

Child Abuse: Mandatory reporting Requirements and Procedures

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Note:

Child Abuse: mandatory reporting requirements and procedures

Definition of Child Maltreatment

Child maltreatment refers to any non-accidental behaviour by adults or children that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of harm to a child or young person. The behaviours may be intentional or unintentional.

It may be the result of action or inaction on the part of a person who has responsibility to care for a child resulting in harm or injury to the child. The harm may include delayed physical and/or intellectual development. The maltreatment experienced is normally described in five categories. Each category of maltreatment is described by a range of indicators listed below:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional including psychological
- Neglect
- Family and domestic violence.

Descriptions of these indicators have been taken from the Department for Child Protection document "Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – A Guide for Professionals".

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has experienced severe and/or persistent ill-treatment. It can include, but is not limited to injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and fractures caused by a range of acts including beating, shaking, illicit administration of alcohol and other drugs, attempted suffocation, excessive discipline, physical punishment or other forms.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse covers a wide range of behaviour or activities that expose or subject a child to sexual activity that is exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level. These behaviours include observation or involvement with inappropriate fondling of a child's body, making a child touch another person's genitalia, showing pornographic material or sexual acts to a child, and sexual penetration of the child. Harm from sexual abuse may include significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infections and impaired emotional and psychological development.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is a sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, confusing, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. Children who have been emotionally abused are

likely to have a reduced capacity to experience a range of emotions, to express emotion appropriately and to modulate their emotional experience. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to be fearful, withdrawn and/or resentful, distressed and despairing.

Included under emotional abuse is psychological abuse. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. These include adequate supervision, adequate food or shelter, suitable clothing, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial care and emotional security. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic, and can result in detrimental effects on the child or young person's social psychological, educational or physical development and/or physical injury. Neglect should be considered in the context of physical, emotional or psychological abuse.

Note 1:

Child abuse and neglect, through the Department for Child Protection and Family Support, is defined as maltreatment done by a person who has responsibility to care for a child.

However, it is very important to note that the definitions of child maltreatment mentioned in this section can be used to describe some of the behaviour that can occur in schools by one child to another. While the treatment of such behaviour may be dealt with through other school policies such as Bullying and Behaviour Management, the victim of that 'bullying' may display some of the physical and behavioural indicators as those described in the next section of this document. These events are treated seriously by the school with the aim to help both parties.

It is also important to note that the child who is 'bullying' may be doing so because they have been subjected to the same inappropriate behaviour and may require assistance through the school's Child Protection policy.

Note 2:

Students aged 18 and over may attend school but are legally considered adults and as such CPFS does not have a child protection mandate for them. However, they can be considered potentially vulnerable and in need of specialist services and schools continue to owe a duty of care towards them. Schools should contact the Police if they are aware of any assault or crime against a young adult.

Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive but contains those that will be of most use to staff. This list has been taken from the Department for Child Protection document "[Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – A Guide for Professionals](#)".

Students frequently show indicators from more than one category; and the examples listed are not necessarily exclusive to a single category of abuse. Any of these indicators may suggest that a student is being abused, neglected or at risk of harm; however, indicators should be considered in the context of the student's age, medical and developmental history, and capabilities. In addition, mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence within families must also be considered.

The single most helpful item for staff to consider is the deviation from normal or baseline behaviour of a child. A child who has been abused experiences mixed emotional and physical responses to abuse and may well be confused by the disconnect between respect/love for the abuser and abhorrence or ambivalence to the abuse itself.

Physical abuse could be represented by:

- 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;
- a history of family violence;
- marked delay between injury and obtaining medical assistance;
- a parent who shows little concern about the welfare of their child or the treatment and care of the injury;
- repeated presentations of the child to health services with injuries, ingestions or minor complaints (this could also be an indicator of Factitious Disorder by proxy, a rare expression of physical and emotional abuse);
- the child or young person is unusually frightened of a parent or carer, or is afraid to go home;
- the child or young person reports intentional injury by their parent or carer;
- arms and legs are kept covered by inappropriate clothing in warm conditions;
- ingestion of poisonous substances including alcohol or drugs;
- the avoidance of physical contact by the child (particularly with a parent or carer).

