



# Child Protection Policy

Ratified by Council	
Date	
Name	
Signature	

<b>Provenance</b>	<b>To be Revised (Date)</b>	
	<b>Relates to Standard</b>	12. Child Abuse Prevention
	<b>Related Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Support Procedure -2013</li> <li>• Agreement with AISWA School Psychology Service</li> <li>• Grant agreements</li> <li>• Student Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting Policy</li> <li>• Discipline Policy</li> <li>• Classroom Management and Behavioural Policy</li> <li>• Excursion Policy</li> </ul>
	<b>Links with Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Children and Community Services Act 2004</i></li> <li>• <i>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</i></li> <li>• <i>Ombudsman Amendment (Child Protection and Community Service) Act 1998</i></li> <li>• <i>Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998</i></li> <li>• <i>Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998</i></li> <li>• <i>Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008</i></li> </ul>
	<b>Appendix</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APPENDIX II: Further information – where to find it</li> <li>• APPENDIX II: Further information – where to find it</li> <li>• APPENDIX III: How do I recognise when a child is at risk?</li> <li>• APPENDIX IV: Procedures to Assist Staff in Responding to Disclosures of Maltreatment</li> <li>• APPENDIX V: Cyber Predators</li> </ul>

*West Coast Steiner School is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation, taking a preventative and participatory stance on child protection issues and promoting a child safe environment and follows the framework of Creating Child Safe Institutions (July 2016) from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*

## Policy

West Coast Steiner School is committed to ensuring the rights of all students to be protected from abusive and neglectful maltreatment.

*All students have a right to feel safe at school and/or when participating at authorised activities.*

We are committed to cultivating an ethos of nurturing care towards the children, and to assist in extending this attitude to every member of the community.

When any question of neglect or abuse is brought to the attention of any staff member, either directly or indirectly, the following procedures are to assist that staff member to deal with this appropriately and sensitively.

This policy will be applied in any situation where there is potential or actual maltreatment towards a child by any person either within or outside the school community, and whether this maltreatment has arisen in the past or appears likely to occur.

West Coast Steiner School requires all notes and reports on students to be submitted to the Principal to be kept as school records. They will be kept confidential and secure.

West Coast Steiner School seeks to implement and carry out effective human resource practices to ensure all new employees, volunteers and contractors are adequately screened, trained and supervised.

## Processes (Prevention)

Teaching and Non Teaching staff

Recruitment:

- The school provides a specific job description for every position to ensure that there are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all employees, contractors and volunteers.
- The recruitment of staff for every position in the school is to include reference checks and interviews with a panel.

- The school administration follows up with referees with specific reference to any concerns about child protection and safety prior to offering positions to potential recruits.
- The school seeks to maintain regular relief staff to provide for emergency staffing needs, and seeks to avoid relying on volunteers or employees who are not included on the school Register of Relief Staff. This ensures that all relief staff are known to the school and have been screened in the past.
- The school administration maintains a detailed register of all staff, including copies of driver's licences and current contact details.
- The school administration ensures that current police clearances certificates are obtained for all new employees.
- The school administration ensures that all staff provide proof of current Working with Children Card details.

#### Training:

- All staff (teaching and non-teaching) receive Mandatory Reporting, including Grooming training from AISWA annually.
- All staff are made aware of the state legislation requiring various occupations, including teachers, to report on child sexual abuse (Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008, an amendment to the Children and Community Services Act 2004).
- All staff attend annual workshops on protective behaviours at AISWA.

#### Education

- The school administration informs students that all staff heed the Child Protection Policy.
- The school administration informs students how they can make a disclosure.

# Procedures

## Mandatory Reporting

### 1. BELIEF OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE FORMED

If a belief is formed on reasonable grounds, during the course of paid or unpaid work as a teacher, that child sex abuse has occurred or is occurring, and where the principal is not the alleged perpetrator, teachers must:

- choose one of the following reporting processes:
  - make an online mandatory report at Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS);
  - make a verbal report to the MRS which must be followed up with an online or written mandatory report; or
  - write a report and provide it to the principal for lodgement with MRS (see Appendix for report form);

#### **Mandatory Reporting Service can be reached on 1800 708 704**

- inform the principal that a mandatory report has been lodged and provide the principal with the receipt number of the mandatory report;
- if a decision to make a mandatory report has not been made, document all observations and consultations and follow procedures for CONCERN OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE;
- inform the principal of the advice contained in the feedback letter received from MRS following the mandatory report; and
- **not** provide a copy of their mandatory report to the principal for storage or store their own copy of the report in WCSS files.

