



Perth Waldorf School

Child Protection Policy

Note: Includes
procedures for Mandatory
Reporting

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

All children have the right to be protected from harm at school. Schools and their teachers and volunteers owe a duty of care to all children on the school's premises and also when they believe the welfare of a child is at risk outside the school. The policy will be reviewed annually or when changes are advised to legislation or other, usually via AISWA.

2. POLICY PURPOSE

All non-government schools are required by the Department of Education Services to have a Child Protection Policy. As the audience to this policy, all staff employed by the Perth Waldorf School have a special responsibility for the care, safety and protection of students. Regarding child protection, these responsibilities are specific to the identification and timely response to concerns regarding the possible sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse, neglect and grooming of a child. The policy scope includes the mandatory reporting requirements for teachers of child sexual abuse. Students may disclose abuse to a teacher, other employees or volunteers and the school needs to know how to respond. The mandatory reporting flowchart is found at Appendix A.

The Child Protection Policy applies to all employees of the school whether employed on a permanent, temporary or casual basis. It also applies to all contractors and volunteers in their work in the school.

3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008
- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Working With Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004
- Criminal Code Act (1913)
- Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006 (changes to s204B of the Criminal Code Act
- Children's Online Privacy Protection Act

4. BACKGROUND

Children have the right to feel safe at school and in the wider community. All members of the Perth Waldorf School staff and all volunteer workers at the school have a Duty of Care towards the children of the school, to act upon any suspicion of child abuse according to the procedures set out in this document.

Abusers take all forms. Many select occupations that allow them access to children. Schools or community groups are likely places for potential abusers to target. It is important to remember that the school community not only includes the students and the teachers, but also includes other parties not limited to the groundsman, bus

drivers, canteen staff, parents volunteering their services and third parties invited in to run an excursion/incursion.

This document explains the actions to be taken by staff to protect children in circumstances where abuse is suspected or where allegations are made against staff members, children or other people in the community.

5. DEFINITIONS

Carer

Any adult person, not being a parent, who is responsible for the child (The Act , Division 2, Section 16 (II))

Child

The definition of 'child' is defined in section 3 of the Act as a person who is under the age of 18 years. In the absence of positive evidence as to age, a child is a person who is apparently under 18 years of age. Young people aged 18 and over are considered to be adults and are not covered by this legislation. However, schools still owe a duty of care to all students at the school. In these instances, police should be informed of any assault or crime against the young person.

Employee:

Any persons who might be engaged by the school to work with the children, including:

- teachers,
- administration staff,
- maintenance workers,
- volunteers,
- work experience participants,
- student placements.

Grooming

Actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for engaging in sexual activity with the child.

Sexual abuse

Is defined by the Act in section 124A as:

'Sexual abuse' in relation to a child, includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- (a) The child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence; or*
- (b) The child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or*
- (c) There is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.*

This legislation is not intended to capture all sexual activity involving children and young people. Reference should be made to consent laws in Western Australia.

Mandatory Reporter

In Western Australia, the mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse are the following professions in both the government and non-government sectors:

- doctors
- nurses
- midwives
- teachers
- police officers.

Teacher

The definition of teacher as it only relates to schools in section 124A of the Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008 has been changed to read:

- a) person who is registered under the Teacher Registration Act 2012

6. STAFF RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

In all cases, allowing adults to work with children carries risks with regard to potential for child maltreatment. Having an attitude that protects the children in our care is of upmost importance and at all times checks should be done to ensure adults working with children at Perth Waldorf School pose no risk to the children.

The Perth Waldorf School's human resources practices aim to ensure that staff and volunteers are adequately screened, trained and supervised.

6.1 RECRUITMENT

When staff have been assessed as suitable for employment, reference checks must be carefully carried out before the applicant is formally offered the position. These reference checks must be done by contacting the referee verbally. Applicants should provide at least two suitable referees who can be contacted in this way.

- All school employees (teaching & non-teaching) must have a current Working With Children Check, a copy of which is to be kept on a central office and a register maintained and monitored.
- Teachers must be registered members of the Teachers Registration Board of WA and complete a police clearance through this process.
- Volunteers who are not parents must have a Working With Children Check if their duties involve contact with children, a copy of which is to be kept in their file in the office. In some instances a police clearance check will be requested. Volunteers on overnight excursions must have a WCC. Volunteers are not to be alone with children and must be accompanied by the supervising staff member who is responsible for duty of care of the students.
- Volunteers who are parents and undertake a professional role at the school are to have a national police clearance.

6.2 TRAINING

All staff should be trained in child protection and be aware of their rights and responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of the Administrator to organise Child Protection Training to all new staff and to provide regular updates to existing staff.

The school will organise regular training sessions for staff on Child Protection, to be run by an accredited outside organisation e.g. AISWA

- This Policy is to be reviewed and evaluated at least once a year. It is the responsibility of the Administrator to ensure this occurs
- This policy is to be mandatory reading for all new and present employees at the school. Staff to sign that they have read and understood it.
- This policy is to be supported through the annual training of all staff in Child Protection
- This policy is to be read through at least one compulsory staff meeting per year. It is the responsibility of the Administrator to ensure this occurs
- A copy of this policy is to be made available in the office and reference to how it may be accessed is to be in each teacher's Staff Handbook file
- Parents of the school community will be informed of the content of the child protection policy and the procedures recommended by that policy in the event that abuse is suspected or has occurred, through materials sent home via email and / or letter or through the school newsletter. It is the responsibility of the Administrator to ensure this occurs annually.
- A summary of the Child Protection Policy will be part of the Parent Handbook

6.3 SCHOOL CURRICULUM

15 Protective Behaviours Education for Children in the Curriculum

The school curriculum will cover a comprehensive, realistic and age-appropriate personal safety component enabling students to recognise and report abuse, understand power in relationships, and develop protective strategies, including seeking help. This school provides a Protective Behaviours program in primary school and Life Skills classes for high school students which cover the content recommended.

Any Protective Behaviours Programs undertaken need to be carefully considered, taking into account the ages and developmental stages of the children. It must be recognised that while such programs can help children to develop useful skills, it is not reasonable or realistic to expect children to be able to guarantee their own safety in most cases. The safety of children remains at all times an adult responsibility. This responsibility should not be implicitly placed on children.

The following practices can however be usefully integrated into day to day practices:

- Encouraging the use of correct terminology for all body parts.
- Encouraging children to identify and discuss feelings in a variety of situations.

- Encouraging questioning and decision making skills.
- Respecting children’s decision and choices about touch and encouraging them to respect other children’s choices.
- Encouraging children to distinguish between situations where they feel safe and don’t feel safe.
- Provide an environment where children know that their questions and concerns are listened to.

