



Reporting child abuse

New South Wales

Legislation

What gets reported?

A report should be made to Community Services if you suspect that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm. This means you have current concerns for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person. You don't have to be certain, you only need to make sure your concerns are well founded and based on information you know or have from a reliable source.

A child or young person is at risk of significant harm if the circumstances that are causing concern for the safety, welfare or well being of the child or young person are present to a significant extent.

Who is required to report?

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, contact the NSW Police immediately by dialling **000**.

Anyone (regardless of whether they are mandatory reporters required to do so by law) who suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm *should* report it to the Child Protection Helpline on **132 111** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In NSW, individuals working within sporting or recreation organisations are **not** mandatory reporters (i.e. they are not required by law to report suspicions of a child at significant risk of harm).

For more information about mandatory reporting, go to the [Family and Community Services – Community Services website](#).

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Action

How do I make a report?

Mandatory reporters are encouraged to use the Mandatory Reporter Guide, to guide their decision making, such as whether or not to report to the Child Protection Helpline. Alternatively, you can call the Child Protection Helpline on **133 627**.

Members of the public can also use the online Mandatory Reporter guide and make a report about a child or young person at risk of harm to the Child Protection Helpline, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, on **132 111** (TTY 1800 212 936).

Useful information

Child-safe environments

There are currently no legislative requirements within NSW relating to child-safe environments other than conducting the Working With Children Check if you provide child-related employment. Introducing child-safe measures will help your organisation manage risks and keep children safe.

Child-safe environment strategies are put in place to prevent and minimise opportunities for child abuse within your organisation including preventing offenders from gaining access to your organisation. They include ensuring your staff and volunteers understand their child protection obligations and that staff and volunteers know who to go to should they have suspicions a child may be at risk of harm.

Organisations working to create child-safe environments and strengthen their environment are committed to and understand the importance of children's safety.

What does establishing a child-safe environment involve?

Basically it requires putting strategies in place to prevent offenders from gaining access to your organisation and reducing opportunities for abuse.

These strategies include:

Understanding the different types of child abuse.

Identifying potential risks and dangers to children (e.g. going away on camps) and managing those risks.

Developing guidelines and processes that clearly outline how to respond to child protection issues.

Choosing your staff with care.

- State your commitment to a child safe environment when advertising vacant positions.
- Seek criminal history checks for employees/volunteers working with children.
- Conduct referee checks (particularly with previous child-related employers, if possible).

Nominating a child protection officer or Member Protection Information Officer who people can trust and go to with concerns.

Ensuring that all staff (paid and volunteers) understand their mandatory/ethical reporting obligations for suspected child abuse.

Ensuring staff have a clear understanding of acceptable/ unacceptable behaviour and know who to contact to about concerns they may have.

Talking openly about the importance of ensuring the safety of children within your organisation.

Resources

Where can I get further information or resources on reporting?

- [NSW Family and Community Services – Community Services](#)
- [NSW Commission for Children and Young People](#)
- [Communities NSW - Sport and Recreation](#)
- [Child Wise – “Choose With Care: 12 Steps to a Child Safe Organisation”](#)

