



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 supporting the protection of children. Governing body members and regular volunteers are required to participate in learning opportunities at least annually about the law with respect to mandatory reporting.

The relevant legislation, *the Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008* has been in place since January 1st, 2009 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 sexual abuse directly to the Department of Child Protection. The legislation focuses on child sexual abuse, is inclusive of grooming behaviours, and requires reporters to report suspected abuse based on reasonable grounds. There are criminal consequences for failing to do so.

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 can be found in the Government of Western Australia Department for Child Protection and Family Support '*How do I recognise when a Child is at Risk of abuse or neglect?*' document.

Teacher Responsibilities

It is the teacher's responsibility to make the report directly to the Mandatory Reporting Service. Teachers **must** advise the Principal of the report. 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: Confidentiality is paramount and 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.

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

Email to: 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 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

In accordance with Standard 10.10 (b), if a school teacher, or adult employed or acting as a school volunteer, is engaged in any behaviours that have created reasonable suspicion of child sexual abuse, the matter would be promptly reported to the responsible government authorities and their direction would be sought and complied with.

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Reporting Child Sex Abuse
Mandatory Reporting Procedure

