



Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

(Replaces Procedures for Dealing with Child Abuse
Guidelines for Catholic schools in South Australia 2002)

CONTENTS

- 1. INTRODUCING PROCEDURES AND RELATED POLICY 1
- 2. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT-GENERAL INFORMATION 1
- 3. RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT..... 2
- 4. UNDERSTANDING LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES4
- 5. MAKING A MANDATORY NOTIFICATION 4
- 6. SOURCING FURTHER INFORMATION 6

1. INTRODUCING PROCEDURES AND RELATED POLICY

The Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect supports the following SACCS Policies and documents:

- *SACCS Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People, 2011*
- *SACCS Procedures: Interview of Students*
<http://online.cesaneet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1975/interstu.html>

2. REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT-GENERAL INFORMATION

- 2.1. SACCS considers all personnel in schools and at the Catholic Education Offices to be mandated notifiers. Mandated notifiers are anyone who works with or cares for children in a paid or voluntary capacity providing health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care, or residential services. Under Section 11(1) and (2) of the Children's Protection Act 1993, all personnel in schools involved in the delivery of the services are obliged by law to notify Families SA, if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has been, or is being, abused and/or neglected.
- 2.2. Personnel in schools and at the Catholic Education Offices must participate in Responding to Abuse and Neglect Education and Care update training, every 3 years.
- 2.3. Volunteers must be provided with information and training regarding their responsibilities as mandated notifiers and will be supported by a nominated person at the school in cases of notification.
- 2.4. The information in the DECS publication *Responding to Abuse and Neglect: Education and Care Training 2009-2011*, makes it clear that a mandatory notification may, on its own, no longer be the only response required to meet the child protection obligations on our schools. Schools have a duty of care responsibility to provide ongoing support and services to a child or young person and the Principal directs the care responses. For these reasons, additional procedures are now required of school and Catholic Education Office personnel in making a notification.
- 2.5. The publication *Child Safe Environments, Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect, Guidelines for Mandated Notifiers* from the Department for Families and Communities provides advice regarding making a notification and is available on CESA online at: *CESA online/Child Protection*.

<http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/Home/FamiliesSA/ChildSafeEnvironments/TrainingforMandatedNotifiers/tabid/968/Default.aspx>

- 2.6 The SACCS *Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People* describes the responsibilities of schools and is available on CESA online at: *CESA online/CESA services/Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*.
- <http://online.cesanel.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document->
- 2.7 All reasonable suspicions of abuse or neglect must be reported to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78.
- 2.8 The Children's Protection Act (SA) 1993 and its Regulations contain the relevant legislation related to issues of child abuse and/or neglect.
- 2.9 Throughout the *Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect* the emphasis is on assisting school communities. The same procedures apply to staff at the Catholic Education Offices, (CEO) as they are also considered by SACCS to be mandated notifiers. Consequently staff at the Catholic Education Offices should substitute the word 'Principal' with 'Team Leader' and the word 'school' with 'CEO'. Please note that 'CEO' includes the Catholic Education Offices in the Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Diocese of Port Pirie.

3. RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child abuse and/or neglect is categorised in four ways:

- 3.1 **Physical abuse**¹ is commonly characterised by physical injury resulting from:
- hitting, punching, kicking (marks from belt buckles, fingers)
 - shaking (particularly young babies)
 - burns (irons, cigarettes)
 - biting
 - pulling out hair or
 - the administration of alcohol or other drugs.
- 3.2 **Sexual abuse**² occurs when someone in a position of power to a child uses that power to involve a child in sexual activity.

¹Government of South Australia, Department for Families and Communities, Mandatory Notification: Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect, A Practical Guide for Organisations. <http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/Home/FamiliesSA/ChildSafeEnvironments/TrainingforMandatedNotifiers/tabid/968/Default.aspx>

then click on page 4 of the

[Guidelines for reporting child abuse and neglect \[alternative\]](#), viewed 1 October 2010.

It can include:

- sexual suggestion
- exhibitionism, mutual masturbation, oral sex
- showing pornographic material on DVD or internet
- using a child in the production of pornographic material
- penile or other penetration of the genital or anal region or
- child prostitution.

- 3.3 Emotional abuse³ tends to be a chronic behavioural pattern directed at a child so that a child's self esteem and social competence are undermined or eroded over time.

It can include:

- devaluing
- ignoring
- rejecting
- corrupting
- isolating
- terrorising or
- chronic or extreme domestic violence in a child's presence.

- 3.4 Neglect⁴ is characterised by the failure to provide for a child's basic needs.

It may include:

- inadequate supervision of a young child for long periods of time
- failure to provide adequate nutrition, clothing or personal hygiene
- failure to provide needed or appropriate health care, or medical treatment
- disregard for potential hazards in the home
- forcing a child to leave home early or
- allowing a child to engage in chronic truancy.

² ibid

³ ibid

⁴ ibid

4. UNDERSTANDING LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The legal responsibilities for mandated notifiers include:

- 4.1 It is an individual's personal responsibility to report suspected abuse and/or neglect. It is not the responsibility of the employer, manager or supervisor.
- 4.2 The notifier must form a reasonable suspicion that abuse or neglect has occurred but does not need to wait for proof.
- 4.3 The notification report will contain a statement of the observations, information and opinions on which your suspicion is based.
- 4.4 All notifiers are immune from civil and criminal liability for reporting suspicions in good faith; (section 12(a) and (b) of the Children's Protection Act 1993) and that the notifier's name is protected in most cases.
- 4.5 Feedback about how the notification is being responded to, will be provided on a need-to-know basis and will be subject to confidentiality principles.
- 4.6 Although only mandated notifiers have a legal responsibility to make reports, SACCS expects that all personnel and volunteers in schools will notify Families SA through the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 when there is a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child has been abused and/or neglected.
- 4.7 Reasonable grounds may include:
 - when observations of a particular child's behaviour and/or injuries, or knowledge of children generally leads to a suspicion that abuse is occurring;
 - when a child says that he/she has been abused;
 - a child says that they know of someone who has been abused (she/he may possibly referring to her/himself); or
 - when someone who is in a position to provide reliable information, perhaps a relative or friend, neighbour, or sibling of the child says a child is at risk.