Sexual abuse could be represented by:

- 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 anal or genital area with redness or swelling;
- fear of being alone with a particular person;
- a child or young person implying that he/she is required to keep secrets;
- the presence of sexually transmitted disease;
- sudden unexplained fears;
- enuresis and/or encopresis (bed-wetting and bed soiling).

Emotional or Psychological abuse could be when:

- the parent or carer constantly criticises, threatens, belittles, insults, or rejects the child or young person with no evidence of love, support, or guidance;
- the child or young person exhibits extremes in behaviour from overly aggressive to overly passive;
- there is delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development;
- there is compulsive lying and stealing;
- there are high levels of anxiety;
- there is a lack of trust in people;
- the student has feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves;
- the student is eating hungrily or hardly at all;
- there is uncharacteristic seeking of attention or affection;
- there is a reluctance to go home;
- the student is rocking, sucking thumbs or participating in self harming behaviour;
- there is a fearfulness when approached by a person known to them.

Sign of Neglect may include:

- signs of malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food;
- poor hygiene: matted hair, dirty skin or severe body odour;
- unattended physical or medical problems;
- When the child or young person states that no one is home to provide care (inadequate supervision, failure to ensure safety);
- The child or young person 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.

Myths about Child Abuse and its Prevalence

An accurate understanding of the dynamics underlying child abuse is important because the impact of any form of abuse on the victim can be life changing. Common outcomes associated with abuse include drug abuse, suicide, eating disorders, low self-esteem, psychosomatic illness and self-mutilation.

There are many myths about sexual abuse. Some of the common ones are:

- sex between children and adults is not damaging if it is in the context of a loving relationship;
- it is not the abuse which causes the problem but the effects of the intervention by others;
- those abused turn into abusers;
- children frequently lie about sexual abuse;
- sexual abuse is more common in lower socio-economic areas and families;
- only men sexually abuse children;
- sexual abusers are readily identified by 'normal' people.

The following myths pertaining to sexual and other forms of abuse relate particularly to schools:

- There will not be a problem here because all the volunteers/employees are female
- There will not be a problem here because the young people come from privileged backgrounds and will complain if there is an issue of abuse
- If we get the selection procedures right we will eliminate the possibility of abuse
- We use Police Clearances and Working with Children Checks here so we are covered
- It is one of the other children's parents/brothers/sisters to whom I am entrusting the child/ren, so it will be OK
- We did not need to screen Mr Smith because he is a friend of the teacher, president etc
- My workers, volunteers and casuals are youth themselves so there is no risk
- We are pretty good at identifying people here who are a bit 'odd'.

The Facts about Child Abuse

By its very nature, child abuse is a very difficult concept to measure. It is estimated that much of the abuse goes unreported. Statistics used, are often based on incarceration figures of those found guilty of abuse beyond reasonable doubt, a legally nuanced term. Most cases of child abuse do not meet the legal criteria of beyond reasonable doubt, but do present sufficient evidence to involve child protection authorities, where the criteria is based on the balance of probabilities. Those figures demonstrate an increased number of children who have been abused. Additionally, when studies involve cohorts reporting experiences of abuse, the figures increase substantially again and provide a different prevalence and typology of abusers.

Children or young people are at significant risk of developing psychological and emotional problems later in life, and at risk of repeating the pattern of abuse with their own children, through an inter-generational mechanism.

A child abuser can be a member of the family (father, step-father, mother etc.) or someone close to the family or the child (church member, teacher, community group leader). There is no reliable

profile of a child sexual abuser and institutions and communities must be vigilant for those in their care.

A child abuser usually spends sufficient time grooming the child with the child being made to feel that they are in some way complicit in the acts, thus making disclosure a difficult process.

