



ST KEVIN'S COLLEGE

MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

St Kevin's College is committed to the legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect which is known as mandatory reporting. All jurisdictions possess mandatory reporting requirements of some description. Child Protection & Family Services within the Department of Human Services is the relevant department mandated to report to and defines the abuse types for which it is mandatory to report in Victoria. If DHS personnel are unavailable, a report will be made to Victoria Police.

The College completely supports and follows the Catholic Education Office (Melbourne) Mandatory Reporting of Child Physical and Sexual Abuse Responsibilities of Teachers and Principals.

CEOM POLICY 2.19 Mandatory Reporting of Child Physical and Sexual Abuse Mandatory Reporting of Child Physical and Sexual Abuse Responsibilities of teachers and principals

Discharge of Mandated Responsibility

To discharge their mandated responsibility a teacher or principal must either make a report personally or be satisfied that the report has been made to the Child Protection unit (DHS).

It should be noted that the duty to report:

- applies regardless of whether the alleged suspected abuse occurred in Victoria, outside the State or on the school grounds
- is not discharged when a teacher advises the principal of his or her belief.
NOTE: If the principal declines to make a report to Child Protection, the teacher is still mandated to report.¹

It is the responsibility of the individual teacher to ensure that all reasonable grounds supporting the belief have been reported. It is not a teacher's role to investigate or prove that abuse has taken place.

In cases where it is not a mandatory report, generally speaking, a principal or teacher should discuss with parents, in cases where appropriate, regarding consultation with or disclosure to Child First provided that doing so does not place the child at further risk.² A principal or teacher does not require the consent of the child or their family to make a mandatory report to Child Protection.

DHS personnel are responsible for contacting the parents, guardians or caregivers at an appropriate time after a notification has been made.

Interviews with Students

It may be necessary for Child Protection to interview a child at school when a notification of abuse has been made. Such requests may be directed to the principal or the principal's nominee. It is important to advise children or young people of their right to have a supportive adult present at such an interview. This may be the principal or a teacher.

When officers of Child Protection or Victoria Police (Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit) seek an interview with a child, the principal should cooperate with the authorised agency. The principal should:

- arrange for the child to choose a supportive adult to be present;
- follow the recommended procedures from the DHS and the CEOM³;
- ensure that arrangements are in order for any interview which is to take place at the school;
- observe confidentiality at all times in the management of a mandatory reporting case;
- if legal assistance is required, contact the CEOM in the first instance.

References

- ¹ Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide, *Child Protection – Mandatory Reporting*.
- ² Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and Department of Human Services (DHS) Victoria 2010, *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people*.
- ³ http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/~data/assets/pdf_file/0003/582591/flowchart-mandatory-reporting-27-5-10.pdf
<http://www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au/publications-policies/policy/policy-2.19-mandatory-reporting-of-child-abuse/>

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