If a belief is formed on reasonable grounds, during the course of paid or unpaid work as a teacher, that child sex abuse has occurred or is occurring, where the principal is the alleged perpetrator or may be biased towards the alleged perpetrator, teachers must:

- make a report to the Department of Child Protection and the Chairperson of Council and choose one of the following reporting processes:
  - make an online mandatory report at Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS); or
  - make a verbal report to the MRS which must be followed up with an online or written mandatory report; and
- **not** provide a copy of their mandatory report to the principal for storage or store their own copy of the report in WCSS files.

## 2. CONCERN OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE

If a belief on reasonable grounds is not formed, but a child protection concern of possible child sexual abuse is held, teachers must:

- report to the principal;
- document all observations, relevant information and concerns; and
- provide this documentation to the principal.

## 3. REPORTING OF ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE PERPETRATED BY STAFF

Teachers must:

- report all allegations of abuse perpetrated by staff to the principal;
- if the principal is the alleged perpetrator or may be biased towards the staff member alleged to be responsible, inform the Chairperson of the School's Council and
- follow reporting procedures in Mandatory reporting.

Teachers must not:

- interview the child;
- investigate the allegation; or
- inform the alleged offender that an allegation has been made.

## 4. SEXUAL ABUSE PERPETRATED BY A STUDENT DURING SUPERVISED SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Teachers must:

- report all incidents of sexual abuse perpetrated by a student during supervised school activities to the principal; and
- follow reporting procedures in Mandatory Reporting.

Teachers **must not**:

- interview the children involved; or
- disclose the identity of the person alleged to have committed the abuse to the alleged victim's parent.

## Non-Mandatory Reporting

### 5. REFERRAL OF PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE, FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR NEGLECT

Teachers must:

- document and refer all child protection concerns relating to physical abuse, emotional abuse, family and domestic violence or neglect to the principal; and

- inform Department of Child Protection and Chairperson of Council if the principal is the alleged perpetrator or may be biased towards the alleged perpetrator.

Teachers **must not**:

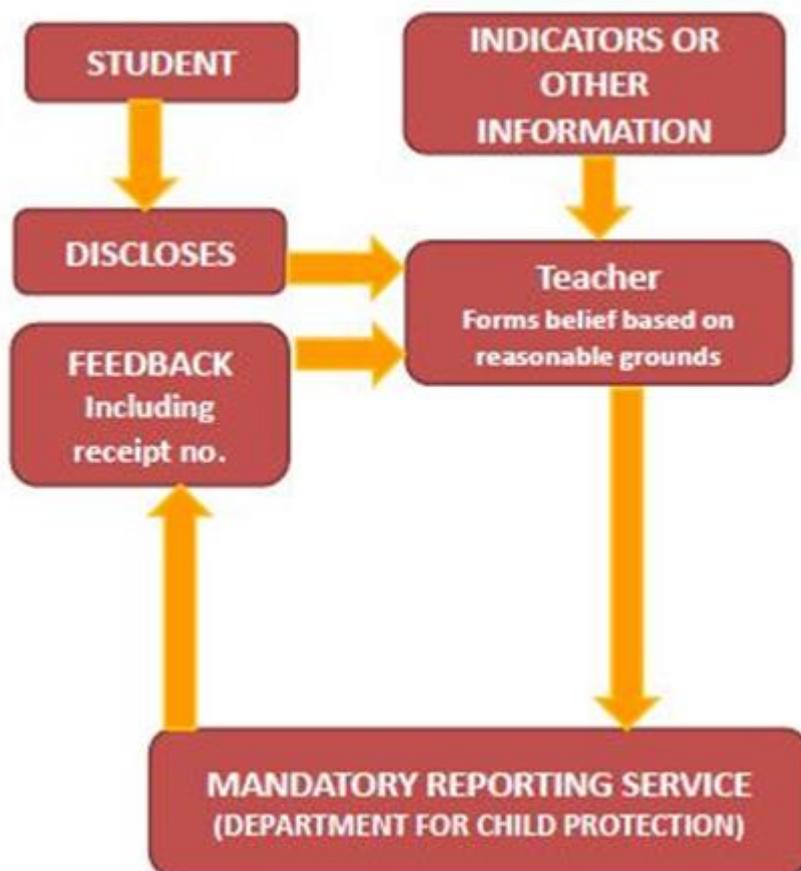
- inform parents that a referral has been made;
- interview the child or children involved;
- investigate the concern; or
- collect photographic evidence.