The administrator in collaboration with the faculty is responsible for ensuring Protective Behaviours Programs and Child Protection Professional Development sessions are made part of the curriculum in collaboration with outside agencies.

PART A – OVERVIEW OF CHILD ABUSE

7. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILD ABUSE AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Child abuse and neglect is defined as maltreatment done by a person who has responsibility to care for a child and this document concentrates specifically on that relationship.

However, it is very important to note that the definitions of child maltreatment described in section 8 of this document can be used to explain some of the behaviour that can occur in schools by one child to another. While the treatment of such behaviour may be dealt with through other school policies such as Bullying and Behaviour Management, the victim of that ‘bullying’ may display some of the physical and behavioural indicators as those described in section 5 of this document. These events should be treated seriously by the school with the aim to help both parties.

It is also important to note that the child who is ‘bullying’ may be doing so because they have been subjected to the same inappropriate behaviour and may require assistance through the school’s Child Protection policy.

8. CHILD MALTREATMENT

8.1 DEFINITION

This is maltreatment of a person under the age of 18 years. It is the result of action or inaction on the part of a person who has responsibility to care for a child resulting in harm or injury to the child. The harm may include delayed physical and/or intellectual development. The maltreatment experienced is normally described in five categories – physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and neglect. Each category of maltreatment is described by a range of indicators.

8.1.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has experienced severe and/or persistent ill-treatment. It can include, but is not limited by injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and fractures caused by a range of acts including beating, shaking, illicit

administration of alcohol and other drugs, attempted suffocation, excessive discipline or physical punishment.

8.1.2 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse covers a wide range of behaviour or activities that expose or subject a child to sexual activity that is exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level. These behaviours include observation or involvement with inappropriate fondling of a child's body, making a child touch an adult's genitalia, showing pornographic material or sexual acts to a child, and sexual penetration of the child. Harm from sexual abuse may include significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infections and impaired emotional and psychological development.

8.1.3 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is a sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, confusing, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to have a reduced capacity to experience a range of emotions, to express emotion appropriately and to modulate their emotional experience. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to be fearful, withdrawn and/or resentful, distressed and despairing.

8.1.4 Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse is the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, isolating, neglecting, discrediting, misleading, disregarding, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.

8.1.5 Neglect

Neglect is the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. These include adequate supervision, adequate food or shelter, suitable clothing, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial care and emotional security. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic, and can result in detrimental effects on the child or young person's social psychological, educational or physical development and/or physical injury. Neglect should be considered in the context of physical, emotional or psychological abuse.

8.2 INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The following list of indicators in the table at 8.2.2 is not exhaustive but contains those that will be of most use to staff. This list has been taken from the Department for Child Protection document *"Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – A Guide for Professionals"*.

While not described in the Child Maltreatment categories, the school has included in the same table the indicators of grooming to assist staff with detection. Grooming is a precursor to sexual abuse and occurs when communication or conduct by an adult is linked to the intention of facilitating the involvement of a child in sexual behaviour with an adult.

There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The following information is presented as a guide to assist practitioners in recognising the child abuse and neglect. It cannot be considered to be comprehensive listing of all harms, behaviours or presentations that give rise to a concern or suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Each sign needs to be considered in the context of the child's personal circumstances.

Contextual factors, which relate to all types of abuse and neglect, are described. They are of assistance when considering the likelihood that an injury, behaviour or disclosure of a child is related to or caused by abuse or neglect. The indicators of the child abuse and neglect are grouped by neglect, followed by physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The indicators are described in terms of the child's presentation and behaviours of those that abuse and neglect them.

One indicator in isolation may not imply abuse or neglect. Each indicator needs to be considered in the context of other indicators and the child's circumstances.

8.2.1 Contextual Factors

The following contextual factors in the life circumstances of the child are relevant when considering indicators of abuse and neglect:

- history of previous harm to the child
- social or geographic isolation of the child or family; including lack of access to extended family
- abuse or neglect of sibling
- family history of violence including injury to children
- domestic violence
- physical or mental health issues for the parent or care giver affecting their ability to care for the child
- the parent's or care givers' abuse of alcohol or other drugs affecting their ability to care for the child
- parent or care giver is experiencing significant problems in managing the child's behaviour
- the parent or care giver has unrealistic expectations of age appropriate behaviour in the child.

8.2.2 Description of Indicators

GENERAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT					
INDICATORS	NEGLECT	PHYSICAL ABUSE	EMOTIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE	SEXUAL ABUSE	GROOMING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marked delay between injury and presentation for medical assistance • history of injury which is inconsistent with the physical findings • history of injury which is vague, bizarre or variable • where the child tells you when he/she has been abused • when the child tells you she/he knows someone who has been abused, may be referring to herself/himself • someone else tells you, such as a relative, friend, acquaintance or sibling of the child that the child may have been abused. 					
GENERAL INDICATORS OF CHILD STRESS					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor concentration at school • sleeping/bedtime problems, eg. nightmares, bed wetting • marked changes in behaviour or mood, tantrums, aggressiveness, withdrawal • child complains of stomach aches and headaches with no physical findings 					
CHILDREN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor standards of hygiene leading to social isolation • scavenging or stealing food • extended stays at school, public places, other homes • being focused on basic survival • extreme longing for adult affection • a flat and superficial way of relating, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facial, head and neck bruising • lacerations and welts from excessive discipline or physical restraint • explanation offered by the child is not consistent with the injury • other bruising and marks which may show the shape of the object that caused it (eg. A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inability to value others • lack of interpersonal skills necessary for adequate functioning • extreme attention seeking behaviour • other behavioural disorders (eg. disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying.) • the child or young person exhibits extremes in behaviour from overly aggressive to overly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexualised behaviours inappropriate to their age (including sexually touching other children and themselves) • knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate to their years • describes sexual acts (eg. Daddy hurts my wee-wee) • disclosure of abuse either directly or indirectly through drawings, play or writing that describes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile phone or expensive habits • going missing or absconding with the purpose to be elsewhere • child has developed a special relationship with an adult that is secretive • child is receiving favours or gifts