Many child sex abusers hold positions of trust within the community with ready access to children and their families. Occupations that some convicted child sex offenders have held include bus driver, entertainer, teacher, scout leader, librarian, principal, church leader, judge.

In Australia, a case of child abuse is reported every 2.5 minutes.

Sexual abuse is more common among girls, other types of abuse are slightly more common among boys ([Child Protection, Australia \(2010 – 11\), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)).

Two-thirds of substantiations for abuse or neglect are for children aged 9 years old and under ([Child Protection, Australia \(2010 – 11\), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)).

Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse

The legislation

Since 1 January 2009, the *Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008* has been in effect and covers mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in Western Australia.

From January 2009, teachers and boarding supervisors are required by law to make a mandatory report of child sexual abuse when a belief, based on reasonable grounds, is formed that sexual abuse is occurring or has occurred. This applies to staff working in a paid or unpaid capacity as a teacher, school nurse and/or boarding supervisor.

This amendment forms part of the [*Children and Community Services Act 2004*](#).

In Western Australia, the mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse are the following professions in both the government and non-government sectors:

- teachers;
- boarding supervisors;
- nurses;
- doctors;
- police officers; and
- midwives.

Definition of 'boarding supervisor':

Boarding supervisor means a person who holds an office or position at a boarding facility the duties of which include the supervision of children living at the facility.

Definition of a 'nurse':

Nurse means a person registered under the Health Practitioners Regulation national Law (Western Australia) in the nursing and midwifery profession whose name is entered on the Register of Nurses kept under that Law.

Definition of 'teacher':

The definition of teacher in section 124A of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 has been changed to read:

- a) *person who is registered under the Teacher Registration Act 2012, or*
- b) *a person who provides instruction in a course that is -*
 - (i) mentioned in the School Education Act 1999 s11B(1)(a), (b) or (e) and*
 - (ii) prescribed for the purposes of this definition; or*
- c) *A person who instructs or supervises a student who is participating in an activity that is*
 - i. part of an educational program of a school under an arrangement mentioned in the School Education Act 1999 s24(1); and*
 - ii. prescribed for the purposes of this definition; or*
- d) *A person employed by the chief executive officer as defined in the Young Offenders Act*

1994 s3 to teach detainees at a detention centre as defined in that section.

All parents are aware of the mandatory requirements for teachers to report. This is done through a letter to parents or as an inclusion in the school's regular newsletter.

Role of Non Mandatory Reporters and Notifiers

Teacher assistants, school chaplains and school psychologists are examples of people who work with children in schools that are not mandated reporters. However, all people working with children, whether mandatory reporters or not, should continue to report reasonable beliefs and suspicions or concerns about all forms of abuse. These people who work with children also have a greater knowledge of the children in their care and can be included in the consultative process with the teacher in the case of sexual abuse.

Reports by those employees who are not mandated but should be made to the Principal of the school. In the case where it is believed the Principal may somehow be complicit or obstructionist, the report should be made to Chair of the Carmel School Board.

PLEASE NOTE:

Sexual abuse that occurred before 1 January 2009 is not considered a mandatory report but **MUST** be reported to the Principal.

In cases where a former student (still under the age of 18), or the parent or guardian of a former student, makes an allegation about child sexual abuse at the school occurring before 2009, the Department of Communities – Child Protection Service is to be informed immediately. An allegation involving a former student who is now aged 18 or over is reportable to the Police. In either case, the Principal must submit a critical incident report to the Director General, Department of Education and may also be required to notify the Teachers Registration Board of Western Australia

Definition of sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is defined by the Act in section 124A as:

'Sexual abuse' in relation to a child, includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- a) the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence; or*
- b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or*
- c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.*

This legislation is not intended to capture all sexual activity involving children and young people. Reference should be made to consent laws in Western Australia, [The Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 s. 320-322](#)

Definition of child

The definition of 'child' is defined in section 3 of the Children and Community Services Act as a person who is under the age of 18 years. In the absence of positive evidence as to age, a child is a person who is apparently under 18 years of age. Young people aged 18 and over are considered to be adults and are not covered by this legislation. However, schools still owe a duty of care to all students at the school. In these instances, police should be informed of any assault or crime against the young person.

