



## MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

### Aim

Pioneer Village School aims to keep all children safe. The school requires all teaching staff to attend Mandatory Reporting workshops and to be aware of their responsibilities and the legislation that supports the protection of children.

The relevant legislation has been in place since January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. The Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008 is also in effect and covers mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in Western Australia. This amendment forms part of the Children and Community Services Act 2004. Mandatory reporting legislation requires teachers to report concerns of child abuse directly to the Department of Child Protection. The legislation focuses on child abuse, is inclusive of grooming behaviors, and requires reporters to report suspected abuse based on reasonable grounds.

### Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect is the 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. Each category of maltreatment is described by a range of indicators.

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Psychological
- Neglect

Descriptions of these indicators have been taken from the Department for Child Protection document *Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – A Guide for Professionals*. Staff should refer to the Pioneer Village Mandatory Reporting Procedures for further information.

### Teacher Responsibilities

It is the teacher's responsibility to make the report directly to the Mandatory Reporting Service. The Principal and other relevant staff are there to provide support if required and teachers **may** advise the Principal of the report, but there is no obligation on the teacher to do so. A consultation process may occur prior to the teacher forming a belief. In the course of such a discussion, should the principal or other staff member themselves then form a belief, the person forming the belief would be obliged to make a Mandatory Report.

*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.*

## How does a mandatory reporter make a report?

A centralised Mandatory Reporting Service has been established to receive all reports of child sexual abuse in Western Australia. This service is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There are two ways to make a report - verbal or written.

A verbal report is preferred in the first instance, particularly if the child is at ongoing risk. It must be followed up by a written report as soon as practicable, usually within 24 hours. The Mandatory Reporting Service can be reached on 1800 708 704. Failure to follow up a verbal report with a written report may result in a fine of \$3000. A written report form can be downloaded from the mandatory reporting website [www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au).

Once you have completed your written report, it can be returned using any of the following methods;

Email to: [mrs@wa.gov.au](mailto:mrs@wa.gov.au)

Fax to: 1800 610 614

Post to: PO Box 8146, Perth BC WA 6849

## What happens next?

The Mandatory Reporting Service will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the report with a standardised letter. This letter is proof that you made a report so it is important that you keep it;
- Assess immediate risk to the child and determine the need for further child protection assessment and investigation;
- Send a copy of the report to the WA police;
- Send feedback to the mandatory reporter advising them of the DCP District Office it has been referred to, or whether no further action was recommended by the Mandatory Reporting Service.

## Potential Abuse in Schools

If a school teacher, or adult employed or acting as a school volunteer, is engaged in any behaviors that have created reasonable suspicion of child sexual abuse, the employee would be investigated immediately by an independent person, referred to the police, automatically suspended from duties and placed under investigation (internally or by police) for committing sexual abuse. The automatic termination of employment would result if found guilty of committing sexual abuse (either by an internal investigation or by a court).

Document Group	Welfare
Document Owner	Principal
Last Review	May 2020
Next Review	2021
Distribution	Internal/ External

## Mandatory Reporting Flow Chart

