

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| First Written  | 2019 |
| Due for Review | 2021 |

## 1. RATIONALE

Every staff member at Saint Joseph's Primary School plays a key role in the pastoral dimension of a Catholic School. School staff members are key figures in the identification of child abuse. It is staff to whom a child will generally, directly or indirectly, disclose that abuse has occurred and they are responsible for ensuring that the child is protected from further harm.

Catholic schools are entrusted, in partnership with parents/guardians/caregivers who are the primary educators of their children, with the total education of the child. Catholic school staff have a duty of care to students during school operating hours and at other times when a staff/student relationship exists for example camps, retreats and excursions.

Saint Joseph's uses the child protection curriculum "Keeping Safe" to assist our students from Kindergarten to Year 6 to develop protective strategies and to recognise and if necessary, report abuse.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

'Child protection' refers to prevention and response to abuse against children. This includes the policies, preventative measures and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In context it applies particularly to the duty of Catholic Education and individuals associated with Catholic Education, towards children in their care.

The following list of indicators of child abuse and neglect are to be used as a guide only and are the ones that will be of most use to teachers.

### Physical Abuse

| <u>Physical Indicators</u>   | <u>Behavioural Indicators</u>                        |
|--|--|
| Unexplained bruises and welts, particularly on face, lips, mouth and back torso or on several body parts | Fear of adults, particularly parents                 |
| Shaped or linear bruising  | Startled reflex, cringes at sudden movement by adult |
| Unexplained shaped or linear burns   | Behavioural extremes, withdrawn or aggressive        |
| Unexplained fractures  | Afraid to go home                                    |
| Injuries in various stages of healing  | Reports of injury from child                         |
|  | Changes in academic performance                      |

### Emotional Abuse

| <u>Physical Indicators</u>   | <u>Behavioural Indicators</u>                               |
|------------------------------|---|
| Speech disorders             | Habitual behaviours not consistent with developmental stage |
| Failure to thrive            | Conduct disorders, destructive, violent                     |
| Lags in physical development | Behavioural extremes  |
|                              | Changes in academic performance                             |

## Sexual Abuse

| <u>Physical Indicators</u>                                 | <u>Behavioural Indicators</u>  |
|--|--|
| Genital or anal bleeding                                   | Disclosure of involvement in sexual activity   |
| Signs of pain or discomfort in the genital or anal regions | Inappropriate knowledge or interest of sexual matters                                    |
| Unexplained difficulty in walking or sitting               | Reports of sexual assault or inappropriate sexual behaviour to a staff member or student |
|  | Changes in academic performance  |

## Neglect

| <u>Physical Indicators</u>             | <u>Behavioural Indicators</u>   |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Consistent hunger                      | Constant fatigue                |
| Unattended physical or mental problems | Developmental delays            |
| Inadequate clothing                    | Changes in academic performance |
| Abandonment                            |                                 |

## 3. PROCEDURES

### Dealing With Allegations

- All Saint Joseph's staff who identify concerns regarding the sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect of a child must respond according to the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.
- Allegations of Misconduct and Serious Misconduct against Staff – Processes and Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia, is to be followed when an allegation is directed against school employees. These include teachers, administrative staff, grounds staff or any other staff member.
- Allegations directed against any clergy or members of religious institutes should be discussed with the Director of Professional Standards and follow Towards Healing: Principles and Procedures in Responding to Complaints of Abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia as well as fulfilling other relevant requirements i.e. mandatory reporting.
- The Principal shall ensure that staff receive induction, in relation to the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia and Mandatory Reporting within the first 12 months of appointment
- The Principal shall ensure the school's pastoral care structures reflect the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.
- Staff shall act in accordance with the relevant section of Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia in regard to any historic allegations of child abuse.

### Dealing With Allegations of Sexual Abuse

#### **Procedures for Teaching Staff**

A teacher is defined in the Children and Community Services Act 2004 as: a person who, under the Teacher Registration Act 2012 holds provisional registration, full registration, limited registration or non-practicing registration.

Teaching staff that form a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred or is occurring are responsible for:

1. Where the allegation is made against the Principal, the Coordinator of Employment and Community Relations must be informed immediately.

