



Our Lady of Hope School Greenwith

POLICY DOCUMENT

<h2>Child Protection and Mandatory Notification</h2>
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OUR LADY OF HOPE SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION AND MANDATORY NOTIFICATION POLICY

1. SCOPE AND BACKGROUND

- All personnel in schools are Mandated Notifiers. Mandated Notifiers include anyone who works with or cares for children in a paid or voluntary capacity by providing children with health, welfare, education, childcare or residential services. Such people are legally obliged to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) if in the course of their paid or voluntary work, they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected. Although Mandated Notifiers have a legal responsibility to notify, everyone has a moral responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect;
- All school personnel (i.e. all teachers and all education support officers), are required to have completed the 7 hour Responding to Abuse and Neglect Education and Day Care training;
- All staff are required to complete an online update of their training (approximately 3 hours in duration) every 3 years;
- All staff are to be familiar with the Protective Practices for Staff in their interactions with children and young people document and ensure their interactions with students are in accordance with this document;
- Guidelines for Mandated Notifiers and Information for Organisations can be found at www.families.sa.gov.au;
- All volunteers should be made aware of their responsibilities as Mandated Notifiers to report suspected child abuse;
- The SACCS Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People is available on CESA Online, in CESA Services.

2. RATIONALE

At Our Lady of Hope School (OLOH), we aim:

- To provide a safe school environment which ensures that children are protected from harm;
- To ensure that all interactions with children are guided by the Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people document;
- To ensure school personnel understand the definitions of child abuse and neglect and carry out their legal obligations and responsibilities as well as follow the correct procedures when notifying suspicion of child abuse and neglect;
- To support school personnel directly involved with the handling of disclosure and notification;
- To ensure that policies and organisational procedures provide children with a safe school environment. (This will be done in consultation with the School Board and the parent community);
- To promote models of behaviour between school personnel and children, based on mutual respect and consideration;
- To ensure that student management practices respect the dignity of children.

- To provide training and development for school personnel in implementing the Child Protection Curriculum;
- To initiate and support the implementation of the Child Protection Curriculum at the classroom level in order to ensure that all children have access to these programs throughout their school years;
- To monitor and evaluate Child Protection Curriculum;
- To provide families with information about and opportunities to participate in the Child Protection curriculum;
- To ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

3. PROCEDURE

In order to implement this policy at OLOH School, leadership and all staff have a legal and pastoral obligation:

- To treat children with dignity and respect, to act with propriety, provide a duty of care and protect children in their care;
- To notify Families SA through the Child Abuse Report Line, if in the course of their work, they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected;
- To provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for children;
- To participate in training and development opportunities, which provide knowledge and skills in Mandatory notification;
- To teach children skills and understanding which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety;
- To assist children to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours, which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse;
- To be guided by The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People to further develop policies, practices and procedures at of Our Lady of Hope School which:
 - ensure a safe environment for all children at OLOH School;
 - support children to gain confidence in their identity and develop their capabilities and strengths;
 - respect the diverse and special needs of children;
 - are sensitive and responsive to changes in behaviour which may be indicative of abuse.
- Provide training and development opportunities for all school staff to:
 - ensure they understand their obligations and responsibilities as mandated notifiers and develop appropriate procedures at their work site;
 - provide the skills, knowledge and understanding of personal safety programs for children and enable them to continually build on this;
 - assist them in their role as advocates, particularly on behalf of very young children.

- Develop partnerships between home, school and the wider community to:
 - promote safe environments for children wherever they are, based on effective communication;
 - promote community understanding of personal safety programs;
 - acknowledge and provide for diversity e.g. cultural, special needs.

- Ensure that all people who volunteer at the school are suitable to be working with children and understand their need to keep children safe by
 - Ensuring all volunteers and contractors have suitable police clearances or are working under direct supervision of school staff in line with the Catholic Education Child Protection and Police Check guidelines;
 - Ensuring all volunteers are adequately inducted and understand their role in regards to responding to signs of child abuse or neglect.

- Develop mandatory reporting systems which are clear and understood by all school personnel so that they:
 - are provided with clear information relevant to their employment;
 - have established and clear support mechanisms available;
 - are able to participate in training and development i.e. Child Protection & Responding to Abuse & Neglect Education & Care Training and Induction Programs.

Provide Child Protection Programs which support children to:

- develop knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve and maintain personal safety (i.e. Religious Education, Family Life Education, Program Achieve, Child Protection Curriculum). Such programs need to include a component on online safety.

4. POLICY GUIDELINES

- The Children's Protection Act (SA) 1993 and its Regulations are the relevant legislative documents relating to the issue of child abuse.