Duty to report sexual abuse of children Section 124B of the CCS Act 2004 states, in part, a person who... has formed a belief or opinion based on reasonable grounds that a child:

- i. has been the subject of sexual abuse that occurred on or after commencement day;
- ii. is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse; and forms the belief;
- iii. in the course of the person's work (whether paid or unpaid)... must report the belief as soon as practicable after forming the belief.

When does a mandatory reporter make a report?

Mandatory reporters must report a belief, based on reasonable grounds in the course of their work, paid or unpaid, that child sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring. This means that teachers working outside of the school grounds are also required to report when working in either a paid or unpaid capacity. For example, tutoring, volunteer teacher at youth centre, working as a Sunday school teacher.

- *Please note that although only beliefs regarding sexual abuse are mandated to be reported under West Australian law, however all other concerns or beliefs regarding abuse or neglect of a child must be reported to the Principal or to Child Protective Services.*
- **Please note that within an Independent School such as Carmel School, once a teacher has formed a belief based on reasonable grounds, in the course of their work, that individual teacher is required to make a [written report to CPFS](#), not the school principal. Prior to forming a belief, the teacher may, if they wish, consult with appropriate colleagues with specialist knowledge, for example, the principal, psychologist, school counsellor, or relevant Head of School.**

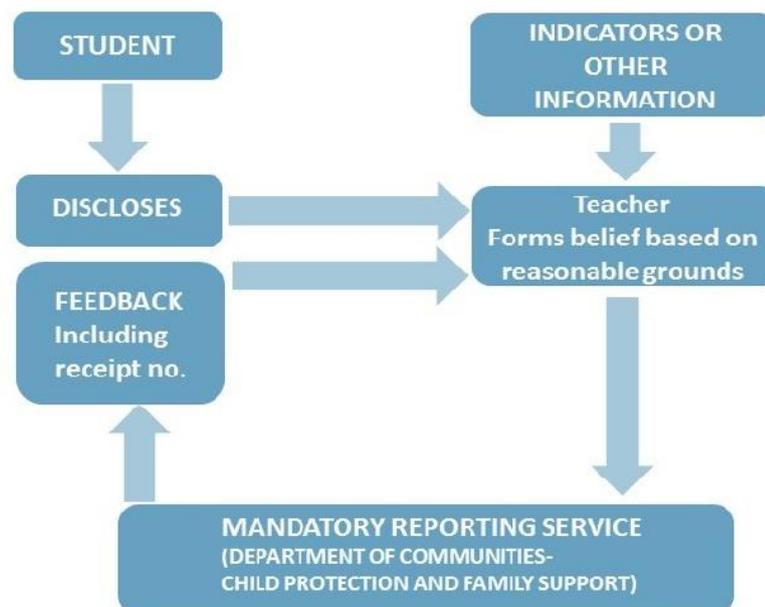
A mandatory reporter can form the necessary belief, based on reasonable grounds, by noting the presence of indicators, disclosures, injuries, signs, symptoms and behaviours that heighten concerns about child sexual abuse. Information on the indicators of sexual abuse is covered in section 3 of this document.

Teachers may wish to consider the following questions to assist them in deciding if their belief is based on reasonable grounds

- Can you describe the reasons why you believe a child has been, or is being sexually abused?
- What has the child said or done to suggest they are being sexually abused?
- Have you observed, or been told about, the presence of any of the 'possible indicators' of sexual abuse?
- Did the child disclose sexual abuse? What did they say happened? Who did they disclose to and when?
- What other behaviours have you observed and/or interactions with the child are of concern to you? What is the frequency and severity of the behaviour? How long has it been occurring?

REPORTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

MANDATORY REPORTING PROCEDURE



Once a teacher has formed a belief based on reasonable grounds, they are required to make the report to the Mandatory Reporting Service of CPFS

The flowchart above only shows what the teacher must do once they have formed a belief. It does not include any consultation process with other school staff. A consultation process may occur **prior** to the teacher forming a belief, but once that belief is formed the teacher is mandated to report.

