



Yarraville West Primary School

Mandatory Reporting Policy & Procedures

Rationale

- As a staff we uphold and comply with the Child Safe Standards as outlined in Ministerial Order 870
- All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. All school staff have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and emotional wellbeing of children in their care.
- 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 to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with the school poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove the risk.
- If a staff member in authority such as the Principal or senior school staff fails to do this, it may amount to a criminal offence

Purpose

To ensure Yarraville West Primary School complies with Mandatory Reporting requirements of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, the *Crimes Act 1958* and other legislation.

- To ensure that children's right to be safe is maintained and each child is protected against physical, sexual abuse or neglect
- Define the roles and responsibilities of staff in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children
- Enable staff to identify the indicators of an abused child in need of protection. This may include neglect or a failure to provide the child with adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development are impaired or placed at risk

Implementation

All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and/or neglect. Proof is not required that abuse or neglect has occurred or is likely to occur – 'a reasonable belief' is sufficient

- If a staff member has concerns about safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care they must take immediate action
- Types of abuse include: physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, medical neglect, family violence or sexual exploitation

Forming a belief on reasonable grounds may include any of the following:

- A child who states they have been sexually or physically abused
- A child states they know of someone who has been physically or sexually abused
- A child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused
- A staff member observes signs of being physically or sexually abused

- A child's actions or behaviour that may place them at risk of significant harm or the parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child
- A staff member observes signs of neglect (poor hygiene, lack of food, sleep deprivation)

- The presence of a single indicator or even several indicators does not prove that abuse or neglect has taken place, however the repeated occurrence of an indicator or several indicators together should alert staff to the possibility of abuse or neglect
- These concerns should be discussed with the Principal/Assistant Principal (Welfare) or members of the leadership team
- Staff should date and document their concerns to assist with 'forming a belief on reasonable grounds'
- If a belief has been formed by a member of staff, all written notes will be kept on file in the Assistant Principal (Welfare)'s office. These notes are to remain confidential
- A staff member does not need permission of parents/carers/guardians to make a notification to Child Protection
- The staff member does not need to tell the parents/carers/guardians that they have made a notification to Child Protection
- The Principal/Assistant Principal (Welfare) or the staff member will contact DHHS – Child Protection by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification

Child Protection Crisis Line and after hours	131 278
Child Protection (Preston Intake)	9479 0101
Child Protection Footscray (local contact)	1300 664 977
Western Child FIRST	1300 775 160

- When making an official notification to DHHS (Child Protection) staff should include the following information:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Full name of child, address and date of birth -Details of concerns and reasons for concerns -The staff member's involvement with the child -Details of any other agencies involved with the child

- In case of EMERGENCY or if the child is in immediate danger, the school will contact triple zero (000) or the Footscray Police Station on 9398 9800
- **A staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed must disclose that information to the Police. Failure to do so is a criminal offence**
- Any child who discloses to staff a desire to harm themselves or others must be reported to the Principal/Assistant Principal (Welfare)
- New staff will be informed of their Child Protection Reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction to the school
- All staff will complete the ELearning Module on Mandatory Reporting annually. This is a DET requirement. This module will be completed in Term 1 each year. The link to the module is: lcm.s.elmolms.com/elmoportal/deecd/sciau/
- Education Support Staff will also be required to complete this module annually
- Certificates of completion should be handed to the Assistant Principal (Welfare) who will keep them on record

After a notification has been made to DHHS (Child Protection):

- DHHS Child Protection officers and members of Victoria Police must provide identification before they interview a child or a staff member
- If any documents or other information is requested by members of these agencies, the request must be in writing by authorized persons
- All reports and subsequent discussions and information gathered are to be recorded and must remain STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL
- Following incidents there must be ongoing vigilance by staff. Any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported
- Student Support Officers will work with the school staff to provide support to all students who may have been involved and impacted by the incident

Ratified by YWPS School Council on 26th October 2016

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle (October 2019) or as needed