#### 6. RESPONDING WHEN A STUDENT IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM

Where there is a concern that the student will be exposed to the immediate risk of harm during or after school hours, teachers must inform the principal.

If there is immediate danger: ring the Police **131 444**.

## MANDATORY REPORTING PROCEDURE



### Confidentiality and Legal Protection

The identity of the reporter is required to be kept confidential, except in limited circumstances. Section 124F(2) protects a reporter's identity from being disclosed. Disclosure of a reporter's identity carries a maximum fine of \$24,000 and 2 years imprisonment.

There are exceptions where a reporter's identity is permitted. Even where disclosure is allowed, consideration will be given to ensuring the reporter's safety has been taken into account. Examples of when a reporter's identity may be revealed include:

- The Mandatory Reporting Service must send a copy of every written report to the WA Police;
- The WA Police may need to reveal a reporter's identity in order to investigate or prosecute a suspected offence;
- A Department for Child Protection officer may need to reveal the reporter's identity when certain child protection, family law or adoption proceedings are taking place;

- Reporter may have provided written permission for their identity to be disclosed.

A mandated reporter who is normally governed by a code of confidentiality or secrecy, professional ethics, standards or principles of conduct (eg. Doctor/patient) is protected from a breach to this code if they are making a report in good faith. The legislative requirements of the Act override internal school policies, professional codes or confidentiality requirements.

A mandated reporter is also protected from liability. If a report is made in good faith, they will not incur any civil or criminal liability by making a report.

### **Storage and retention of notes and reports**

The Freedom of Information Act does not apply to independent schools. This applies irrespective of whether a report has been made to the Department. See the Privacy Act for further requirements.

West Coast Steiner School requires all notes and reports on students to be submitted to the Principal to be kept as school records. They will be kept confidential and secure under lock and key.

Once the report has been provided to the Department for Child Protection, the report becomes a 'government record' held by the Department and must be treated by the Department in accordance with the requirements imposed on the Department by the Act and any other statutory obligations.

Because the reporting obligations under the Act are obligations placed upon the teacher personally, we recommend that the teacher:

- Keep a copy of the report and any notes the teacher provides to the Department in compliance with their obligations under the Act;
- Keep a record of receipt by the Department of the report (this is usually in the form of receipt number) as evidence that the report was made to the Department;
- Keep a copy of the report and any notes the teacher provides to the school;
- Should retain copies of any notes, the report and the receipt of the report by the Department, when the teacher leaves the school.

### **The role of the Department for Child Protection and WA Police**

Mandatory reporting is a requirement in Western Australia for occupations including teachers to make reports when they have a reasonable belief that sexual abuse is occurring or has occurred. For other forms of child abuse mandatory reporting is not yet a requirement,

however, schools have a duty of care and a moral obligation to follow the recommended procedures in cases of suspected child abuse.

The *Department for Child Protection (DCP)* [formerly the Department for Community Development] is the government department with the statutory authority to investigate concerns in Western Australia. It is not the school's role to investigate child maltreatment issues, including concerns of sexual abuse. That is the DCP's responsibility. All disclosures or strong concerns of abuse or neglect should be **reported** to DCP by the Principal/Principal or teacher. The DCP will then decide on how to proceed.