2. Lodging a report with the Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS) as soon as practicable. The teacher may fulfil the statutory requirement by making the report to the Principal. A verbal report can be made but this must be followed by a written report, preferably within the first 24 hours. Upon consultation, the MRS may direct the teacher to give both a verbal report and a written report, or just to submit a written report. Teachers also have the option at law to report directly to DCP.
3. Consulting with the Principal- the Principal may involve appropriate support staff including but not limited to psychologist, social worker, counsellor, and Coordinator from the Employment and Community Relations Team or the Mandatory Reporting Consultant based at CEWA.
4. Assisting in supporting any child involved where necessary.
5. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.
6. Recording the MRS receipt number issued.

### **Procedures for Non-Teaching Staff**

Staff at Saint Joseph's must inform the Principal of any concerns involving child abuse.

Staff that have a concern that child abuse has occurred or is occurring are responsible for:

1. Where the allegation is made against the Principal, the Coordinator, Employment and Community Relations must be informed immediately.
2. Documenting the details of the grounds for their belief as well as any observations, consultations made and actions taken.
3. Notifying their Principal as soon as possible (usually within one working day) of their concern and the grounds that led to their concern.
4. Assisting in supporting any child involved where necessary.
5. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

### **Procedures for Principals**

The Principal of Saint Joseph's is an approved "class of persons" in accordance with the Act and is able to take reports regarding child abuse. As well as informing the Principal, teachers also have the option at law to report directly to DCP.

The Principal at Saint Joseph's is responsible for:

1. In the case of a teacher, supporting the teacher to make a verbal and/or written report to the MRS as required. Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia Page 8 February 2014.
2. Passing on an exact copy of the report to the MRS within one working day when a teacher chooses to lodge their written mandatory report with the Principal as an approved class of person. Failure to do so can result in a \$6000 fine for the Principal.
3. In the case of educators and other staff, making a notification of the concern to the Duty Officer of the local DCP district office or supporting the staff member to make the report.
4. Consulting with appropriate support staff including but not limited to the psychologist, social worker and counsellor.
5. Contacting the Coordinator from the Employment and Community Relations Team or the Mandatory Reporting Consultant based at CEWA.
6. Providing information to DCP or WA Police as required.
7. Reporting child protection concerns that may involve criminal behaviour to WA Police.
8. Ensuring the relevant staff member's document any disclosures, observations and actions promptly.
9. Coordinating support for any child involved and for relevant staff where necessary.
10. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

## Lodging a Mandatory Report with the Mandatory Reporting Service

Teachers at Saint Joseph's must either:

- make a written report only; or
- make a verbal report which must be followed up as soon as is practicable with a written report (within one working day).
- Verbal reports are required in urgent cases. If teachers are unsure as to whether the case they are reporting is urgent or not, they should phone the MRS for consultation and follow the instructions provided.

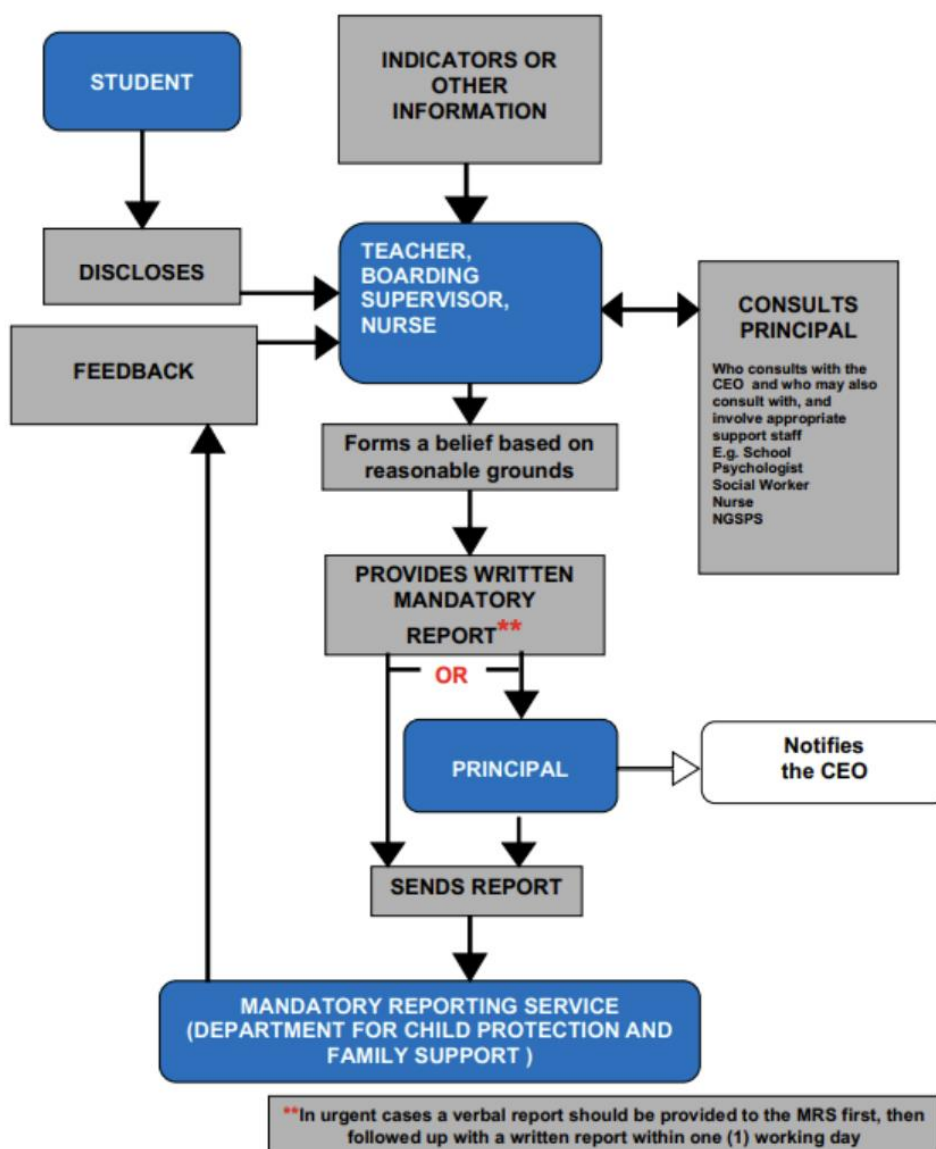
Teachers must lodge a report with the MRS in one of the following ways:

- complete the Mandatory Reporting Form and submit the written report electronically, by fax or post directly to the MRS; or
- complete the Mandatory Reporting Form and submit the written report to the Principal who is authorised to receive it on behalf of the MRS; or
- make a verbal report to the MRS and then follow up by submitting a written report within one working day either directly to the MRS or to the Principal.

Mandatory Reporting forms can be found on the MRS website:

[www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au)

**CECWA REPORTING PROCEDURES**  
**CHART 1: MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**



## Reporting Child Physical Abuse, Emotional/Psychological Abuse and Neglect

### **Responsibilities of all Staff**

All child protection concerns must be reported. School staff will generally form concerns regarding a student through observation of possible indicators or through disclosure. Saint Joseph's staff that have concerns that child abuse or neglect may be occurring must inform the Principal and keep written, dated records of their, concerns, observations and actions.

Consultation should first occur with the principal who may also involve appropriate support staff such as the CEWA Psychology Team.

Staff that have a concern that a child is at risk of, or subject to, child abuse are responsible for:

1. Where the allegation is made against the Principal, informing the Team Leader, Employment and Community Relations Team immediately.
2. Documenting the details of the grounds for their concern as well as any consultations made.
3. Notifying their Principal as soon as possible (usually within one working day) of their concern and the grounds that led to their concern.
4. In many instances, the Principal will provide the notification to CPFS. There may be circumstances in which the Principal deems it more appropriate that the staff member speaks directly with CPFS. On these occasions, the staff member must provide all relevant information Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools In Western Australia - June 2016 Page | 10 to CPFS.
5. Assisting in supporting any child involved where necessary.
6. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

### **Responsibilities of Principals**

The Children and Community Services Act (2004), (the Act), shall be adhered to in all Catholic schools. Principals are required to ensure that all staff are aware of and comply with legislation and policies with respect to child protection. Upon receiving notification that a staff member has a concern that child abuse has occurred or is occurring, Principals are responsible for:

1. Reporting the concern and the grounds that led to that concern to the Duty Officer of the local District office of CPFS as soon as is possible (usually within one working day).
2. Consulting with appropriate support staff including but not limited to psychologist, social worker, and counsellor.
3. Contacting the Team Leader from Employment and Community Relations Team or the Coordinator, Psychology Team, at CEWA.
4. If the allegation concerns a staff member, the Team Leader, Employment and Community Relations Team must be notified as soon as possible.
5. Reporting child abuse concerns that may involve criminal behaviour to WA Police.
6. Ensuring the relevant staff members' document any disclosures, observations and actions promptly.
7. Coordinate support for any child involved and for affected staff where necessary.
8. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

**CECWA REPORTING PROCEDURES  
CHART 2: REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE**

