

Child Protection - Abuse, Grooming & Neglect Identification & Initial Notification

Child Abuse
(Maltreatment)

All children have the right to be protected from abuse, maltreatment and harm and from being affected by family violence.

Grooming refers to predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time.

Grooming behaviour typically involves a graduation from attention giving and non-sexual touching to increasingly more intimate and intrusive behaviour.

Grooming

Grooming behaviour is not a form of abuse under Tasmanian law however it can lead to abuse.

St Alice School treats the commission of grooming behaviours on its premises, online, using *school/college* equipment or during its extra-curricular activities as conduct which threatens the safety of students and action must be taken as part of our child protection program.

See our [Detecting, Reporting and Addressing Grooming Behaviours Policy](#).

St Alice School is committed to providing a safe environment for all our students.

It is our policy that:

- all staff are trained with respect to identification of child abuse and relevant procedures;
- all suspected cases of child abuse must reported to Child Protection Services;
- if an urgent an response is needed Police are called on 000;
- we maintain up-to-date procedures to assist staff in identifying and reporting child abuse;
- we work collaboratively with relevant external agencies that may be involved in child protection;
- we act immediately to ensure the safety of abused students; and
- we provide ongoing support and assistance to students who have been abused.

St Alice School's
Policy

Abuse or neglect means:

Indicators of Child
Abuse or Neglect

- sexual abuse; or
- physical or emotional injury or other abuse, or neglect, to the extent that:

-the injured, abused or neglected person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological harm detrimental to the person's wellbeing; or

-the injured, abused or neglected person's physical or psychological development is in jeopardy.

Child neglect concerns what parents and caregivers don't do for their children. Neglect can be physical, educational, or emotional.

Physical neglect includes:

Physical Neglect

- not providing adequate food;
- not providing adequate clothing;
- not providing appropriate medical care, which includes refusing or delaying in seeking medical treatment, failing to give regular medication for chronic conditions such as diabetes or asthma, and failing to take normal preventative measures;
- not providing appropriate supervision, which includes failing to supervise a child, or arranging for proper supervision in the absence of a parent or caregiver;
- not providing appropriate shelter;
- not providing appropriate weather protection (heat or coats); and
- abandonment, such as leaving a child alone or without arranging appropriate care.

Emotional neglect includes:

Emotional Neglect

- not providing adequately for a child's emotional and psychological development needs; and
- not spending enough time with the child, or not providing the experiences a child needs for their minds and emotions to develop in a healthy and balanced way.

Educational neglect includes:

Educational Neglect

- failure to provide appropriate schooling or special educational needs; and
- allowing excessive trancies.

Psychological

Psychological neglect includes:

- Neglect
- the lack of adequate emotional support and love;
 - never attending to the child;
 - spousal abuse; and
 - abuse including allowing the child to participate in drug and alcohol use.

An 'affected child' means a child whose safety, psychological wellbeing or interests are affected or likely to be affected by family violence.

Family violence is conduct intentionally committed by a person, directly or indirectly, against that person's spouse or partner that includes attempting, committing, or threatening to commit:

- Indicators of a Child Being Affected by Family Violence
- assault, including sexual assault;
 - threats, coercion, intimidation or verbal abuse;
 - abduction; and
 - stalking.

Family violence also includes:

- economic abuse;
- emotional abuse or intimidation; and
- contravening any type of family violence order.

A child who is affected by family abuse may also be 'abused or neglected'.

A student may disclose information about abuse or neglect privately to a staff member. Alternatively a child may make a public disclosure such as making a disclosure in class or to a group of other students.

Private Disclosure

Managing a Student's Disclosure of Abuse or Neglect

If a student discloses a situation of abuse or neglect directly to a staff member their role is to reassure the student and support the student in their decision to disclose. The teacher must assure students that they have the right to feel safe and must listen actively to what the student is saying.

Disclosure of abuse or neglect can cause strong feelings in the person to whom the disclosure is being made. It is important for the staff member to be aware of, and control, their feelings.

Sometimes students may try and elicit a promise that a staff member not tell anyone about the disclosure. Do not make this promise.

The teacher is responsible for reporting the matter (refer to our [Child](#)

[Protection - Mandatory Reporting of Abuse & Neglect](#)) and is not responsible for investigating the matter.

Public Disclosure

It is possible that a student may start to disclose in class or with a group of other students. In this circumstance, a teacher should use a strategy of 'protective interrupting' and:

- acknowledge that you have heard the student and stop further disclosure whilst maintaining support and encouraging the student to discuss the matter in a more private situation;
- quietly arrange to see the student as soon as possible away from other students; and
- do not allow other students to ask questions and discourage them from making judgements.