	<p>lacking of a sense of genuine interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anxiety about being dropped or abandoned • self comforting behaviour, eg. rocking, sucking • non-organic failure to thrive • delay in developmental milestones • loss of 'skin bloom' • poor hair texture • untreated physical problems. 	<p>handprint, buckle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bite marks and scratches where the bruise may show a print of teeth and experts can determine whether or not it is an adult bite • multiple injuries or bruises • ingestion of poisonous substances, alcohol or other harmful drugs • ruptured internal organs without a history of major trauma • dislocations, sprains, twisting • fractures of bones, especially in children under 3 years • burns and scalds • head injuries where the child may have indicators of drowsiness, vomiting, fits or retinal haemorrhages suggesting the possibility of the child having been shaken 	<p>passive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development • compulsive lying and stealing • high levels of anxiety • lack of trust in people • feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves • eating hungrily or hardly at all • uncharacteristic seeking of attention or affection • reluctance to go home • rocking, sucking thumbs or self harming behaviour • fearfulness when approached by a person known to them 	<p>abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pain or bleeding in the anal or genital area with redness or swelling • fear of being alone with a particular person • child or young person implies that he/she is required to keep secrets • presence of sexually transmitted disease • sudden unexplained fears • enuresis and/or encopresis (bed-wetting and bed soiling) • self-destructive behaviour, drug dependency, suicide attempts, self mutilation • persistent running away from home • anorexia, overeating • going to bed fully clothed • regression in developmental achievements in younger children • child being in contact with a known or suspected perpetrator of sexual assault • unexplained accumulation of money and gifts • injuries such as tears or bruising to the genitalia, anus or perineal region • sexually transmitted diseases • adolescent pregnancy 	<p>from that adult that is inappropriate or is heard to brag about their special relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child and adult are meeting in secluded or secret places outside of normal interactions • overly defensive of anyone accessing personal forms of media and electronic devices • an adult or child is manufacturing opportunities to be alone together • an adult is testing or ignoring professional boundaries or rules with one particular child or group • disengagement with school (e.g. truancy) • unusual association with older men or women • unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual) • possible self harming • injuries from physical assault, physical
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general indicators of female genital mutilation which could include: having a special operation associated with celebrations; reluctance to be involved in sport or other physical activities when previously interested; difficulties with toileting. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trauma to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs 	<p>restraint, sexual assault</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adult or child is displaying unwanted physical touch of a tactile or sexual nature.
<p>PARENTS OR CARE GIVERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, hygienic home conditions or leaving the child inappropriately without supervision • inability to respond emotionally to a child • child abandoned • depriving of or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct admissions by parents or caregivers that they fear they may injure the child • family history of violence, including previous harm to children • history of their own maltreatment as a child • repeated presentations of the child to health or other services with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child, or ignoring or withholding praise and affection • excessive or unreasonable demands • persistent hostility and severe verbal abuse, rejection and scapegoating • belief that a particular child is bad or 'evil' • using inappropriate physical or social isolations as punishment • situations here an adult's behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exposing the child to prostitution or child pornography or using a child for pornographic purposes • intentional exposure of child to sexual behaviour of others • ever committed/been suspected of child sexual abuse • inappropriate curtailing or jealousy regarding age-appropriate development of independence from the family • coercing child to 	

	<p>withholding physical contact or stimulation for prolonged periods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> failure to provide psychological nurturing treating one child differently from the others. 	<p>injuries, ingestions or with minor complaints.</p>	<p>harms a child's wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> exposure to domestic violence 	<p>engage in sexual abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> verbal threats of sexual abuse denial of adolescent's pregnancy by family perpetration of spouse abuse or physical abuse. 	
<p>OTHERS (e.g. siblings, relatives, acquaintances or strangers</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As Above Offenders use a range of tactics including force, threats, and tricks to engage children in sexual contact and to try to silence the child. They may also try to gain the trust and friendship of parents in order to obtain access to children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

9. MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

9.1 MYTHS

An accurate understanding of the dynamics underlying child abuse is important because the impact of any form of abuse on the victim can be life changing. Common outcomes associated with abuse include drug abuse, suicide, eating disorders, low self-esteem, psychosomatic illness and self-mutilation.

There are many dangerous beliefs and myths about sexual abuse. Some of the common ones are shown below:

- sex between children and adults is not damaging if it is in the context of a loving relationship;
- it is not the abuse which causes the problem but the effects of the intervention by others;
- those abused turn into abusers;
- children frequently lie about sexual abuse;
- sexual abuse is more common in lower socio-economic areas and families;
- only men sexually abuse children;
- sexual abusers are readily identified by 'normal' people.

Myths pertaining to sexual and other forms of abuse of particular interest to schools include:

- there will not be a problem here because all the volunteers/employees are female;
- there will not be a problem here because the young people come from privileged backgrounds and will complain if there is an issue of abuse;
- if we get the selection procedures right we will eliminate the possibility of abuse;
- we use Police Clearances and Working with Children Checks here so we are covered;
- it is one of the other children's parents/brothers/sisters to whom I am entrusting the child/ren, so it will be OK;
- we did not need to screen Mr Smith because he is a friend of the teacher, president etc;
- my workers, volunteers and casuals are youth themselves so there is no risk;
- we are pretty good at identifying people here who are a bit 'odd'.

9.2FACTS

Children or young people are more often abused by a parent or carer. Adults who were abused as children are at greater risk of developing psychological and emotional problems later in life, and repeating the pattern of abuse with their own children.

A child abuser can be a member of the family (father, step-father, mother etc.) or someone close to the family or the child (church member, teacher, community group leader). A child abuser usually spends a lot of time grooming the child with the child being made to feel that they are in some way complicit in the acts, thus making disclosure a difficult process.

On the whole, abusers are the least obvious people in our community. Many child sex abusers, for example, hold positions of trust within the community with easy access to children and their families. Occupations that some convicted child sex offenders have held include bus driver, entertainer, teacher, scout leader, librarian, principal, church leader, judge.

A recent study carried out by Huddersfield University, UK found that 52% of children were sexually abused in community-based organisations. These included sports and voluntary groups and also private tuition classes.

In Australia, a case of child abuse is reported every 2.5 minutes.

Almost three times as many girls as boys have substantiations of sexual abuse but boys are more likely to be physically abused. (AIHW, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008)

Two-thirds of all substantiations are for children aged 10 years old and under (AIHW, 2008).

Children with an intellectual disability are at the highest risk of sexual abuse. Research indicates that sexual abuse statistics range between 65% and 85% for these young people (Horsley and Azzopardi, 1990).

10.CYBER PREDATORS

As discussed above, the main perpetrators of child abuse and neglect are people that the child knows. However, the continuing popularity of the internet has given credence once more to the term 'Stranger Danger'.

The internet is one of the main sources of communication for young people today with the popularity of chat rooms, discussion groups, and playing interactive games. Unfortunately it is also a very attractive place for predators to go as they can remain virtually anonymous whilst participating in a range of paedophilic activity and in particular employ grooming methods to befriend children.

As NetAlert describes on their website,

“...paedophiles can socialise together, trawl for inappropriate content (such as child pornography) and easily make collections of this and distribute to others. They can pretend to be people other than themselves and they find a sense of security by operating from the confines of their own homes.

Grooming children online with the intention to meet them in real life is an activity many undertake.

They often set up bogus email accounts and handles (a nickname for a person who uses the Internet) which protect their identity online.