The *Western Australian Police* also have a role in responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect. The WA Police Service Child Abuse Investigation Unit intervene in instances where it is believed that a criminal offence has occurred which may lead to criminal charges being laid. In the case of a report of child sexual abuse, DCP will forward all reports to the WA Police.

Where abuse and neglect has occurred within a family and there is the possibility of criminal charges being laid, the police and the DCP may undertake a joint investigation to reduce the trauma of the interviewing process to the child or young person.

Under section 129 of the *Children's and Community Services Act 2004*, people who give information, in good faith, to the Department of Child Protection are protected from incurring any civil or criminal liability, from having breached any confidentiality imposed by law, or from having breached any professional ethics or standards.

### Step 1

- The teacher's observations or the child's disclosure should be discussed, in the first instance, with the Principal, and in the absence of the Principal, College Chair. If the matter is suspected to be sexual abuse, the teacher can and should make the report directly to the DCP – ( see2. Where it appears a child has been subjected to sexual abuse)
- The Principal may be consulted and provide support to the teacher in this situation.
- It is not the role of the teacher to investigate child abuse or neglect matters. They must report concerns to the Principal.
- The teacher and Co-ordinator may wish to consult with the school psychologist or a member of the Non-Government Schools Psychology Service.

Note: It is vital to remember that **confidentiality** is paramount and that disclosure of this information should only be discussed with those in the school who are required to know.

### Step 2

- In cases of suspected sexual abuse a teacher is the mandatory reporter required to make a report to the Department for Child Protection through the Mandatory Reporting Service. In cases of other forms of abuse or neglect, the Education Co-ordinator and the teacher concerned will decide the appropriate actions to take and

who should be contacted in consultation with the Business Manager and Council Chair.

### Step 3

- If following a report a family approaches the school it is recommended that any interview be conducted with a minimum of two school members present (e.g. The Principal and the Business Manager) to provide support.

*Note: It is important to remember that the focus of the meeting should be the welfare of the child.*

### Step 4

- The Principal should ensure that ongoing support for the teacher, the student and anyone else affected is available. This may include counselling. The need for ongoing support could be necessary as the teacher continues in their role with the student and the DCP's role may continue for a while.

**Very important:** to avoid interfering with any investigative process initiated by DCP or the police, the Principal must seek advice from DCP or police prior to informing the parent or carer of a concern of abuse or neglect.

### Department of Child Protection (DCP)

In cases of child sexual abuse the teacher will provide a written report to the Mandatory Reporting Service of DCP. The Mandatory Reporting Service will provide a feedback letter to the reporter outlining which DCP local office is involved, and what action has been taken. The Mandatory Reporting Service is required to forward all reports on to the WA Police.

For other forms of abuse, the Principal should report all disclosures or strong concerns to the DCP of abuse or neglect arising from the actions or inactions of parents/caregivers and maintain a written record of this communication and subsequent actions. The DCP will then decide how to proceed. The decision to progress the matter further is the responsibility of the DCP.

The DCP is required to provide feedback to people making reports on child abuse. The Principal should seek undertakings from the DCP that they will be kept informed within the bounds of confidentiality.

The Principal's initial contact with the DCP will be through the Duty Officer at the Local District Office (see white pages) closest to where the child lives or closest to the school if this cannot be ascertained:

Department of Child Protection:

**Mirrabooka:** 8 Sudbury Road, Mirrabooka WA 6061 (08) 9344 9666

**Perth Office:** 641 Wellington Street, Perth WA 6000 (08) 9214 2444

Ask: for name of intake officer

Ask: what to do if the child is currently with you.

All calls from school concerning students are taken very seriously and it may be appropriate if the emergency occurs after hours to explain to the switchboard operator that it is an emergency so they can speak to the Duty Officer promptly. When reporting to the Duty Officer, note his/her name and position.

Note: The Duty Officer at the local DCP office can also be used initially in a consultative role if the Principal or Business Manager is unsure of what action to take.

