



# Child Protection Policy

## BACKGROUND

It is every child's right to be safe and protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, violence or exploitation. It is the legal and moral obligation of every adult who works with children to ensure their safety and wellbeing. This duty of care is held by all those involved in the outside school hours care service.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Holy Family Catholic School OSHC service is committed to provide the provision of a safe environment which children can grow including the identification of potential risk of harm to children and young people. In order to ensure children's safety, our Service will perform proficiently and act in the best interest of the child. We aim to ensure that all educators at the Service are aware of the current child protection law and understand their obligations under that law. We believe it is our responsibility as educators to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children. We aim to provide the children at the service with the opportunity to develop to their full potential free from harm and abuse. Educators have an obligation to all children attending the service and are committed to defend their right to care and protection. To support this right and to ensure children's protection, the service complies with the procedures set down under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 when dealing with any allegations of abuse or neglect of children.

## HOW THE POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED.

### 1. Recognition of abuse

According to the Child and Young People (Safety) Act, the service must provide the following outcomes:

- a. to be safe from harm;
- b. to do well at all levels of learning and to have skills for life;
- c. to enjoy a healthy lifestyle; and
- d. to be active citizens who have a voice and influence.

### Indicators of abuse

There are common physical and behavioural signs that may indicate abuse or neglect. The presence of one of these signs does not necessarily mean abuse or neglect. Behavioural or physical signs which assist in recognising harm to children are known as indicators. One indicator on its own may not imply abuse or neglect. However, a single indicator can be as important as the presence of several indicators. Each indicator needs to be deliberated in the perspective of other indicators and the child's circumstances. A child's behaviour is likely to be affected if he/she is under stress. There can be many causes of stress and it is important to find out specifically what is causing the stress. Abuse and neglect can be single incidents or ongoing, and may be intentional or unintentional. General indicators of abuse and neglect may include:

- Marked delay between injury and seeking medical assistance,
- History of injury,
- The child gives some indication that the injury did not occur as stated,
- The child tells you someone has hurt him/her,
- The child tells you about someone he/she knows who has been hurt, or

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- Someone (relative, friend, acquaintance, and sibling) tells you that the child may have been abused.

**1.1 Physical abuse** commonly characterised by physical injury resulting from:

- hitting, punching, kicking (marks from belt buckles, fingers),
- shaking (particularly young babies),
- burns (irons, cigarettes),
- biting,
- pulling out hair, or
- the administration of alcohol or other drugs.

**1.2 Sexual abuse** occurs when someone in a position of power to a child uses that power. It can include:

- sexual suggestion,
- exhibitionism, mutual masturbation, oral sex,
- showing pornographic material,
- using a child in the production of pornographic material,
- penile or other penetration of the genital or anal region, or
- child prostitution.

**1.3 Emotional abuse** tends to be a chronic behavioural pattern directed at a child so that a child’s self-esteem and social competence are undermined or eroded over time. It can include:

- devaluing,
- ignoring,
- rejecting,
- corrupting,
- isolating,
- terrorising, or
- chronic or extreme domestic violence in a child’s presence.

**1.4 Neglect** is characterised by the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs. It may include:

- inadequate supervision of a young child for long periods of time,
- failure to provide adequate nutrition, clothing or personal hygiene,
- failure to provide needed or appropriate health care, or medical treatment,
- disregard for potential hazards in the home,
- forcing a child to leave home early, or
- allowing a child to engage in chronic truancy.

**2. Recruitment and screening**

Employees and volunteers will be screened for their suitability to work or volunteer with children and young people. The Service’s induction process will be used to ensure that educators feel confident and well prepared to manage situations that have the potential to place children at risk. Responsibilities in relation to the child protection policy, the importance of supervision and appropriate responses to bullying will form an important part of the induction process.

**3. Training and support**

Employees and volunteers will receive approved training and support which explains their child protection responsibilities and outlines how these responsibilities can be met with sensitivity and purpose. One of these responsibilities is their role as a mandated notifier under Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.

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#### 4. Conduct

Employees and volunteers are expected to relate respectfully with all members of the education or care community. Employees and volunteers have a responsibility to report and intervene against behaviours that compromise the safety or wellbeing of children and young people. All employees and volunteers will follow approved protective practice guidelines in their physical and social interactions with children and young people.