*Children need to think carefully about a handle they choose. Handles such as *Angel-Babe*, *Sweet-Sixteen* and *SexyKid* appear harmless on the outset, however can attract the wrong attention. Paedophiles are often attracted to people with these types of names.*

Paedophiles may also erase the history of what they have done online from their personal computers, making it a lengthy task for authorities to charge them with an offence.

Paedophiles conduct numerous activities online:

- *Swapping child porn pictures in chat rooms or through email or P2P networks;*
- *Swapping personal information of children that they have collected;*
- *Participating in online communities with the intention to groom children for personal sexual gratification or to meet them in person;*
- *Forming networks with other paedophiles;*
- *Trading techniques on how to avoid the authorities.”*

The *Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006* is the legislation in Western Australia that protects children under the age of 16, or that the offender believes is under the age of 16, from an adult who uses electronic communications with the intent to procure the child to engage in sexual activity; or to expose the child to any indecent matter.

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ([COPPA](#)), prevents companies from collecting certain information from children under the age of thirteen. Therefore Facebook and other social media websites such as Instagram and Twitter websites and apps choose to restrict access to those under 13.

11.GROOMING

Grooming is a relatively new term that describes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for engaging in sexual activity with the child. Mandatory Reporting training now includes grooming and indicators of grooming. Any reports of grooming should be handled through the mandatory reporting process.

PART B - MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

12.OVERVIEW

12.1 LEGISLATION

From the 1st January 2009, the *Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008* came into effect and covers mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in Western Australia. This amendment forms part of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

In Western Australia, the mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse are the following professions in both the government and non-government sectors:

- doctors
- nurses
- midwives
- teachers
- police officers.

The definition of teacher is described in section 5 of the Act as it pertains to schools is *a person who, under the Western Australian College of Teaching Act 2004, is registered, provisionally registered or has a limited authority to teach.*

Below is an explanation of who is included under the definition of teacher.

- a) provisionally registered is someone who is still pending conditions eg. Finish qualifications for new graduates; limited authority to teach includes a teacher who can teach at one school but not any other eg. Aboriginal elder is teaching an aboriginal language at the school.
- b) 236(2) of School Education Act relates to those teaching in a community kindergarten
- c) Section 11B of School Education Act relates to compulsory education of children and the decision by the Minister to exempt a child.
- d) Section 24(1) of the School Education Act relates to arrangements alternative to attendance and alternative education programs for children that don't attend school
- e) Relates to those teaching detainees in a detention centre.

12.2 Roles & Responsibilities

12.2.1 Teacher

It is important to note that the notification steps for sexual abuse will differ from the steps used to notify other forms of child abuse. **In the independent school sector, teachers are required to make the report, not the School Administrator (Principal).** While the school principal may be involved in the discussion, the teacher is responsible for completing and submitting the report to the Mandatory Reporting Service.

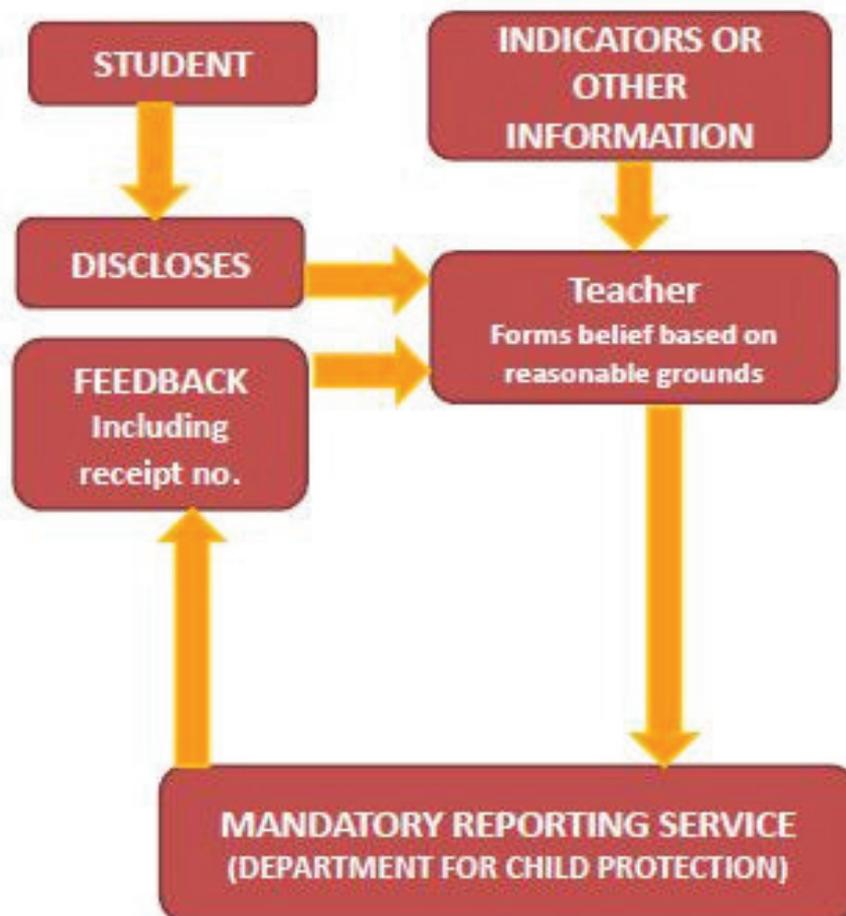
12.2.2 Other Staff

Teacher assistants, school chaplains and school psychologists are examples of people who work with children in schools that are not mandated reporters. However, all people working with children, whether mandatory reporters or not, should continue to report reasonable beliefs about all forms of abuse. These people who work with children also have a great knowledge of the children in their care and can be included in the consultative process with the teacher in the case of sexual abuse.

13. PROCEDURES

13.1. Mandatory Reporting Procedural Chart

MANDATORY REPORTING PROCEDURE



13.2 When Does a Mandatory Reporter Make a Report

Mandatory reporters must report a belief, based on reasonable grounds in the course of their work, paid or unpaid, that child sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring. This means that teachers working outside of the school grounds are also required to report when working in either a paid or unpaid capacity. For example, tutoring, volunteer teacher at youth centre, working as a Sunday school teacher.

Failure to make a report can incur the maximum penalty of \$6,000.

A mandatory reporter can form the necessary belief, based on reasonable grounds, by noting the presence of indicators, disclosures, injuries, signs, symptoms and behaviours that heighten concerns about child sexual abuse. Information on the indicators of sexual abuse is covered in section 3 of this document.

Teachers may wish to consider the following questions to assist them in deciding if their belief is based on reasonable grounds:

- Can you describe the reasons why you believe a child has been, or is being sexually abused?
- What has the child said or done to suggest they are being sexual abused?
- Have you observed, or been told about, the presence of any of the 'possible indicators' of sexual abuse?
- Did the child disclose sexual abuse? What did they say happened? Who did they disclose to and when?
- What other behaviours have you observed and/or interactions with the child are of concern to you? What is the frequency and severity of the behaviour? How long has it been occurring?