Note: The school should be aware that the powers of the DCP under the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* includes:

- **Apprehension of children in need of care and protection** (without warrant)
- **Interviewing the child:** DCP has the authority to interview the child at school before contact is made with the parent/caregiver. Before doing so, the principal or 'person in charge' at the school must be notified. The child should have the option of having support at the interview from a staff member of their choosing.
- **Removal of children from the school:** DCP officers may remove a child from the school if they have the permission of the parent/caregiver or if they have apprehended the child. The Principal should satisfy themselves that all conditions have been met before this occurs and document all conversations.
- **Medical examination:** DCP may require that a medical examination occur as soon as possible so that bruising, marking and other symptoms can be recorded for future reference. This would normally take place at either PMH or the Community Child Health Services Centres. This examination can only take place if permission has been obtained from the parent/caregiver or the child has been apprehended (when parent/carer permission is not obtained).

### **Police**

Strong concerns and disclosures of abuse and neglect from a person who is not the parent/caregiver should be advised to the police. The Principal should also notify the DCP as they can offer support to the student and family, and risk assess other children in the community.

The Police are also notified by the Mandatory Reporting Service of DCP of all reports of child sexual abuse.

### **Parents/Caregivers**

To avoid interfering with any investigative process initiated by DCP or the Police, the Principal and teacher must seek advice from DCP or Police prior to informing the parent/carer of a concern of abuse or neglect.

In cases of child sexual abuse, the legislation provides protection for the person reporting. Disclosure of the reporter's identity or identifying information to parents or any other party can incur a fine of \$24,000 and two years' imprisonment.

# Appendix One

## Procedures for Handling Allegations and Convictions of Child Abuse against Employees

### Definitions

#### Employee:

Any persons who might be engaged by the school to work with the children, including:

- teachers,
- administration staff,
- maintenance workers,
- volunteers,
- work experience participants,
- student placements.

#### Allegation:

An allegation of child abuse against a current employee. An allegation may be about alleged conduct that happened before the employee commenced work at the school. Staff, parents/users of the service, other agencies, or the Ombudsman, can make allegations.

#### Convictions:

The Ombudsman must be notified of any convictions in this state or elsewhere for child abuse against an employee.

### Procedures

1. If an allegation is made against an employee, the employee must be immediately suspended (with pay) and asked not to approach the school or make any contact with staff students or parents pending an investigation into the matter. In order to protect the integrity of the investigation, the employee should not be notified of the nature of the investigation, but that they will be contacted in due course.
2. The matter immediately be referred to DCP or the police for investigation. If the person reporting the abuse is a child, it is already a mandatory reporting situation, however if the person reporting the abuse is someone else (eg a parent) they can be encouraged to make the report directly to the authorities. The school must not conduct the investigation internally.
3. The Authorised Supervisor be required to give no reason or a vague reason to staff and parents regarding the reason for the suspension.
4. The school council immediately be notified that an allegation has been made and the course of action taken. The council does not need to be notified of the identity of the employee or the subject of the allegations.
5. Parents be notified if any charges are laid. – More details of how this can should be done are contained in the report linked above.

6. If charges are laid, the employee be suspended without pay from that day forward.

**It is the role of the authorised supervisor to:**

- Seek advice/information from AISWA about the process of investigation of the allegations made.
- Protect/maintain the confidentiality of the identity of persons the subject of the allegations, as far as possible, given the considerations relating to any care and protection intervention.
- Assess allegations impartially.
- Act fairly to persons the subject of an allegation.
- Assess any immediate care and protection issues.
- Seek legal advice from Levin Legal Phone Number: 08 9288 6000

Some issues are very concerning for teachers and staff members – for instance malicious allegations made by students against teachers. It is not the role of a teacher or the Principal to decide whether or not an allegation of child abuse is founded or unfounded. They must establish “firm belief” or “belief based on reasonable grounds”. It is the role of the DCP, the Police Service or the Case Management Unit to carry out as full investigation.

Attempting to resolve an allegation made against a teacher within the school setting without outside assistance is against school policy.

