



## CHILD PROTECTION & MANDATORY NOTIFICATION POLICY

2019

Review: 2022

Ratified by School Board:  SEPTEMBER 2019

### Vision Statement

*Guided by our Catholic Identity and Mercy Tradition, St Anthony's Catholic Primary School strives to provide education of excellence. We promote positive attitudes through living in a community where respect, justice and faith are celebrated.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

At St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, the protection, safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a fundamental responsibility that cannot ever be compromised by any other consideration. Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a fundamental responsibility that cannot be compromised by other considerations. Children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and to be protected from harm, to be asked to express their views and wishes about matters affecting their lives and to have those views appropriately considered should the need arise.

## **WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

Child abuse is about a person harming a child. In South Australia the law states that a child is a person under the age of 18 years. Child abuse can occur through someone doing something hurtful or by someone not doing something to provide for or protect a child.

There are four types of child abuse:

- Physical abuse is when a child's body is injured. This can be through punching, hitting, beating, shaking, biting, burning or any actions which results in a child's body being harmed. It can be seen in bruising, swelling, welts and broken bones.
- Emotional abuse is behaviour towards a child which destroys self-esteem, confidence and child's sense of worth. It includes constant criticism, belittling, blaming, 'put-downs', withdrawal of affection, ignoring and excessive teasing. A child can be left feeling worthless, unloved and lacking self-confidence.
- Neglect is the failure to provide a child with the basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, hygiene, education, adequate supervision, medical and dental care.
- Sexual abuse involves a child in any type of sexual activity.

## **Touching children**

Caring touch is essential for a child's health, growth and development. The caring touch between a child and trusted adult should not be confused with touching which is of a sexual nature.

## **What does the law say?**

The law states that certain people must report their concerns if they have reasonable ground to suspect a child has been or is being abused. This covers doctors, nurses, dentists, psychologists, police, probation officers, social workers, teachers, family day carers, and people who work in places where services are provided to children (including volunteers). A person who makes a report in good faith is protected from civil or criminal liability.

## **WHY REPORT CHILD ABUSE?**

Children have limited power to protect themselves from abuse and will only be protected from abuse and neglect if responsible adults take action on their behalf. In addition, schools provide educational programs to encourage children to protect themselves from abuse (often called Child Protection Curriculum).

Child abuse can happen to any child in any family. It hurts and can have lasting, damaging effects. Some children even die because of child abuse.

Reporting child abuse is the first step in stopping the abuse and protecting children from further harm. Reporting suspected abuse also gives **the Department of Child Protection** the chance to help families in situations where a child or children may be at risk.

## **RATIONALE**

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School believes that:

- Children have the right to be emotionally and physically safe at all times
- Children have the right to be protected from abuse and neglect
- Child abuse and neglect rarely stop without intervention and help
- Everyone has a moral obligation to report child abuse or a child/children at risk
- Early identification of abuse and neglect can ensure that relevant agencies and workers provide appropriate intervention to the family and the child/children
- Confidentiality of those reporting the abuse or neglect is imperative

## **GUIDELINES**

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School will:

- screen of adults working or volunteering at the site using approved screening policy.
- ensure volunteers receive approved child protection induction on site.
- Maintain a three-yearly approved staff child protection training which will be recorded on the HR system.
- Any concerns raised about staff or volunteer conduct will be responded to in accordance with approved Protective Practice guidelines.
- access the approved child protection curriculum each year.

In support of this policy:

## **THE PRINCIPAL WILL:**

- Ensure that all staff members have completed Mandatory Notification training
- Ensure that all staff members and volunteers are aware of their responsibility to report suspected abuse and neglect
- Online reporting: <https://my.families.sa.gov.au/IDMProv/landing.html>
- Phone Reporting: 13 14 78

[NB For all reporting, please ensure you have full names, dates of birth, addresses and phone numbers prior to making the report]

- Ensure that all staff members have access to the relevant sections of the 'Children and Young People (Safety) Act', 2017
- Ensure that all staff members are aware of the policy
- Ensure awareness of the South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council and the Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People, 2011.
- Provide support for staff in undertaking their responsibility in this area.

## **ALL STAFF MEMBERS WILL:**

- Update RAN Training every three years.
- Access and understand relevant sections of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (SAFETY) ACT 2017.
- Report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Line or make on-line reports as mandated by legislation.
- Provide an educational environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety using the 'Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum across R-2; 3-5 and 6-9.

## **PARENTS/CAREGIVERS/VOLUNTEERS WILL:**

- Be aware of the school's Child Protection & Mandatory Notification Policy
- As a volunteer in the school, understand that they **are mandated to report** any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Line

## **OBLIGATION OF MANDATED NOTIFIERS**

Everyone has a moral obligation to report child abuse or a child at risk.

Mandated notifiers must, by law, notify on a reasonable suspicion of 'abuse and neglect', as defined in the Act Section 6(1) and on reasonable likelihood of at risk in terms of Section 6(2) (b) (i) and (ii).

All reasonable suspicions must be reported without delay. Mandated notifiers need to be aware that a notification to the Department of Child Protection does not automatically result in an investigation.

While it is not mandatory to inform others of your report, it is a courtesy to inform the Principal and/or a member of leadership. The form below may be filed in the Principal's office but must be held in a locked file and not kept electronically.

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE CHILD ABUSE REPORT LINE IS CONTACTED?**

Suspected cases of abuse or neglect are referred to the **Department of Child Protection** district office. Social workers may visit the child and family to investigate the concerns. If a child is in immediate danger an investigation will occur within 24 hours and may also involve the assistance of police and hospitals.