5. MAKING A MANDATORY NOTIFICATION

Considerations for notification:

- 5.1 Notifications must be documented using the Mandatory Notification Record Form. The form can be accessed at:
 CESA online/CESA services/child protection
<http://online.cesanet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-3794>
- 5.2 If the mandatory notification relates to the Principal, the notifier should, in addition to making a report to CARL, contact the Director at the

Catholic Education Office on 08 83016600. For Congregational Schools, contact the Principal's employer first and also inform the Director or Assistant Director to ensure that the usual support processes of the Office can be offered.

- 5.3 Where the Principal is not part of the notification, school staff should complete the notification documents in collaboration with the Principal. Volunteers will be supported by the school based nominated person, who will then complete the notification documents with the Principal. Catholic Education Office staff should complete the notification documents in collaboration with their Team Leader. The Principal has the responsibility to sign and store the record once it is completed. The importance of the Principal's oversight of mandatory reports is that it:
- allows the Principal to contribute other relevant information about the child which may enhance the quality of the report provided to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL);
 - ensures the notification checklist is fully considered and allows the Principal to consider what information can be appropriately shared regarding the child or young person's details. The Principal must consider whether it is prudent and appropriate for them to make an independent notification to CARL;
 - assists the Principal to keep an overview about the student's welfare;
 - allows the best supports to be put in place and any further actions to be considered which may include police involvement, discussions with the student's family and/or referrals to health and allied agencies;
 - assists the school to meet their duty of care to children and young people and to other members of the school community;
 - assists the school to coordinate their information to Families SA.
- 5.4 **Discussion with the Principal does not replace making a notification to CARL. The responsibility for making a mandatory notification remains with the individual, not the Principal or Team Leader.**

To make a report:

- 5.5 Ring the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 13 14 78 and follow the phone prompts to the service for *Education and Care Settings* or *Yaitya Tirramangkotti* if the notification concerns an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child or young person.
- 5.6 Complete the mandatory notification record form. Print out the information and provide it to the Principal. Delete the mandatory notification record form from the electronic file and do not place it in the student file.
- 5.7 Limit details in the mandatory notification record form to factual information as far as possible and be aware that this document may be produced under subpoena in court.

- 5.8 When filling out the mandatory notification record form, be aware that while the name of the person making the notification will *in most cases* be protected from disclosure, other names included on the mandated notification record form as having contributed to the notification *may not* be protected from disclosure.
- 5.9 Any actions recommended by Families SA must be recorded on the mandatory notification record form and reported to the Principal, as the Principal has the duty of care responsibility in directing further actions to support the child or young person.
- 5.10 Following a notification, the Principal will store the mandatory notification record form in a secure, confidential file and may wish to discuss the report with the staff member to determine further actions or support for the child or young person. The actions may include the Principal contacting the child's family, referral to therapeutic or support services and/or a refocus on classroom child protection curriculum.
- 5.11 Following the notification the staff member may wish to discuss the report with the Principal or CEO Team Leader and/or may wish to contact ACCESS OCAR on 1300 66 77 00 for personal debriefing, support or counselling. Volunteers may wish to debrief with their nominated person at the school.

6. SOURCING FURTHER INFORMATION

- 6.1 Further information regarding requirements for reporting abuse and/or neglect can be obtained from:
- the Principal
 - the Principal Consultant for your school
 - the Senior Education Adviser, Behaviour Education Team at the Catholic Education Office
 - an intake worker at the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78
 - SA police, Local Service Area Office.
- 6.2 Contacting another person for further information and advice regarding mandatory notification procedures does not release a person from her/his obligation to report suspicions of child abuse and/or neglect.
- 6.3 In relation to these areas, the following publications provide further advice and procedures;
- 6.4 Families SA, Guidelines for Mandated Notifiers Booklet.
<http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/Home/FamiliesSA/ChildSafeEnvironments/TrainingforMandatedNotifiers/tabid/968/Default.aspx>
- 6.5 Reporting Abuse and Neglect Update training Volunteers Booklet.
http://online.cesanet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-14691/Volunteer_s_handbook_LR_we.pdf

- 6.6 Protective Practices, Guidelines for Staff in their Interactions with Students in Education and Care Settings.

<http://online.cesnet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6076/Protective+Practices+edited+April+2009+version.pdf>

- 6.7 Suicide Postvention Guidelines.

<http://online.cesnet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-10668/Suicide+Postvention+Guidelines+cover+tabs.pdf>

<http://online.cesnet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-10667/Suicide+Postvention+Guidelines+main+content.pdf>

- 6.8 Responding to Problem Sexual Behaviours.

<http://online.cesnet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-14368/Responding+to+Problem+Sexual+Abuse+Guidelines.pdf>

This document will be updated regularly as regulatory matters or other matters associated with the document arise.

Review October 2016

For further information contact:
Executive Officer
South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools
PO Box 179 Torrensville Plaza South Australia 5031
Telephone: (08) 8301 6600
Facsimile: (08) 8301 6611
<http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/>