



# Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy

## Rationale

At St John's we recognise the dignity of each person as made in the likeness of a loving God. We are committed to the health, safety and well being of the students in our care.

**As mandated persons we, as teachers, are required by law to make a report to Care and Protection Services if we have formed a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has suffered or is suffering sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury and those grounds arise during the course of our work (whether for remuneration or otherwise). The mandated reporter does not need to investigate or prove his or her concern and information will be shared on a need to know basis.**

## Aims

The aims of St John the Apostle's Mandatory Reporting Policy are to:

- care for the health, safety and well being of students ensure that teachers are aware of their legal and professional responsibilities.
- appraise staff of the correct procedures to make a mandatory report.

## Agreed Practice

St John's Agreed Practice is designed to complement the *Children and Young People Act 1999 (ACT)* and the Catholic Education Office's *Child Protection – Mandatory Reporting ACT Policy* as published on the CEO website.

### *Step 1: Peer Discussion*

A teacher who has concerns about a particular child **may** wish to discuss those concerns with one colleague. The child's name is not discussed and the conversation is of a consultative nature.

### *Step 2: Discussion with Principal or Assistant Principal*

Whilst Mandated Reporters are obliged to make a report to Care and Protection Services, it will be usual practice that the report will be made through the Principal/Assistant Principal. The teacher will make an appointment with the Principal/Assistant Principal to discuss the concerns and share any observations that s/he has about the child. The Principal/Assistant Principal will ensure that accurate records are kept of all reports and will ensure that the teacher is informed of whether Care and Protection Services will appraise the report or not.

At this stage responsibility for reporting passes from the teacher to the Principal/Assistant Principal. The teacher shall continue to advise the Principal/Assistant Principal about developments in the situation. If the teacher is concerned that insufficient action is being taken, they should discuss their concerns with the Principal/Assistant Principal. In the extreme circumstance that a mandated reporter is not satisfied that the Principal/Assistant Principal has made a report to Care and Protection Services, the teacher must make a report on his or her own behalf to Care and Protection Services. The teacher then must inform the Principal/Assistant Principal of his or her action and provide the Principal/Assistant Principal with a copy of the Care and Protection Services notification regarding appraisal of the report.

### *Step 3: Outside Contact*

- 3 (a) The Principal / Assistant Principal rings the CatholicCare counsellor and sets up a time for a phone or interview consultation. **None of the child's identifying details are used.**

#### **AND / OR**

- 3 (b) The Principal rings Care and Protection Services (1300 556 728) to consult. **None of the child's identifying details are used.**

### *Step 4 Interview*

The Principal/Assistant Principal convenes a meeting with the teacher and the counsellor at which they discuss the child and any siblings who attend St John's. Together they may decide if there are reasonable grounds to notify Care and Protection Services and consider what implications may arise. They complete the School Mandatory Reporting Form and decide whether to proceed to Step 5.

### *Step 5 Notification*

The Principal notifies Care and Protection Services (1300 556 728) of a suspicion of child abuse. The Principal notifies the Division of Human Resources at the Catholic Education Office that a notification has been made. When making a report the Principal will discuss with Care and Protection Services about informing parents that a report has been made. If

Care and Protection Services advise not to inform parents, the parents **must not** be informed that a report has been made.

### *Step 6 Debriefing*

The Principal / Assistant Principal convenes another meeting with the teacher and counsellor to inform them of the results of the notification and the Urgency Rating allocated to the case.

### *Step 7 Support*

Ongoing support will be offered to the teacher involved in the notification. This may be in the form of counselling by Centacare staff.

## **Definitions**

Child is a person under 12 years of age.

