



Reporting child abuse

Western Australia

Legislation

Who is required to report abuse?

In Western Australia, mandatory reporting requirements do not apply to everyone.

It is a legal requirement in Western Australia for doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers and police officers to report all reasonable beliefs of **child sexual abuse** to the Department for Child Protection.

However, **anyone** who has reasonable grounds for suspecting a child or young person is at risk of being neglected or physically, sexually or emotionally abused, should also report their concerns to the Department for Child Protection.

You should contact the Department for Child Protection immediately if you have a suspicion of neglect or abuse. **You don't have to have proof.**

If you believe a child or young person is in need of **immediate assistance** contact the Western Australia Police on **131 444** or **000** for life threatening emergencies.

When should you report?

When a mandatory reporter forms a belief, on reasonable grounds, that child sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring; they must make a report to the Department for Child Protection's [Mandatory Reporting Service](#).

A verbal report can be made, but must be followed by a written report (within 24hrs).

The earlier a report is received, the faster action can be taken to protect a child, where this is necessary.

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Action

What do I need to do to make a report?

If you are a mandatory reporter, go to the Department for Child Protection [mandatory reporting website](#) or phone **1800 708 704**.

If you are not a mandatory reporter but you have concerns or suspicions about a child's well being, contact the [Department for Child Protection](#). This website has the phone numbers for the local offices.

Useful information

Child-safe environments

Providing strategies for child-safe environments is not a legal requirement but considered good practice in preventing and minimising opportunities for child abuse within your organisation, including preventing offenders from gaining access to your organisation.

Child-safe environments 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.

What does establishing a child-safe environment involve?

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 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?

- [West Australian Department for Child Protection](#)
- [West Australian Department of Sport and Recreation](#)
- [Western Australian Sports Federation](#)
- [Child Wise – “Choose With Care: 12 Steps to a Child Safe Organisation”](#)