- Schools are required to observe the agreed practices laid out in the Guidelines for Mandated Notifiers and Information for Organisations (Families SA, 2015);

- When School Principals, Deputy Principals, Teachers, Education Support Officers and other School Personnel, including volunteers, have suspicions of child abuse; these procedures are to help them carry out their obligations under the Act.

5. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE

5.1 Children's Protection Act (1993)

- Under Section 11 (1) & (2) of the Children's Protection Act 1993 Principals, Teachers and other School Personnel (including volunteers) are obliged by law to notify CARL if they suspect on reasonable ground that a child (i.e. person under eighteen years of age) has been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

5.2 Recognition of Abuse

The term 'abuse' refers to sexual, physical, emotional/psychological abuse and neglect.

The following definitions are used by Families SA in determining whether child abuse has occurred.

Physical Abuse:

Any non accidental act inflicted upon a child, which results in physical injury to the child.

Sexual Abuse:

When someone in a position of power to the child, uses that power to involve the child in sexual activity.

Emotional Abuse:

A chronic attitude or behaviour directed at a child, or a creation of an emotional environment, which is detrimental to or impairs the child's psychological and/or physical development.

Neglect:

This is characterised by the ongoing failure to provide for the child's basic needs which has a detrimental impact on the child's physical and/or psychological development and well-being.

5.3 Legal requirements

It is important to note that it is the role of Families SA to determine whether abuse occurred – NOT SCHOOL PERSONNEL.

- The Law requires school personnel to report reasonable suspicions of abuse. School personnel have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse and to contact Families SA when:
 - A child tells them when he or she has been abused;
 - A child tells them he or she knows someone who has been abused (a child could possibly be referring to himself or herself);
 - Someone else tells them (e.g. sibling, relative, friend, neighbour, or acquaintance of the child) that a child has been abused;
 - Their own observations of the child's physical condition and/or behaviour lead them to suspect that the child has been abused;
 - Other circumstances lead them to suspect that a child has been abused.
- Notifying suspected abuse can be the first step in helping both the abused child and the adult causing the abuse;
- There is no civil or criminal liability for notifying in good faith a suspicion of abuse;
- There is a significant fine for failure to report.

5.4 Notification Procedures

- To consult and make a notification, phone the Child Abuse Report Line on 131478 as soon as possible;
- This is a 24 hour, 7 days a week line and can be called from anywhere in the state for the cost of a local call;
- Under Section 11(3) of the Children's Protection Act, 1993, the school personnel making notification will be required to provide the Department with "a statement of the observations, information and opinions upon which the suspicion is based". This can be done verbally.
- When making a notification, school personnel must advise:
 - The child/young person's name, age and address;
 - The reason for suspecting that the injury to, or behaviour of, or the condition of the child/young person is the result of abuse or neglect;
 - The notifier's assessment of immediate danger to the child or young person (information may be sought about the whereabouts of the alleged abuser/s);
 - What arrangements, if any, exist for the care and protection of the child/young person;
 - What involvement, if any, other agencies have in dealing with the abuse or neglect issues;
 - The notifier's description of the injury, the behaviour or condition observed;
 - The current whereabouts of the child/young person. (the notifier is not required to have all of the above information in order to make a notification);
 - The onus to notify Families SA rests with the person who suspects abuse. Staff are encouraged to speak with the Principal or Deputy Principal about any suspicions of child abuse involving children at the school;
- Certain types notifications of suspected child abuse and neglect can now be reported on line through an online child protection reporting system for less serious matters. The new system aims to provide a streamlined way for notifiers to make online child protection notifications, without the need to phone the Child Abuse Report Line.

In relation to serious child abuse and neglect matters mandated notifiers will still need to call the Child Abuse Report Line to notify Families SA about their concerns

For immediate life threatening situations notifiers will continue to need to call SAPOL.

The URL address for the new system is:
www.reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au.

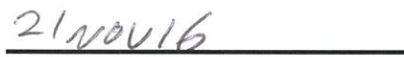
- Following the Families SA investigation, a number of interventions may occur, including, for example:
- counselling for the family and/or individual;
- referral to other agencies;
- emergency foster care to relieve the immediate stress on the family and remove the risk to the child;
- the service of a parent aide (trained volunteer);
- practical assistance (e.g. help with housing, finance, child care);
- an assessment that the student is safe and hence no further action;
- In all cases of sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, or serious neglect, the Police and Families SA consult to determine the respective roles of the two departments.

RESOURCES

- Child Protection Act (1993).
- SACCS Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People (2011).
- SACCS Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect (2010)
- Information Sharing Guidelines (2009).
- Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people.
- Responding to Problem Sexual Behaviour in children and Young People.
- Managing allegations of Sexual misconduct in SA education and care settings.
- Cyber safety: Keeping Children Safe in a connected world.
- Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum.
- Our lady of Hope Personal Responsibility Policy.



Chairperson



Date



Principal



Date