All discussions and documentations will remain highly confidential and Carmel School will protect the identity of the reporter. However, throughout the process, the wellbeing of the child will be of paramount concern.

How does a mandatory reporter make a report?

A centralised [Mandatory Reporting Service \(MRS\)](#) has been established to receive all reports of child sexual abuse in Western Australia. This service is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Where a teacher has formed a belief that the child is at imminent risk of being abused, they should consider calling the Western Australian Police first, whether through the 000 or the 131444 numbers. This does not fulfil the legal obligation to report a child sexual abuse belief and the individual who has formed the belief should then make a [Mandatory Report \(MR\)](#), which can be completed through the following link:

https://mrweb.dcp.wa.gov.au/psc/mrweb/EMPLOYEE/CRM/c/MRIS2.AS_MRIS2.GBL?Page=AS_MRWEBFRONT_PG&Action=A&

Section 124C states that a written report may, but need not be in a form, approved by the CEO. However, the same section also specifies what information a report is to contain.

A report is to contain:

- (a) the name and contact details of the reporter;
- (b) the name of the child or, if the child's name cannot be obtained after reasonable inquiries, a description of the child;
- (c) if, or to the extent, known to the reporter —
 - (i) the child's date of birth;
 - (ii) information about where the child lives;
 - (iii) the names of the child's parents or other appropriate persons as defined in section 41(1);
- (d) the grounds for the reporter's belief that the child has been the subject of sexual abuse or is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse;
- (e) (ea) if, or to the extent, known to the reporter —
 - (i) the name of any person alleged to be responsible for the sexual abuse;
 - (ii) the person's contact details;
 - (iii) the person's relationship to the child;
- (f) any other information that is prescribed.

Mandatory reporters are required to submit a written report to the MRS as soon as practicable. A report may be oral or written, but in the case of an oral report the reporter must make a written report as soon as practicable after the oral report has been made.

Failure to make a verbal report can incur a penalty of up to \$6,000.

Failure to follow up a verbal report with a written report as soon as is practicable may result in a fine of \$3,000. Reporters may report beliefs to CPFS on a web based form which can be accessed at the mandatory reporting website www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au. Please note that this is a timed form for security reasons and cannot be saved on a local device.

Where a reporter does not have access to a computer, a written form can also be mailed out. Once you have completed your written report, it can be lodged using any of the following methods:

Email: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Fax: 1800 610 614

Post: PO Box 8146

Perth BC, WA 6849

After a report is lodged, the sender will receive a standardised letter. This letter is proof that a report has been made, so it is important that the response is retained and securely stored.

Processing of the Report

Once the report has been lodged, the Mandatory Reporting Service will assess the immediate risk to the child, and determine the need for further child protection assessment and investigation. A copy of the report is sent to the WA Police. The police determine if they need to be involved on a case by case basis.

The mandatory reporter will receive a feedback letter advising them of the CPFS District Office to which the report has been referred. It is important to note that all reports are actioned by CPFS, but it may not be the response that the reporter expects. Principals may discuss ongoing concerns with CPFS and are encouraged to maintain clear lines of communication with the District Office.

If new information becomes available to the reporter, this information should be submitted to CPFS. If a new concern or belief is formed, a new MR should be submitted.

Confidentiality and Legal Protection

The identity of the reporter is required to be kept confidential, except in limited and very specific circumstances. Section 124F(2) protects a reporter's identity from being disclosed. This includes information where a reporter's identity could be deduced. (s124A) Disclosure of a reporter's identity carries a maximum fine of \$24,000 and 2 years' imprisonment.

There are exceptions where disclosure of a reporter's identity is permitted. In such cases, 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
- The 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 of 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.

NOTE: At no time we will confirm, deny or comment to a parent as to whether we have or have not made a report to the authorities.

