



MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

Definition

All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs and disclosures of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect.

Rationale

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. Teachers 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 *Child Safe Standards* direct staff to act to ensure the safety of children from abuse. Staff must comply with the requirements of Ministerial Order No. 870. (Refer to the RPS Child Safety Policy 2016)

Aims

- To align policy and protocols in relation to *Mandatory Reporting* with the RPS Child Safety Policy and Code of conduct.
- To define the roles and responsibilities of school staff in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- To enable staff to identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection.
- To enable staff to make a report of a child or young person who may in need of protection.

Guidelines

- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs and disclosures of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect;
- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures;
- Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually through online training and via staff meeting agenda;
- If staff have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child, they must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in their absence, the Acting Principal or Student Welfare Officer;
- School staff should keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:
 1. Description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour);
 2. Source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person);
 3. Actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with Principal, report to DHS Child Protection etc.);
- The Principal will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern;
- If a belief has been formed by a staff member that sexual or physical abuse or neglect has taken place, an Incident Report must be completed. This will be filed in the Principal's office;
- The teacher and/or Principal/Acting Principal will contact the Department of Human Services (Child Protection) by telephone as soon as possible, to make an official notification on: 1300 360 391 or after 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/Acting Principal or his/her nominee.
- All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential;
- All incidents are 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, 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 to the Principal;
- The School Chaplain/Primary Wellbeing officer will provide support to students concerned where appropriate.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's Strategic Planning and Review cycle.

Further information and reference materials:

Child Safety School Policy & Advisory Guide –

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/chilsafestandards.aspx>

Australian Government Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/cfca/pubs/factsheets/a141787/>

Flowchart:

[*A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST \(PDF - 270Kb\)*](#)

This policy was last ratified by School Council in

June 2017.