

Mandatory Reporting Policy

Rationale:

All children have a right to feel safe. We have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to all suspected or alleged incidences of abuse or neglect of the children with whom we have contact. We have a duty to report each instance in a timely manner where we believe or suspect physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect has or may have occurred.

Aims:

To ensure that children's rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect. Our aim is to report all suspected or alleged instances in a timely manner, by either the Principal or directly by the mandated reporters in instances where they may not share the belief that an incident has or may have occurred.

Implementation:

- The following professionals are prescribed as mandated reporters under section 182 of the *Child Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA):
 - Primary and Secondary School Teachers and Principals (including students in training to become teachers)
 - Registered medical practitioners (including psychiatrists) nurses (including school nurses)
 - Police
- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect.
- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures.

Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities regularly.

- All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Acting Principal and also reported to the appropriate authorities – Department of Human Services (DHS), Child first etc.
- The Principal will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.
- If a belief has been formed by a staff member that sexual or physical abuse or neglect has taken place a “Mandatory Reporting Information Form” available from the Principal must be completed and filed in the Principal’s office.
- If a belief is formed by a staff member then the teacher and/or the Principal (the mandated reporter) will contact DHS by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification.

1300 369 536 or after school hours crisis line 131 278

There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

- *A child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused*
 - *A child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)*
 - *Someone who knows the child or young person states that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused*
 - *A child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused.*
 - *The staff member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on the child or young person’s safety, stability or development*
 - *The staff member observes signs or indicators of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision*
 - *A child’s actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the child’s parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.*
- Members of the Department of Human Services, or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification, will interview staff and children only in the presence of the Principal or his/her nominee.
 - All “Mandatory Reporting Information Forms” remain filed in the Principal’s office.

- All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.
- All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.
- 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.
- Students, who disclose to staff a desire to harm themselves or others, must be reported by staff to the Principal.
- In the circumstance where either the Principal or the mandated reporter has agreed to report an incident then there will be follow up by the other party within one working day to ensure the incident has been reported.

The role of College staff:

College staff have a duty of care to protect and preserve the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people in their care and staff must always act in the best interests of those children and young people. If a staff member has any concerns regarding the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person it is important to take immediate action.

Note: The role of investigating an allegation of child abuse rests solely with Child Protection and/or Victoria Police.

Attachment: A Step by Step Guide to Making a Report to Child Protection or Child FIRST

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Crimes Act 1958 (vic) Policy

Ratified by the Board on: 31/08/2016

Chairperson: Mr. Ken Yucel

This policy will be communicated to staff, parents, students and the wider community through one or more of the following channels: newsletter, assemblies, staff/student handbook, College website, staff meetings, information sessions.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's 2 year review cycle.