13.3 How Does a Mandatory Reporter Make a Report

In the first instance you can lodge a verbal mandatory report by calling the Department for Child Protection and Family Support's Mandatory Reporting Service on free call **1800 708 704**. This allows the service to ask clarifying questions and gather as much information as possible.

However, by law, you must also lodge a written report, as soon as practicable, preferably within 24 hours. Please provide as much information as possible, as this will assist with the assessment of the child's safety.

The Mandatory Reporting Service has a form, *Mandatory Report - Sexual Abuse* which should be used to make a written report.

Written reports can be lodged with the Mandatory Reporting Service via:

The internet by completing a secure online form -

www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au

The form can be downloaded and printed out from the same web address and lodged by these methods:

Email to - mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Fax to: 1800 610 614

By Mail: P.O Box 8146 PERTH BC WA 6849

Failure to make a written report, following a verbal report, can result in a fine of up to \$3,000.

Failure to make *any* report may result in a fine of up to \$6000. A person can be prosecuted within three (3) years after failing to make a report. After that it is at the Attorney General's discretion.

13.4 What Happens Next to my Mandatory Report

Once you have lodged a report, you will receive an acknowledgement receipt. This receipt is proof that you have made a report so it is important that you keep it. Once the report has been lodged, the Mandatory Reporting Service will assess the immediate risk to the child, and determine the need for further child protection assessment and investigation.

The assessment process could include reviewing, collating and evaluating information from existing sources, and contacting other professionals who may be working with the child and who may be able to provide further information.

The assessment process may result in a decision to investigate. An investigation may include workers from the Department for Child Protection and Family Support and/or the Western Australia Police speaking with the child and the child's family or carers. A range of measures may be implemented to safeguard the child, if necessary, following an investigation.

Not all reports will result in an investigation or contact with the child and their family.

The Mandatory Reporting Service will provide a copy of all written reports to the Western Australia Police. The Service will also provide any other information that may assist the Western Australia Police in the administration of their responsibilities.

As part of the assessment or investigation process, reporters may be contacted by workers from the Department for Child Protection and Family Support and/or the Western Australia Police for further or updated information.

The mandatory reporter will receive a feedback letter advising them of the District Office it has been referred to, or whether no further action was recommended by the Mandatory Reporting Service.

14.CONFIDENTIALITY AND LEGAL PROTECTION

14.1 Protection from Legal Liability

The legislation under s.124E of the Children and Community Services Amendment Act 2008 provides protection for a person who makes a mandatory report (the reporter) and the person who provides information which forms the basis of the report or causes a report to be made (the informant).

Reporters and informants who act in good faith will be protected from:

- Civil or criminal liability.
- Breach of a duty of confidentiality.
- Breach of professional ethics, standards, codes of conduct or from engaging in unprofessional conduct, which would normally arise from the actions involved in making a mandatory report.

14.2 Confidentiality

The school has an obligation to inform relevant agencies when the welfare or safety of the student or students is threatened and thus cannot agree to demands of confidentiality by the student.

The mandatory reporting legislation also provides strong confidentiality protection for reporters and for informant. It is intended to strictly manage information about a reporter's identity in the interests of promoting the protection of children as well as protecting and supporting mandatory reporters. The identity of the reporter is required to be kept confidential and can be disclosed in only limited circumstances.

There are penalties of up to a \$24,000 fine and 2 years imprisonment for people who breach these confidentiality provisions. This includes disclosing information which does not directly name the reporter or informant, but might allow others to work out who they are.

There may be cases where disclosing identifying information is necessary to protect a child or is unavoidable. The legislation has made allowances for these cases.

However, identifying information should not be revealed just because the legislation allows it. People still need to carefully consider whether a person's safety would be put at risk by revealing their identity.

Revealing identifying information about a reporter or informant will be allowed where:

- The Department sends a copy of every written report to the Western Australia Police (as required by law), that includes the reporter's details.
- A person is performing functions under the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.
- A Department for Child Protection officer finds it necessary to do so during child protection, family law or adoption proceedings relating to the child.
- A person is being prosecuted for an offence relating to mandatory reporting (for example, making a misleading report).
- The reporter consents in writing to the identifying information being revealed.

In other cases, a Court must give permission for identifying information to be revealed and can only do so where:

- satisfied that it is necessary to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of the child, or critically important in the proceedings and there is compelling reason in the public interest to make the disclosure; or
- the person has consented to the disclosure.

Similar limits apply to the use of the report as evidence and the questioning of persons about the report during legal proceedings. Even where disclosure of identifying information is allowed, a Department officer can object where they believe that the disclosure endangers, or is likely to endanger, a person's safety or psychological health.

14.2.1 Professional Confidentiality Principles & Internal Arrangements

A person who, in good faith, makes a mandatory report about child sexual abuse is protected, in making the report, from breaching any duty of confidentiality or secrecy, professional ethics, standards or principles of conduct which would normally apply (for example, doctor/patient confidentiality).

Mandatory reporters must comply with the legislative requirements to report child sexual abuse, *despite* reporting structures, internal organisational policies, professional codes of conduct or confidentiality requirements which would normally apply.

While the School Administrator (Principal) and other relevant staff may be involved in discussions with the teacher in relation to a specific child, it is the teacher's responsibility to make the report directly to the Mandatory Reporting Service when the teacher forms a reasonable belief that sexual abuse has occurred, or is occurring.

15. RECORD KEEPING

The situation with respect to notes and a report prepared by a teacher who is employed in an independent school is different to the situation that applies in Government schools. This is because the FOI Act does not apply to independent schools. Further, a report prepared by the teacher is not a '*government record*' and therefore is also not subject to provisions of the *State Records Act*.

That aside, under the Privacy Act a teacher, and also the school, do have obligations to keep secure and confidential any notes and reports that they prepare about individual students. These obligations apply irrespective of whether a report has been made to the Department. There are also other requirements with respect to collection, correction, use, access and transfer of information under the Privacy Act.

There is nothing within the Act which requires a teacher to provide the report or their notes to the school nor does it make them automatically the property of the school.

However, many schools have in place school policies and procedures which require these types of documents and records to be provided to the Principal of the school and to be kept as school records. In which case the Principal and the school will also have obligations under the *Privacy Act* to keep confidential and secure any notes or reports it may receive.

Once the report has been provided to the Department for Child Protection, the report becomes a 'government record' held by the Department and must be treated by the Department in accordance with the requirements imposed on the Department by the Act and any other statutory obligations.