Child Abuse and Neglect may fall into the following categories:

- Non accidental physical injury (physical abuse) – includes injuries caused by excessive discipline, beating or shaking, bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation, female genital mutilation, poisoning, attempted suffocation or strangulation or physical mutilation.
- Sexual abuse – is any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child or young person. Usually this occurs when an adult or someone who is bigger or older involves the child or young person in a sexual activity by using his or her power over the child or young person or by taking advantage of their trust.
- Emotional abuse – refers to chronic or repeated behaviours directed at a child or young person, which are seriously detrimental to or impair the child or young person's psychological, social, emotional, cognitive or intellectual development or behaviour. This includes significant harm to the child or young person's well being or development because of his or her continual exposure to domestic violence.
- Neglect – is the continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and psychological, intellectual or physical development such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision. The Office for Children, Youth and Family Services, *Reporting Child Abuse Keeping Children and Young People Safe*, August 2006, pp 2 - 7

In Need of Care and Protection is defined fully in s 156 of the *Children and Young People Act 1999 (ACT)*. A child or young person is In Need of Care and Protection if he or she has been, is being or is likely to be, abused or neglected and no-one with parental responsibility for the child or young person is willing and able to protect him or her from suffering the abuse or neglect.

Mandated Reporter is defined in s 159 *Children and Young People Act 1999 (ACT)*. For the purposes of this policy and compliance with ACT law a mandated reporter includes teachers and school counsellors.

Reasonable Suspicion. A Mandated Reporter has a reasonable suspicion to report to Care and Protection Services when:

- A child or young person discloses that he or she has suffered or is suffering non-accidental physical injury or sexual abuse
- Someone else advises you that a child or young person has been sexually abused or non-accidentally injured, or
- Your own observations of the child or young person's physical condition or behaviours lead you to reasonably suspect that the child or young person has suffered or is suffering non-accidental physical injury or sexual abuse.

The mandated reporter is not required to prove that abuse has occurred.

Young Person is a person who is 12 years or older but not yet an adult.

## Resources

### ***Children and Young People Act 1999 (ACT)***

#### ***Reporting Child Abuse: Keeping Children and Young People Safe***

CEO Child Protection - Mandatory Reporting ACT Policy:

[http://www.ceo.cangoul.catholic.edu.au/policies/mandatory\\_report\\_act.htm](http://www.ceo.cangoul.catholic.edu.au/policies/mandatory_report_act.htm)

## Related Policies / Agreed Practices

Complaints Resolution Policy

Pastoral Care and Student Welfare Policy

Administration Agreed Practice

## Review

The St John the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy is reviewed at least once each five years in line with current Registration practices. It may also be reviewed more often according to the need and educational trends.

<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Matthew Egan-Richards
<b>Revision date:</b>	7/5/2015
<b>Approved by:</b>	School Executive
<b>Implementation date:</b>	2015

**IN-CONFIDENCE**

**ST JOHN THE APOSTLE  
NOTIFICATION OF CHILD ABUSE**

Forward to: Family Service Branch  
Department of Education & Training  
Children Youth & Family Services  
**Include Student's Name**

Director  
Catholic Education Office  
**Do Not Include Student's Name**

A copy to be kept in Principal's records  
**Include Student's Name**

**FORM MUST BE RETAINED AT THE SCHOOL UNTIL THE STUDENT IS AT LEAST 25 YEARS OLD.**

Except for Children's Court procedures relating to this student, this document is not admissible in evidence nor can any person be compelled to produce it or give evidence to its contents.

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Report made to: Family Services Office at:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Officer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notification Made:** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notification Made By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Urgency Rating Assigned (if applicable)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Director (or delegate) of CEO Informed of Notification:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasonable Grounds for Notification:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**IN-CONFIDENCE**

**ST JOHN THE APOSTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL  
MANDATORY REPORTING FORM**

(To be completed by the Principal / Assistant Principal and the teacher who suspects child abuse. The completion of this form is Step 4 in the school protocol and should be completed before notification to Family Services. The form is to be kept by the Principal and includes information that will be sought by Family Services upon notification.)

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Caregiver Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W)

If the child lives with one parent do you know the whereabouts of the other?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who is allegedly harming the child? (Include name, address, phone & relationship to the child)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other members of the household in which the child lives and their relationship to the child:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural background Of the child and family: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT** (A detailed description of the size and location of any injury, current or previous or details of disclosure or incident observed.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHEN** the injuries observed or disclosure made? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**HOW** do you know this and what leads you to believe it is non-accidental injury or sexual abuse? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHERE** is the child now? \_\_\_\_\_

**WHO** is aware this report is being made? \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_