



MACEDON PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD SAFE MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY & PROCEDURES

Rationale:

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. In schools, 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. School staff have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care. If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care they should take immediate action.

Aim:

To set out guidelines in respect to mandatory reporting required to ensure that children's rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect

Implementation:

All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs or risks of harm, disclosures of abuse or neglect, or a reasonable belief a student is subjected to sexual abuse or physical harm. 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.

All other staff members who form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person:

- is in need of protection, should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.
- is displaying sexually abusive behaviours and is in need of therapeutic treatment should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection.

If staff have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person, they should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST. (See Responding to Suspected Child Abuse - template for guidance on how to report.)

In cases where staff have concerns about a child or young person, they should also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team.

New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure. Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually. All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or Positive Climate team.

The Principal or Student Wellbeing officer 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 a mandatory report must be made, the appropriate documentation is completed and kept securely. The Responding to Suspected Child Abuse – template should be used to record all information relating to the report.

The teacher and/or the Principal officer/ or Student Wellbeing coordinator will contact the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification on:

- (03) 9479 6222 or after school hours crisis line 131278
- North-Western Region on 9488 9488

Members of Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), 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 reports, records, documentation 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.

Reporting criminal child sexual abuse - failure to disclose offence:

Any staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.

Reference: School Policy & Advisory Guide –Mandatory Reporting

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/PROTECT_Responding_TemplateSchools.pdf

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

<http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/protecting-children-together>

<http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children%2c-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource>

http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/586465/information-guide-registered-teachers-principals.pdf

<http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/about-child-abuse>

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle and following significant incidents if they occur.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in: November 2018

Last review: 20 November 2018

Date of next review: 20 November 2020