schools.

Protective Behaviours can be contacted on (08) 9356 0514 or

email: pbwainc@hotmail.com

The following support service is available for staff at schools who may experience personal issues resulting from making a report:

Prime Corporate Psychology Services

Offers an employee assistance program including counselling, management and referrals.
94460800/1800 674 188

Each school may already have an assistance program available to their staff to provide help in overcoming problems that may cause difficulties in their work or personal lives.

The following services and organisations can provide help, advice and support to the school, parents or children who are affected by the effects of abuse and to prevent abuse from recurring:

Department of Communities (formerly Department for Child Protection and Family Support) 1800176888 enquiries@communities.wa.gov.au

Ngala Parenting Line

08 93689368 / 1800 111546

Family Helpline is a free confidential telephone counselling and information service for families with relationship difficulties.

9223 1100 / 1800 643 000

Crisis Care – provides after hours response to concerns for a child's safety
1800007339

Women's Domestic Violence Helpline provides a free 24 hour telephone support and counselling service for women experiencing family and domestic violence.

9223 1188/1800 007 339

Perth Children's Hospital

08 64562222

Kids Helpline is a free and confidential telephone counselling service for 5 to 25 year olds in Australia available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

1800 551 800

Sexual Assault Resource Centre Counselling Line offers a free, 24 hour emergency service for people aged 13 or over who have been sexually assaulted or sexually abused recently (within the last two weeks).

64581828/1800 199 888

Lifeline Australia offers a service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can provide information about other support services, if required. 13 11 14

REVISIONS AND ADDENDA

Revision Date	Clauses Affected	Page Number	Review Date
14/10/2014	Reviewed whole policy	All pages	
19/02/2016	Reviewed whole policy	All pages	19/02/2016
15/03/2018	Added working with children information		15/3/2018
April 2019	Added 'Grooming Behaviour' Appendix 1 Working with children checks	Page 8-9 page 12	April 2020
March 2023	Confirmed websites and phone numbers listed are active	24-25	March 2024
June 2023	Combined Child safety document with Child protection policy to one document		June 2024