
ESSEX HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL **MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY**

Essex Heights Primary School staff has a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care. Child abuse can have a significant effect on a child's physical or emotional health, development and wellbeing. The younger a child, the more vulnerable he/she is and the more serious the consequences are likely to be. If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care it is important to take immediate action.

In the case of a child who may be in need of protection or therapeutic treatment, or where there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, school staff can discharge this duty of care by taking action which includes the following:

- Reporting their concerns to the Department of Human Services (DHS), Child Protection or another appropriate agency, and
- Notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Guidelines

1.0 Mandatory reporters, who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, must report their concerns to DHS Child Protection.

1.1 Mandatory reporters include:

- School teachers and principals (including students in training to become teachers)
- Registered medical practitioners
- Nurses
- All members of the police force

1.2 *Child in need of protection*

Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection for any of the following reasons:

- The child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child.
- The child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child.
- The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

- The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- The child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- The child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parents are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care.

1.3 All other school staff who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of:

- protection are encouraged to report their concerns to DHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.
- therapeutic treatment are encouraged to report their concerns to DHS Child Protection.

2.0 If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to Child Protection.

3.0 If staff have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person **they must** report their concerns to DHS Child Protection or Child FIRST. In cases where staff has concerns about a child or young person, they should discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team.

3.1 If a principal or member of the leadership team does not wish to make a mandatory report, this does not discharge the teacher's obligation to do so if they have formed a reasonable belief that abuse may have occurred. If the teacher's concerns continue, even after consultation with the principal or member of the leadership team, that teacher is still legally obliged to make a mandatory report of their concerns.

4.0 Mandatory reporters must make a report as soon as practicable if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

5.0 EHPS staff will receive Mandatory Reporting training as recommended by DEECD guidelines.

6.0 This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the EHPS Policy Review schedule.

References:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/protecting-children-together>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children%2c-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource>

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/586465/information-guide-registered-teachers-principals.pdf

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/about-child-abuse>

Related legislation

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- *Crimes Act 1958*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- *Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001*

Department resources

- Flowchart: *A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST* (PDF - 270Kb)
- *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people*
- *Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module*

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