



## St. Bernadette's Primary School

### Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures

#### **RATIONALE**

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. As teachers, 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.

#### **GUIDELINES**

- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse and neglect to the Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Protection.
- Staff should make a report to Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Protection when there is a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from harm.
- Staff should make a referral to a Child First team when there is a significant concern for a child's well being but there is no belief the child needs protection.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.
- Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually. If a belief is formed that a child is in need of protections, the teacher / Principal class officer will contact the Department of Human Services as soon as possible to make an official notification on: (03) 9843 6000 or after school hours crisis line 131278.
- Proof is not required to form a belief; it is not the responsibility of teachers or Educational personnel to determine if child abuse or neglect exists: that is the responsibility of DHS or the police.
- If teachers are unsure whether or not to make a report they should discuss their concerns with the Principal/ Assistant Principal or ring DHS for advice.
- If a belief has been formed by a staff member that sexual or physical abuse has taken place a "Mandatory Reporting Information Sheet" available from the Principal must be completed and filed in the Principal's office.

- If members of the Department of Human Services, or associated support or intervention services visit the school following a notification, they will interview staff and children only in the presence of a Principal class member or his/her nominee.
- Teachers must respect confidentiality when dealing with a case of child abuse and neglect and must only discuss identity and case details with those with bona fide involvement in the management of the situation
- Teachers should seek parental consent before sharing information where this is possible and where this does not place the child at risk.
- Teachers should only share information as authorised by the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 i.e. where a child is subject to Child Protection investigation, Child Protection intervention or a Children's Court Protection Order. In other cases they should abide by the Information Privacy Act 2000.
- Staff should monitor all incidents 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 to the Principal.
- The Principal/ teacher should keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.
- Where a disclosure of an alleged sexual assault is made to a staff member, the staff member must inform the Principal as soon as possible. It must be on the same day. Principals should follow the required Departmental procedures for responding to allegations of student sexual assault

**Evaluation:** -This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle or as needed.

**Next Review:** July 2018