Because the reporting obligations under the Act are obligations placed upon the teacher personally, it is recommended that the teacher:

- (a) Keep a copy of the report and any notes the teacher provides to the Department in compliance with their obligations under the Act;
- (b) Keep a record of receipt by the Department of the report (this is usually in the form of receipt number) as evidence that the report was made to the Department;
- (c) Keep a copy of the report and any notes the teacher provides to the school;
- (d) Should retain copies of any notes, the report and the receipt of the report by the Department, when the teacher leaves the school.

15. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Department for Child Protection is the agency responsible for the legislation regarding the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse. The Mandatory Reporting Service has been established by the Department to receive and investigate reports of sexual abuse.

The Department for Child Protection has a website www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au. Information on this website includes frequently asked questions and a copy of the report to download.

The Mandatory Reporting Service can also be contacted through the following ways:

Telephone: 1800 708 704

Email: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Fax: 1800 610 614

Post: PO Box 8146, Perth BC, WA 6849

In addition to training and information on this website, mandatory reporters can also contact the agencies listed below to access further information and training about mandatory reporting that is specific to professional sectors.

Education professionals

Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia

Michael ten Haaf, Policies and Projects Officer

Telephone: (08) 9441 1633

Email: mtenhaaf@ais.wa.edu.au

Department of Education

Child Protection Support Team

Telephone: (08) 9402 6124

Email: Child.Protection@education.wa.edu.au

PART C – REPORTING FOR OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE (EXCLUDING SEXUAL ABUSE)

17. OVERVIEW

As detailed in Section 10, Mandatory reporting is now a requirement in Western Australia for certain occupations including teachers to make reports when they have a reasonable belief that sexual abuse is occurring or has occurred.

For other forms of child abuse mandatory reporting is not yet a requirement, however, schools have a duty of care and a moral obligation to follow the recommended procedures in cases of suspected child abuse.

The *Department for Child Protection (DCP)* is the government department with the statutory authority to investigate concerns in Western Australia.

It is not the school's role to investigate child maltreatment issues, including concerns of sexual abuse. That is the DCP's responsibility.

All disclosures or strong concerns of abuse or neglect should be **reported** to DCP by the School Administrator. The DCP will then decide on how to proceed and whether it is appropriate to notify the Western Australian Police.

The *Western Australian Police* also have a role in responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect. The WA Police Service Child Abuse Investigation Unit intervene in instances where it is believed that a criminal offence has occurred which may lead to criminal charges being laid. In the case of a report of child sexual abuse, DCP will forward all reports to the WA Police.

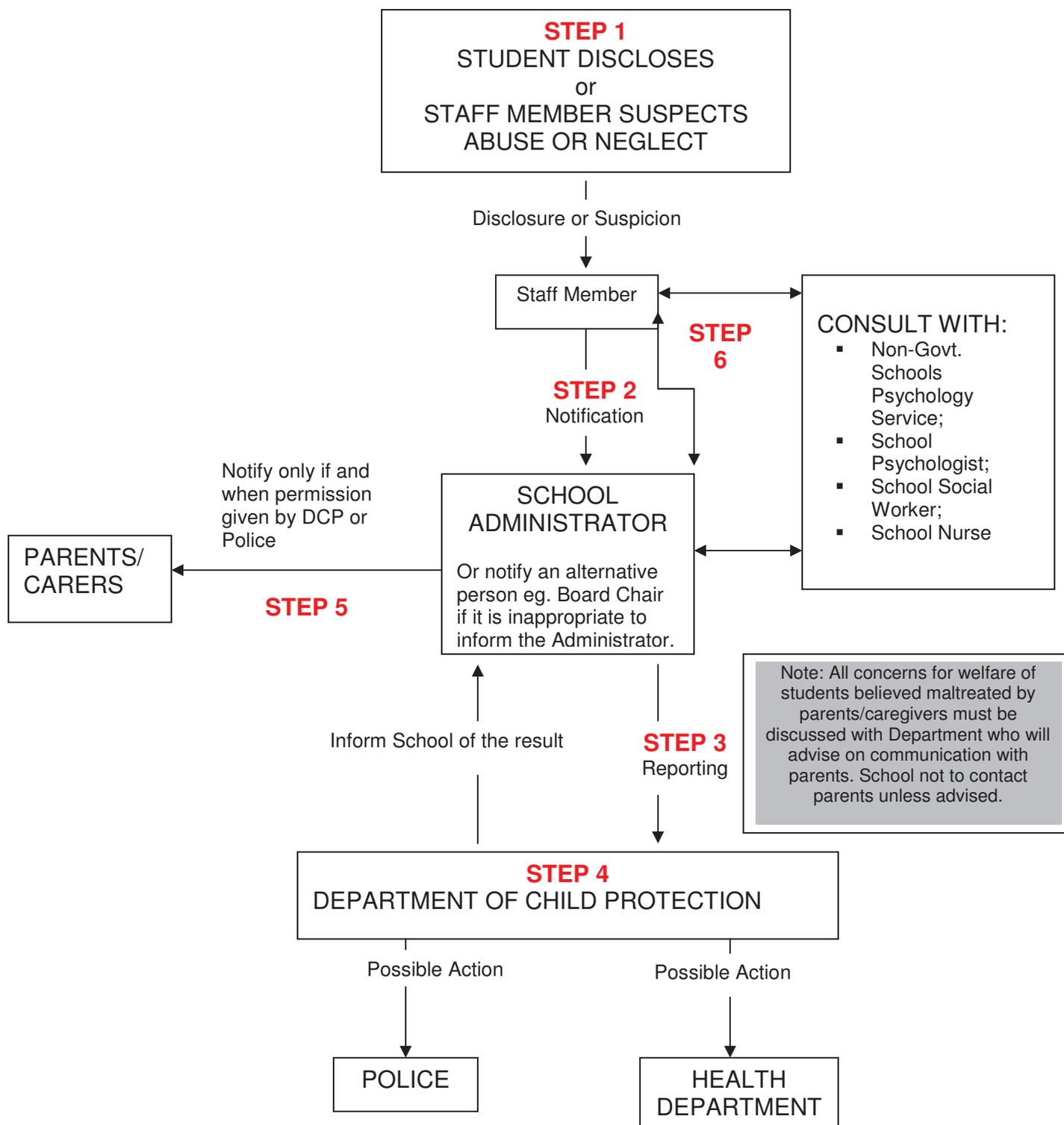
Where abuse and neglect has occurred within a family and there is the possibility of criminal charges being laid, the police and the DCP may undertake a joint investigation to reduce the trauma of the interviewing process to the child or young person.

Note that the reporting requirements for sexual abuse differ to those for other forms of suspected child abuse and the procedure is detailed in Section 10.

Details of the procedure in this school for all other forms of abuse follows in 16.

