

School Policy
Child Abuse Royal Commission

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of the South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs (SAASPC) in relation to the Royal commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse – issues Paper 9, dated 31 July 2015.

SAASPC is a not for profit organisation made up of volunteers. The Association promotes and develops the interest of parents in the education and general welfare of children at government preschools and schools, acts as an advocate for parents' on educational matters. SAASPC receives a grant from the Minister for Education and Child Development a portion of this funding since approximately 1991 is set aside specifically for SAASPC to run sessions in preschools and schools for volunteers on Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (Mandatory Notification).

Topic A: General questions

1. without relevant information from the appropriate agencies and departments it is impossible to know.
2. SAASPC believes that Education programs for schools, staff and volunteers should put in place to keep them informed and up to date.
3. Risks; in SA we feel that the non reporting is due to lack of staff in Families SA and the response time (lengthy wait) when calling the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL).
5. in Education our Principals are professionals and there should be an expectation on them that they have adopted the "safe school elements". It would also be very useful to educate parents to that they know what should be occurring in schools.

Topic B: Governance and Leadership

2. It would be useful for those in the whole school community to participate in education programs that inform them on what to look for / recognise in children/young people e.g. behaviour, physical indicators, have a key person at the school whom they can talk to and work closely with if they have any concerns or questions.

Topic C: Protection and support services for children and specific student populations

1. In South Australia we have an excellent curriculum in place for students in our preschools and schools "Keeping Safe" Child Protection Curriculum, this could be implemented in all states and territories.
4. Yes it does make it a difference. Teachers in remote communities are reluctant to report because of the strong possibility of backlash from the education community.

Topic E: Education, training, professional support and primary prevention

2. Training and professional support for teachers plays a huge part in their role, knowledge, confidence etc in relation to child sexual abuse.
3. SAASPC feels that funding should be provided to ensure programs are an ongoing part of the curriculum, and not a one off.

Topic F: Reporting, information sharing, complaints and investigations

3. There should be compulsory obligations for schools to alert and share information in relation to any form of sexual behaviour. This would need to be done as soon as practicable following the raising of the issue / concern and should be done using an agreed process e.g. information sharing guidelines such as is used in South Australia.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the discussion paper.

Please feel free to contact me if you require further information or have any questions

Yours sincerely
Jenice Zerna
President
31/8/2015