The identification of child abuse or neglect can be difficult especially where it is based upon the observation of multiple risk indicators that may often occur over a period of time.

Initial Reporting of Abuse or Neglect

Where a staff member knows, believes, or forms a suspicion that neglect or abuse may be occurring, they must make a report. As a secondary concern it is encouraged to also raise the matter with Principal, or TCEO Child Safe Officer if the matter involves the Principal.

If a Principal or TCEO Child Safe Officer does not wish to make a mandatory report of abuse or neglect, this does not discharge a teacher from their obligation to do so if they have formed a belief or suspicion that abuse or neglect may have occurred. If the teacher's concerns continue, even after a consultation with the Principal, that teacher is still legally required to make a mandatory report of their concerns.

Initial Action Following Disclosure

Safety of students is paramount. Once disclosure has been made the Principal, or appropriate person, may consult with the *school/college* Allied Health Professional(s), as the particular circumstances demand, and will determine a strategy to ensure the student's immediate safety. This process must be documented (refer to the 'Records' section below).

Mandatory Reporting of Abuse & Neglect

In Tasmania it is a requirement of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 that the reporting of abuse (including sexual, physical, psychological or emotional abuse and/or neglect) of a child is mandatory. It is also mandatory to make a report where a child may be affected by family violence.

Abuse and neglect must be reported where a teacher knows, forms a belief, or suspects on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has or is being abused or neglected;
- there is a reasonable likelihood of a child being killed or abused or neglected by a person with whom the child resides; or

- while a woman is pregnant, that there is a reasonable likelihood that after the birth of the child:

i. the child will suffer abuse or neglect, or may be killed by a person with whom the child is likely to reside; or

ii. the child will require medical treatment or other interventions as a result of the behaviour of the woman or other person with whom the woman resides or likely to reside, before the birth of the child.

To make a report call Child Protection Services on 1300 737 639.

For details of the process of mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect refer to our [Child Protection – Mandatory Reporting of Abuse & Neglect Policy](#).

Ongoing Management Plan	<p>Together with Child Protection Services of the Department of Health and Human Services and/or the Police the *school/college* will develop and implement a management plan designed to provide ongoing support to the student who has been the subject of abuse or neglect.</p>
Record Keeping	<p>Where a staff member suspects child abuse or neglect but does not have enough information, written and dated records of their observations and concerns should be kept until a reasonable suspicion is formed.</p> <p>All verbal and written communications regarding child protection matters (including notes of observations, meetings and telephone calls) must be properly documented. The documented records should include dates and times and enough detail to record key conversations, especially those relating to the student's disclosure.</p> <p>The records of child protection matters must be stored securely.</p> <p>Staff who have access to information regarding suspected or disclosed child abuse or neglect must keep such information confidential and secure and must not disclose this information unless required to do so as part of the ongoing investigation or by law.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>Staff must not provide undertakings that are inconsistent with their reporting obligations under this policy. In particular, staff must not promise a student that they will not tell anyone about the student's disclosure.</p> <p>Students and any other parties who become involved in the investigation (this may include other students) should be informed of the reporting process and be requested to maintain confidentiality.</p> <p>Inappropriate disclosure will be subject to disciplinary action.</p>
Workers' Responsibility	<p>All workers are responsible to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reports of child abuse or neglect are made as soon as practicable; • they comply with their obligation for mandatory reporting of abuse

	<p>or neglect;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confidentiality is maintained throughout the process; • immediate support is given to students making disclosures; • records of all verbal and written communication are maintained and stored securely; • no attempts to investigate the incident are made; and • participation in training.
Signage	<p>Posters of child abuse indicators, mandatory reporting processes and Child Protection Services of the Department of Health and Human Services contact details will be displayed strategically in staff rooms within the *school/college* where possible.</p>
Implementation	<p>This policy is implemented through a combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of risk identification and reporting procedures; • the provision of counselling services; • staff training; • signage; • effective communication and incident notification procedures; • effective record keeping procedures; and • initiation of corrective actions where necessary.
Discipline for Breach of Policy	<p>Where a staff member breaches this policy St Alice School will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.</p>
Related Policies	<p>Student Duty of Care Policies Work Safe Policies Child Protection - Mandatory Reporting of Abuse & Neglect Child Protection - Working With Vulnerable People Registration Child Protection - Detecting, reporting and addressing grooming behaviours</p>