REPORTING PROCEDURAL CHART FOR ALL OTHER FORM OF ABUSE

NOTIFICATION STEPS for physical, emotional, psychological abuse and neglect*



*Notification steps for sexual abuse are covered in section 10 of this document

17.1 STEP 1

The individual staff member makes observations and keeps note of concerns that exist that have led them to the belief that a report may be necessary.

A student discloses abuse or neglect of the types listed below:

- i. Disclosure of abuse or neglect from someone with a responsibility to care for the student;
- ii. Alleges sexual contact by staff;
- iii. Show indication of abuse or neglect;
- iv. Sexual contact by another student.

Staff should be aware of the immediate needs of these students and what to do in these circumstances.

- Use 'protective interrupting' if students begin to disclose in class or in a public area to protect them from sharing the information with too many other people:
 - Acknowledge that you have heard them and stop them from disclosing any further;
 - Be supportive and gently indicate that they might tell you about it in a more private situation; and
 - Quietly arrange to see them as soon as possible, in a situation away from other students.
- Establish clear limits on confidentiality by telling the child that a report will be made to a person who will be able to provide help and protection and that you will help them throughout the process;
- Put your own feelings aside and listen as if the information is not sensational;
- Provide reassurance that you believe them, that it is right to tell and do not think that they are to blame or make judgements about what has happened;
- Listen to students in a private location within the school;
- Be supportive and understanding;
- Be empathetic to student feelings;
- Acknowledge that it is difficult to talk about such things;
- Try to identify students' fears;
- Let students tell the event in their own words;
- If you are unable to answer all the questions of the child, it is OK to let them know;
- Once you have established that they have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed, do not pursue the conversation any further. This is important to ensure that questions cannot be raised later about possible manipulation of the disclosure;
- Allow students the option of support during any agency interview and reassure them of the availability of continuing support;
- Document the conversation that you have had remembering as accurately as you can, the words and phrases used by the child to describe what has happened to them;
- Document the disclosure and subsequent discussion and actions;
- Explain what will happen next; and
- Try and stay with the student after the disclosure to provide a sense of security until necessary steps have been taken to ensure the safety and support.

Staff must be mindful they:

- Do not push for details or conduct an investigation. Other agencies have this responsibility;
- Do not express judgement of the student, perpetrator or family;
- Never get angry, upset or show shock;
- Never ask questions that may make the child feel guilty or inadequate;
- Never ask leading questions, for instance 'Did Daddy hit you?'
- Don't put words in students' mouths or interrogate as this could jeopardise the interviewing process of DCP and Police;
- Don't promise not to tell when there are clear limits on confidentiality;
- Never make false promises;
- Don't give a lecture about right and wrong;
- Don't say 'forget it', 'you'll get over it' or other such minimalising statements;
- Don't give excessive pity; or
- Respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and do not share the information with anyone other than the Principal and either the Department for Child Protection or the Police. This includes not engaging in general staffroom discussion about the disclosure.

Staff must be aware that a disclosure can arouse in them strong feelings of shock, anger and helplessness. It is important to control these feelings; they can be worked through after the disclosure.

Staff should be supportive of and understanding towards any child who may be a victim of abuse/neglect.

Under no circumstances should the child be made to feel responsible for the abuse.

If a child volunteers information about the circumstances of abuse the staff should:

- listen sympathetically and reflectively
- use a calm reassuring tone and talk at child's level
- believe the child
- not make promises they cannot keep
- comfort the child
- avoid expressing doubt, judgment or shock
- convey messages; it is not their fault it was right to tell, it is no OK for adults to harm children no matter what
- tell them you will need to talk to other people whose job it is to help children be safe
- in sexual abuse cases – do not alert the alleged offender about disclosure
- report to the DCP as soon as possible on that day
- understand that it is not their responsibility to investigate as it is the role of DCP and the Police.

Staff should be aware that they cannot agree to a student's demands for confidentiality or requests that parents, police or other agencies not be informed when the welfare or safety of the student or other students may be threatened.

Note: It may assist staff members to think in terms of reporting a behaviour or a series of behaviours and concern/s rather than reporting an individual family.

17.2 STEP 2

The staff member's observations or the child's disclosure should be discussed, in the first instance, with the School Administrator, or the Chair of the School Council, if it is not appropriate to discuss it with the School Administrator. (Under mandatory reporting legislations for sexual abuse the teacher must make the report directly to the DCP as per procedures in section 10. If appropriate the School Administrator may be consulted and provide support to the teacher in this situation.

It is not the role of the teacher to investigate child abuse or neglect matters. They must report concerns to the School Administrator.

The teacher and School Administrator may wish to consult with a member of the Non-Government Schools Psychology Service or DCP. The School Administrator should arrange ongoing support for the teacher, the student and anyone else affected.

Note: It is vital to remember that confidentiality is paramount and that disclosure of this information should only be discussed with those in the school who are required to know.

17.3 STEP 3

In cases of suspected sexual abuse, a teacher is the mandated reporter required to make a report to the Department for Child Protection through the Mandatory Reporting Service. In cases of other forms of child abuse and neglect, the School Administrator may be the appropriate person who will then decide the appropriate actions to take and who should be contacted.

The School Administrator should report all disclosures or strong concerns to the DCP of abuse or neglect arising from the actions or inactions of parents/caregivers and maintain a written record of this communication and subsequent actions. The DCP will then decide how to proceed. The decision to progress the matter further is the responsibility of the DCP.

The DCP is required to provide feedback to people making reports on child abuse. The School Administrator should seek undertakings from the DCP that they will be kept informed within the bounds of confidentiality.

The School Administrator's initial contact with the DCP will be through the Duty Officer at the Local District Office closest to where the child lives or closest to the school if this cannot be ascertained. Contact details are available on the Department's website at:

<http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Organisation/ContactUs/Pages/DistrictOfficeLocations-Metropolitanarea.aspx>

To avoid interfering with any investigative process initiated by DCP or the Police, the Principal or teacher must seek advice from DCP or Police prior to informing the parent/carer of a concern of abuse or neglect.

17.4 Step 4

The school should be aware that the power of the DCP under the 'Children and Community Services Act 2004' includes:

Apprehension of children in need of care and protection (without warrant)

Interviewing the child: DCP has the authority to interview the child at school before contact is made with the parent/caregiver. Before doing so, the principal or 'person in charge' at the school must be notified. The child should have the option of having support at the interview from a staff member of their choosing.

Removal of children from the school: DCP officers may remove a child from the school if they have the permission of the parent/caregiver or if they have apprehended the child. The Principal should satisfy themselves that all conditions have been met before this occurs and document all conversations.

Medical examination: DCP may require that a medical examination occur as soon as possible so that bruising, marking and other symptoms can be recorded for future reference. This would normally take place at either PMH or the Community Child Health Services Centres. This examination can only take place if permission has been obtained from the parent/caregiver or the child has been apprehended (when parent/carer permission is not obtained).