Where to go for information and assistance

The [Department for Child Protection](#) is the agency responsible for administering the Children and Community Services Act, which is the legislation dealing with the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse. The Mandatory Reporting Service has been established by the Department to receive and investigate reports of sexual abuse.

The Department has established a [website](#), which provides information around Mandatory Reporting and is the portal for making an online written report, but includes a downloadable copy.

The Mandatory Reporting Service can also be contacted through the following ways:

Telephone: 1800 708 704

Email: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Fax: 1800 610 614

Post: PO Box 8146

Perth BC, WA 6849

Allegations against School Staff

Allegations of abuse or suspected abuse against educators, staff members and volunteers are treated in the same way as allegations against other people. However, under the legislation any allegation of abuse by staff member or educator of, or visitor to Carmel School must immediately be reported directly to West Australian Police on 000.

Educators will make the report with the assistance or support of the Principal. If the Principal is involved in the harm then the [President of the Board](#) or most senior educator will assist in notifying the police. The Principal:

- will complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record and notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of making the report to WA Police.
- will provide appropriate support for any educator or staff member who has an allegation made against them.
- will provide appropriate support for the person who made the allegation.
- will protect the identity of educators/staff members against whom unsubstantiated complaints have been made.
- will review the person's duties, and if they continue to interact with students, ensure they are appropriately supervised at all times.
- may seek legal advice about restricting that person's work activities

NOTE: In the case of an allegation of grooming or child abuse by a former or current staff member, we will inform the complainant about services, including advocacy and support services, which may be available. A list of such services is available from the School Psychologist.

We will consult with the relevant government authorities to determine when, what and by whom information related to an allegation of child abuse and its investigation may be given to the person against whom an allegation is made, and complainant and his/her parents/guardian, other affected students and their parents / guardians, and the wider school community.

Documentation

Documenting a *suspicion* of abuse and neglect

If educators have concerns about the safety of a student, they will:

- record their concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible. This can be done on SEQTA, restricted to the Principal, or in a direct email or letter to the Principal
- record their own observations as well as accurate details of any conversation with a parent (who may for example explain a noticeable mark on a student).
- not attempt to conduct their own investigation.
- document as soon as possible so the details are accurately captured including:
 - time, date and place of the suspicion
 - full details of the suspected abuse
 - date of report and signature.

Documenting a *disclosure* of abuse and neglect

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a student, tells you about harm that has happened or is likely to happen. Disclosures of harm may start with:

- —I think I saw...
- —Somebody told me that...
- —Just think you should know...
- —I'm not sure what I want you to do, but...

When receiving a disclosure of abuse and neglect educators, staff members, and/or Principal will:

- remain calm and find a private place to talk
- not promise to keep a secret
- tell the student/person they have done the right thing in revealing the information but that they'll need to tell someone who can help keep the student safe
- only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter because probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries
- not attempt to conduct their own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.
- document as soon as possible so the details are accurately captured including:
 - time, date and place of the disclosure
 - 'word for word' what happened and what was said, including anything they said and any actions that have been taken
 - date of report
 - record on SEQTA, restricted to the Principal

Notifications of abuse and neglect

The person making a notification of abuse or suspected abuse to a colleague of the School Principal, will make a record of the answers to the following:

- name of person they spoke to.
- what the next step in the process is.
- what advice will be sent to confirm the report has been made.
- If there is any further action they need to take.

Confidentiality

It is important that any notification remains confidential, as it is vitally important to remember that no confirmation of any allegation can be made until the matter is investigated. The individual who makes the complaint should not inform the person they have made the complaint about. This ensures the matter can be investigated without prior knowledge and contamination of evidence.

Safeguards for reporters

Reports made to child Protection are kept confidential. Under the [Students Youth and Families Act 2005](#) if the report is made in good faith:

- the report will not breach confidence or standards of professional conduct
- the report can't incur civil or criminal liability
- the identity of the person making the report is protected. (However the Court may grant leave to reveal the person's identity if the evidence is critically important.)

A report is also an exempt document under the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#).