## Appendix Two

### Further information – where to find it

The Department for Child Protection is the state government department responsible for issues specifically related to the protection of children, including the handling of abuse and neglect cases. This website contains some excellent material for professionals, and parents and friends. Of particular interest is the information on 'Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – a guide for professionals'. <http://www.community.wa.gov.au/>

The sexual abuse reports, the Mandatory Reporting Service must be contacted through one of the following means:

Telephone: 1800 708 704

Email: [mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au](mailto:mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au)

Fax: 1800 610 614

Post: PO Box 8146, Perth BC WA 6849

This unit is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for make a report or to raise concerns.

Details regarding mandatory reporting can be obtained through [www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au)

To contact DCP for assistance with a specific case that does not involve sexual abuse, the school will need to speak to the Duty Officer at the local office, available during office hours. All offices are listed in the White Pages or on the website.

### AFTER HOURS

**Child Abuse Services WA**      9223 1111/1800 199 008

**Crisis Care**                      9223 1111/1800 199 008

(a 24 hour telephone service for people in crisis and needing urgent help)

### WA Police Service Child Abuse Investigation Unit

If the matter is urgent and the safety of a child is at risk, call 000. If you are a victim of child abuse or paedophilia, or if you have information about someone else being abused, you should contact police on **131 444**. You can also report child abuse to the Child Protection

Squad on **9492 5444** or email them on [Child.Abuse.Investigation@police.wa.gov.au](mailto:Child.Abuse.Investigation@police.wa.gov.au) , or ring Crime Stoppers on **1800 333 000** or go to your local police station.

**WA Police Cyber Predator Team** can be contacted on 9492 5444 or complaints can be lodged on the WA Police Website [www.police.wa.gov.au](http://www.police.wa.gov.au)

The websites below contain information on cyber predators for parents, teachers and students.

[www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au)

[www.constablecare.org.au](http://www.constablecare.org.au)

[www.cybersmartkids.com.au](http://www.cybersmartkids.com.au)

[www.netalert.net.au](http://www.netalert.net.au)

[www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com](http://www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com)

### **The National Association of the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)**

NAPCAN is an Australian organisation that seeks to resource and network child welfare professionals and practitioners working to prevent child abuse and neglect from happening before it starts, through the provision of parenting brochures, training, support networks and information. [www.napcan.org.au](http://www.napcan.org.au)

**Protective Behaviours WA (Inc)** is a preventative life skills program that assists people of all ages to develop the skills to help them deal with difficult or hostile situations. The program has a voluntary committee made up of representatives from government and non-government agencies as well as interested members of the community. AISWA is a group member of Protective Behaviours and is able to purchase resources at a discount for interested schools.

Protective Behaviours can be contacted on (08) 9356 0514 or email: [pbwainc@hotmail.com](mailto:pbwainc@hotmail.com)

### **AISWA SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE**

This covers all non-govt schools in WA, and is a free service. Counselling cannot be long term due to lack of resources, and is more likely to be short term or one session, eg risk assessment.

#### **Assessments:**

- IQ assessment
- Behavioural checklists, eg ADHD checklist
- Social and emotional checklists, eg autism and Asperger's.

PD is offered to school staff on:

- How to devise an Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Child protection
- Youth suicide prevention
- Managing confidential information / reporting abuse). Should a teacher have a child he or she is concerned about, two initial steps are necessary:
- Consult with the Principal; and
- Get verbal consent from the parents.

Then the issue can be discussed with the AISWA School Psychology Service representative. Any confidential information is not to be kept on the student's school file, but with the Principal, with the student's file containing a marker to signify this. This is bound by the Privacy Act and the National Privacy Principles, and includes spoken information.

*The following support service is available for staff at schools who may experience personal issues resulting from making a report:*

#### **Prime Corporate Psychology Services**

Offers an employee assistance program including counselling, management and referrals.  
9492 8900/1800 674 188.

*The following services and organisations can provide help, advice and support to the school, parents or children who are affected by the effects of abuse and to prevent abuse from recurring:*

**Department for Child Protection** (see previous page for details)

**Parenting Line**            9272 1466/1800 654 432

**Family Helpline** is a free confidential telephone counselling and information service for families with relationship difficulties. 9223 1100/1800 643 000

**Men's Domestic Violence Helpline** provides a free telephone, referral and counselling service for men to help them change their violent behaviour toward female partners. 9223 1199/1800 000 599.

