

# MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

## Rationale

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. As staff members at Kerrimuir Primary School, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidences involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact, and to report instances that we believe involve physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

The challenge of protecting children is everyone's responsibility: parents, schools, communities, governments and businesses. The Department strongly encourages all school staff to protect and preserve the safety, health and wellbeing of all children and young people.

## Definitions

### Child abuse

Child abuse can have a significant effect on a child's physical or emotional health, development and wellbeing. The younger a child is the more vulnerable they are and the more serious the consequences are likely to be. For full definitions for all of the types of child abuse listed see: Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people (the protocol) within Department resources below.

### Indicators of harm

There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert teachers to the possibility of child abuse and neglect. A comprehensive list of all of the indicators of harm can be found in: Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people (the protocol) within Department resources below.

## Aims

To ensure that children's rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.

To protect children and young people from abuse and neglect by ensuring Kerrimuir Primary School staff members understand their mandatory reporting responsibilities and duty of care obligations to protect children and young people from child abuse including physical and sexual abuse. To ensure staff know how to make a mandatory report to the Principal and subsequently to the Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Protection when they have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and are able to identify and be aware of the indicators of abuse.

## Implementation

- Any person who is registered as a teacher under the Education and Training Reform Act (2006), or any person who has been granted to teach under the Act, including Principals, is mandated to make a report of signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect to the Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Protection.

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- New staff members will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of the induction process.
- Staff members will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities regularly.
- Staff members will complete the DEECD online Mandatory Reporting training as required by DEECD.
- All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Assistant Principal.
- If a Principal or their nominee does not believe that a mandatory report is warranted, this does not discharge the teacher of their 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, that teacher is still legally obliged to make a mandatory report of their concerns.
- Non-mandated staff members who believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection are encouraged to speak to their Principal as well as being able to make a report to DHS Child Protection.
- Staff members that have concerns about a child or young person because they have been made aware of possible harm via their involvement in the community external to their professional role may make a (protective) report to DHHS Child Protection.
- Reports involving international students: Where any report to the DHHS, Child Protection involves an international student, the Principal must advise the Departments International Division on (03) 9637-2990 and consult with the Division to ensure support is arranged.
- The Principal will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.
- The teacher and/or the Principal class officer will contact the Department of Human Services by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification on: **1300 360 391 or after school hours crisis line 131278**
- Members of the Department of Human Services, or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification, will interview staff and children only in the presence of a Principal class member or his/her nominee.
- All reports and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.
- All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.
- While only mandated by law to report incidents of physical and sexual abuse, and neglect; teachers are also encouraged to report incidents of emotional abuse or neglect.
- Students, who disclose to staff a desire to harm themselves or others, must be reported by staff members to the Principal.

## FURTHER INFORMATION:

The Kerrimuir Primary School Mandatory Reporting policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Duty of Care
- Child Safe Policy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

This policy was last updated in April 2018 and is scheduled for review in April 2021.

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