Contact the Police

17.5 Step 5

Very important! All strong concerns for the welfare of children believed maltreated by parents/caregivers are discussed with the Department for Child Protection or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit before advising parents/caregivers. These agencies will then decide on the provision of advice to parents/caregivers and any further action. Police and the DCP are available to provide advice on child abuse concerns and may be contacted anonymously if needed

If following a report, a family approaches the school, it is recommended that any interview be conducted with a minimum of 2 school members present (eg. the Administrator and one other) to provide support.

Note: It is important to remember that the focus of the meeting should be the welfare of the child.

In cases of child sexual abuse, the legislation provides protection for the person reporting. Disclosure of the reporter's identity or identifying information to parents or any other party can incur a fine of \$24,000 and two years imprisonment.

17.6 Step 6

The School Administrator should undertake ongoing support for the teacher, the student and anyone else affected. The need for ongoing support could be necessary

as the teacher continues in their role with the student and the DCP's role may continue for a while.

18. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING ALLEGATIONS AND CONVICTIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AGAINST EMPLOYEES

Allegation:

An allegation of child abuse against a current employee. Allegations may be about alleged conduct that happened before the employee commenced work at the school. Staff, parents/users of the service, other agencies, or the Ombudsman, can make allegations.

Convictions:

Any conviction of a current employee in this State or elsewhere of an offence involving child abuse. The Ombudsman must be notified of any convictions for child abuse against an employee.

Procedures:

1) Any allegation of or information regarding a conviction for child abuse against an employee is to be made directly to the Administrator.

Any allegation of or information regarding a conviction for child abuse against the Administrator is to be made directly to the chairperson of the School Council.

The informed person above becomes the Authorised Supervisor

2) Once an allegation or conviction has been made it is important that any risk to children is removed, or minimised, but as far as possible, the rights of the employee who is the subject of the allegation should be protected.

It is the role of the authorised supervisor to:

- Seek advice/information from AISWA about the process of investigation of the allegations made.
- Protect/maintain the confidentiality of the identity of persons the subject of the allegations, as far as possible, given the considerations relating to any care and protection intervention.
- Assess allegations impartially.
- Act fairly to persons the subject of an allegation.
- Assess any immediate care and protection issues.

Some issues are very concerning for teachers and staff members. One is the malicious allegations made by students against teachers. It is not the role of a teacher or the Administrator to decide whether or not an allegation of child abuse is founded or unfounded. Again, that is the role of the DCP, the Police Service or the Case Management Unit.

Attempting to resolve an allegation made against a teacher within the school setting without outside assistance is against school policy.

APPENDIX A: Where To Go For Further Information

The Department for Child Protection is the state government department responsible for issues specifically related to the protection of children, including the handling of abuse and neglect cases. This website contains some excellent material for professionals, and parents and friends. Of particular interest is the information on 'Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – a guide for professionals'.
<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au>

The sexual abuse reports, the Mandatory Reporting Service must be contacted through one of the following means:

Telephone: 1800 708 704

Email: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Fax: 1800 708 704

Post: PO Box 8146

Perth BC WA 6849

This unit is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for make a report or to raise concerns.

Details regarding mandatory reporting can be obtained through
<http://mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx>

To contact DCP for assistance with a specific case that does not involve sexual abuse, the school will need to speak to the Duty Officer at the local office, available during office hours. All offices are listed in the White Pages or on the website.

Crisis Care

9223 1111/1800 199 008 (a 24 hour telephone service for people in crisis and needing urgent help)

WA Police Service Child Abuse Investigation Unit

If the matter is urgent and the safety of a child is at risk, call 000. If you are a victim of child abuse or paedophilia, or if you have information about someone else being abused, you should contact police on **131 444**. You can also report child abuse to your local police station or ring Crime Stoppers on **1800 333 000**.

WA Police Online Child Exploitation Squad can be contacted on 131444 or complaints can be lodged on the WA Police Website www.police.wa.gov.au

The websites below contain information on cyber predators for both parents, teachers and students to use.

www.acma.gov.au

www.constablecare.org.au

www.cybersmartkids.com.au

www.netalert.net.au

www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com

The National Association of the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)

NAPCAN is an Australian organisation that seeks to resource and network child welfare professionals and practitioners working to prevent child abuse and neglect from happening before it starts, through the provision of parenting brochures, training, support networks and information. www.napcan.org.au

Protective Behaviours WA (Inc) is a preventative life skills program that assists people of all ages to develop the skills to help them deal with difficult or hostile situations. The program has a voluntary committee made up of representatives from government and non-government agencies as well as interested members of the community. AISWA is a group member of Protective Behaviours and is able to purchase resources at a discount for interested schools.

Protective Behaviours can be contacted on **0409 071 068** or email: info@protectivebehaviourswa.org.au

The following support service is available for staff at schools who may experience personal issues resulting from making a report:

Prime Corporate Psychology Services

Offers an employee a assistance program including counselling, management and referrals.

9492 8900/1800 674 188

Each school may already have an assistance program available to their staff to provide help in overcoming problems that may cause difficulties in their work or personal lives.

The following services and organisations can provide help, advice and support to the school, parents or children who are affected by the effects of abuse and to prevent abuse from recurring:

Department for Child Protection (see previous page for details)

Parenting Line

(08) 6279 1200 (metropolitan) or 1800 654 432 (regional callers), 24 hours 7 days

Family Helpline is a free confidential telephone counselling and information service for families with relationship difficulties.

9223 1100/1800 643 000

Men’s Domestic Violence Helpline provides a free telephone, referral and counselling service for men to help them change their violent behaviour toward female partners.

9223 1199/1800 000 599

Women’s Domestic Violence Helpline provides a free 24 hour telephone support and counselling service for women experiencing family and domestic violence.

9223 1188/1800 007 339

Child Health and Community Health Services

Refer to the White Pages for contact details of local Child Health Centres

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

1800 220 400 – 24 hour mental health advice line

Princess Margaret Hospital for Children

9340 8222

State Child Development Centre

9481 2203

Disability Services Commission

9426 9200/1800 998 214

Kids Helpline is a free and confidential telephone counselling service for 5 to 25 year olds in Australia available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

1800 551 800

Sexual Assault Resource Centre Counselling Line offers a free, 24 hour emergency service for people aged 13 or over who have been sexually assaulted or sexually abused recently (within the last two weeks).

9340 1828/1800 199 888

Lifeline Australia offers a service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can provide information about other support services, if required. 13 11 14

The following sites can provide a wide range of background information on child abuse for schools that are interested.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/afsapubs.html>

This site lists recent publications relating to information on child abuse that have been updated on the web site of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications>

This is the Australian Institute of Criminology site and has links to the criminal aspect of child abuse.