**Women's Domestic Violence Helpline** provides a free 24 hour telephone support and counselling service for women experiencing family and domestic violence.

9223 1188/1800 007 339

#### **Child Health and Community Health Services**

Refer to the White Pages for contact details of local Child Health Centres

### **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services**

1800 220 400 – 24 hour mental health advice line

**Princess Margaret Hospital for Children** 9340 8222

**State Child Development Centre** 9481 2203

**Disability Services Commission** 9426 9200/1800 998 214

**Kids Helpline** is a free and confidential telephone counselling service for 5 to 25 year olds in Australia available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1800 551 800

**Sexual Assault Resource Centre Counselling Line** offers a free, 24 hour emergency service for people aged 13 or over who have been sexually assaulted or sexually abused recently (within the last two weeks). 9340 1828/1800 199 888

**Lifeline Australia** offers a service 24 hours a day; 7 days a week and can provide information about other support services, if required. 13 11 14

*The following sites can provide a wide range of background information on child abuse for schools that are interested.*

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/afsapubs.html>

This site lists recent publications relating to information on child abuse that have been updated on the web site of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications>

This is the Australian Institute of Criminology site and has links to the criminal aspect of child abuse.

# Appendix Three

## How do I recognise when a child is at risk?

### Possible indicators of sexual abuse

- sexualised behaviours inappropriate to their age (including sexually touching other children and themselves)
- knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate to their years
- disclosure of abuse either directly or indirectly through drawings, play or writing that describes abuse
- pain or bleeding in the anus or genital area with redness or swelling
- fear of being alone with a particular person
- child or young person implies that he/she is required to keep secrets
- presence of sexually transmitted disease
- sudden unexplained tears
- enuresis and/or encopresis (bed-wetting and bed soiling).

### Possible indicators of Physical Abuse

- broken bones or unexplained bruises, burns, or welts in various stages of healing
- the child or young person is unable to explain an injury, or explanations given are inconsistent, vague or bizarre
- direct admissions from the parents that they are concerned that they might harm their child
- family history of violence
- marked delay between injury and obtaining medical assistance
- parent who shows little concern about the welfare of their child or the treatment and care of the injury

### Possible indicators of emotional or Psychological abuse

- the parent or caretaker constantly criticises, threatens, belittles, insults, or rejects the child or young person with no evidence of love, support, or guidance
- the child/young person exhibits extremes in behaviour from overly aggressive to overly passive
- delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development
- compulsive lying and stealing
- high levels of anxiety
- lack of trust in people
- feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves
- eating hungrily or hardly at all
- uncharacteristic seeking of attention or affection
- reluctance to go home
- rocking, sucking thumbs or self-harming behaviour

- fear when approached by a person known to them,
- signs of malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food
- poor hygiene: matted hair, dirty skin, or severe body odour
- unattended physical or medical problems
- the child or young person states that no one is home to provide care (inadequate supervision,
- failure to ensure safety)
- child appears constantly tired
- frequent lateness to school or absence from school
- inappropriate clothing, especially inadequate clothing in winter
- alcohol and/or drug abuse present in the household
- frequent illness, low grade infections or sores
- hunger.

Nothing in the Act requires a teacher to provide the report or their notes to the school nor does it make them automatically the property of the school. However, many schools have in place school policies and procedures which require these types of documents and records to be provided to the Principal of the school and to be kept as school records. In which case the Principal and the school will also have obligations under the *Privacy Act* to keep confidential and secure any notes or reports it may receive.

Once the report has been provided to the Department for Child Protection, the report becomes a 'government record' held by the Department and must be treated by the Department in accordance with the requirements imposed on the Department by the Act and any other statutory obligations.

Because the reporting obligations under the Act are obligations placed upon the teacher personally, it is recommended that the teacher:

- (a) Keep a copy of the report and any notes the teacher provides to the Department in compliance with their obligations under the Act;
- (b) Keep a record of receipt by the Department of the report (this is usually in the form of receipt number) as evidence that the report was made to the Department;
- (c) Keep a copy of the report and any notes the teacher provides to the school;
- (d) Should retain copies of any notes, the report and the receipt of the report by the Department, when the teacher leaves the school.

