

MANDATORY REPORTING

RATIONALE

Protecting children from significant harm caused by abuse or neglect is a responsibility parents share with schools and the wider community including government organisations, police and community agencies. Schools have an important role to play in supporting children and their families and in protecting students who may be at risk of harm due to abuse or neglect. Any person who is registered as a teacher under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, or any person who has been granted permission to teach under that Act, including principals, is mandated to make a report to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection if, in the course of undertaking their professional duties, a belief is formed on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual abuse or physical injury.

PURPOSE

To enable staff to comply with reporting obligations under child protection law and criminal law and fulfil their duty of care by:

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

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. 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 Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection.
2. A child is in need of protection for any of the following reasons:
 - a) The child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child.
 - b) 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.
 - c) 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.
 - d) 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.
 - e) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
 - f) 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.

3. How to make a mandatory report:
 - 3.1 In case of an emergency or if a child is in immediate danger contact Triple Zero (000) or the local police station.
 - 3.2 Alternatively, to report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHHS Child Protection, call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78 (24 hours 7 days, toll free)
 - a) 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 DHHS Child Protection etc.)
 - b) 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.
 - c) 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.
 - d) Make a report to the relevant agency. (See 3.1 and 3.2 above)
 - e) 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.
 - f) 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.
 - g) Notify the Victoria Police if there is concern that a criminal offence may have been committed
 4. Protecting children from the risk of sexual abuse:
 - a) Any staff member in a position of authority (Principal, senior school staff), who becomes aware that an adult associated with the school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of

sexual abuse to a child under the school's care must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk

This policy should be read in conjunction with PHPS Child Safe Policy.

Department of Education and Training Resources:

- [A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST \(PDF - 270Kb\)](#)
- [Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)
- [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations](#) - elearning module

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed in 2019