#### 5. Supervision

Educators need to be aware of the children and the environment at all times. Actively supervising children in areas they can access plays an important part in providing a safe and protective environment. Volunteers and visitors to the service should be closely monitored and not be left alone to supervise individual or groups of children.

#### 6. Relationships with children

Educators will take the time to observe individual children and to actively listen to their comments about their day and the events occurring in their lives. Attention will also be paid to children's non-verbal communication, their body language, facial expressions, creative expressions and play behaviour with other children.

#### 7. Responding to a child's disclosure

It is important that when a child discloses an allegation of abuse, staff are ready to listen carefully. Finding a quiet, private place to talk and allowing a child to tell their story using their own words is important. Educators should avoid asking leading questions or probing for information that the child is not ready to disclose. It is important that the child is reassured that they have a right to feel safe and have done the right thing in telling someone what has happened. Educators should let the child know that they believe them and will try to help them.

#### 8. Legal responsibilities for Mandated Notifiers

It is an individual's personal responsibility to report suspected abuse and/or neglect. It is not the responsibility of the employer, manager or supervisor. The notifier must form a reasonable suspicion that abuse or neglect has occurred but does not need to wait for proof. The notification report will contain a statement of the observations, information and opinions on which your suspicion is based. All notifiers are immune from civil and criminal liability for reporting suspicions in good faith and the notifier's name is protected in most cases.

Feedback about how the notification is being responded to, will be provided on a need-to-know basis and will be subject to confidentiality principles. Mandated notifiers have a legal responsibility to make reports, it is an expectation that they will notify through the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 131478 or [www.childprotection.sa.gov.au](http://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au) when there is a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child has been abused and/or neglected.

Reasonable grounds may include:

- when observations of a particular child's behaviour and/or injuries, or knowledge of children generally leads to a suspicion that abuse is occurring.
- when a child says that he/she has been abused.
- a child says that they know of someone who has been abused (she/he may possibly be referring to her/himself); or
- when someone who is in a position to provide reliable information, perhaps a relative or friend, neighbour, or sibling of the child says a child is at risk.

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### 8.1 To make a report:

- Contact the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 13 14 78 or [www.childprotection.sa.gov.au](http://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au) and follow the prompts to the service for Education and Care Settings or Yaitya Tirramangkotti if the notification concerns an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child or young person.
- Educators will complete a mandatory notification record form. Print out the information and provide it to the Director. Delete the mandatory notification record form from the electronic file and do not place it in the student file.
- Limit details in the mandatory notification record form to factual information as far as possible and be aware that this document may be produced under subpoena in court.
- When filling out the mandatory notification record form, be aware that while the name of the person making the notification will in most cases be protected from disclosure, other names included on the mandated notification record form as having contributed to the notification may not be protected from disclosure.
- Following a notification, the Director will store the mandatory notification record form in a secure, confidential file and may wish to discuss the report with the staff member to determine further actions or support for the child or young person. The actions may include the Director contacting the child's family and/or referral to therapeutic or support services.
- Following the notification, the Director will discuss the report with the Principal/Nominated Supervisor.

### 8.2 Notification of those involved in the Service

If staff suspect someone else involved in the Service is abusing children, they are obligated to report their suspicions or concerns. The matter should also be reported to the Director as part of the notification process.

### 8.3 Documentation

The Service will maintain well-kept records to prepare and support its ability to make a report. All documentation will remain strictly confidential. Educators should make a record of what they have heard, observed and done and should sign and date their notes whilst using the following principles of good record keeping:

- Be factual and record only what is relevant.
- Identify the people whose actions or views you they have recorded.
- Objective observations

## RESOURCES/REFERENCES

- ACECQA National Quality Framework
- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)
- Department for Child Protection: <http://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/>
- Australia Childhood Foundation: [www.childhood.org.au](http://www.childhood.org.au)
- [CESA Reporting Harm of Children and Young People procedure](#)
- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Protection
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child
- [Education and Care Services National Law Act \(2010\)](#)
- [Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011](#)
- Police 131 444 – non emergency calls
- Police 000 – Emergency
- Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 131 478 or [www.childprotection.sa.gov.au](http://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au)

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