# Appendix Four

## Procedures to Assist Staff in Responding to Disclosures of Maltreatment

- Use 'protective interrupting' if students begin to disclose in class or in a public area
- Acknowledge that you have heard them and stop them from disclosing any further;
- Be supportive and gently indicate that they might tell you about it in a more private situation; and
- Quietly arrange to see them as soon as possible, in a situation away from other students.
- Establish clear limits on confidentiality;
- Listen attentively;
- Listen to students in a private location within the school;
- Be supportive and understanding;
- Acknowledge that it is difficult to talk about such things;
- Try to identify students' fears;
- Let students tell the event in their own words;
- Accept what is said – only the minimum of information is required;
- Reassure the student that it is right to tell, that they are believed and that they are not to blame;
- Be calm and non-judgemental;
- Tell students that a report will be made to a person who will be able to provide protection;
- Allow students the option of support during any agency interview and reassure them of the availability of continuing support;
- Document the disclosure and subsequent discussion and actions;
- Explain what will happen next; and
- Try and stay with students until necessary steps have been taken to ensure the safety and support.

### Staff must be mindful that they do not:

- Push for details or to conduct an investigation. Other agencies have this responsibility;
- Express judgement of the student, perpetrator or family;
- Get angry, upset or show shock;
- Blame students;
- Put words in students' mouths or interrogate as this could jeopardise the interviewing process of DCD and police;
- Promise not to tell when there are clear limits on confidentiality;
- Give a lecture about right and wrong;
- Say 'forget it', 'you'll get over it' or other such minimalizing statements;
- Give excessive pity; or
- Engage in general staffroom discussion about the disclosure.

Staff must be aware that a disclosure can arouse in them strong feelings of shock, anger and helplessness. It is important to control these feelings; they can be worked through after the disclosure.

# Appendix Five

## Cyber Predators

As discussed above, the main perpetrators of child abuse and neglect are people that the child knows. However the continuing popularity of the internet has given credence once more to the term 'Stranger Danger'.

The internet is one of the main sources of communication for young people today with the popularity of chat rooms, discussion groups, and playing interactive games. Unfortunately it is also a very attractive place for predators to go as they can remain virtually anonymous whilst participating in a range of paedophilic activity.

As NetAlert describes on their website,

*"...paedophiles can socialise together, trawl for inappropriate content (such as child pornography) and easily make collections of this and distribute to others.*

*They can pretend to be people other than themselves and they find a sense of security by operating from the confines of their own homes.*

*Grooming children online with the intention to meet them in real life is an activity many undertake.*

*They often set up bogus email accounts and handles (a nickname for a person who uses the Internet) which protect their identity online.*

*Children need to think carefully about a handle they choose. Handles such as \*Angel-Babe\*, \*Sweet-Sixteen\* and \*SexyKid\* appear harmless on the outset, however can attract the wrong attention. Pedophiles are often attracted to people with these types of names.*

*Paedophiles may also erase the history of what they have done online from their personal computers, making it a lengthy task for authorities to charge them with an offence.*

*Pedophiles conduct numerous activities online:*

- **Swapping child porn pictures** in chat rooms or through email or P2P networks;
- **Swapping personal information** of children that they have collected;
- **Participating in online communities** with the intention to groom children for personal sexual gratification or to meet them in person;
- **Forming networks** with other paedophiles;
- **Trading techniques** on how to avoid the authorities."

The WA Police, in conjunction with AISWA, the Department of Education and Training, and the Catholic Education Office have formed the Internet Safety Working Party. The aim of

the working party is to implement strategies through schools and community networks to educate children and parents on safe internet behaviours.

The *Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006* is the legislation in Western Australia that protects children under the age of 16, or that the offender believes is under the age of 16, from an adult who uses electronic communications with the intent to procure the child to engage in sexual activity; or to expose the child to any indecent matter.