



Policies

Mandatory Reporting Policy *May 2017*

1. RATIONALE

As per the Child Safety Standards, all children have the right to feel safe and to be safe. All staff have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to incidents involving abuse and neglect of students and to report instances that they believe may involve physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

2. AIMS

This policy has been developed to ensure Heathmont East Primary School fully complies with MINISTERIAL ORDER 870: CHILD SAFE STANDARDS – MANAGING THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE IN SCHOOLS.

To this end Heathmont East Primary School aims:

- To communicate to all members of the school community that there is zero tolerance for child abuse.
- To develop a school culture of respect and inclusivity whereby discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- To ensure the appropriate conduct for all school staff and volunteers working directly with children are comprehensively communicated and complied with.
- To ensure there are processes to verify that all adults entering the school including parents, visitors or adults completing work not directly related to children, are identified and are aware of and comply with the appropriate conduct within a child safe environment.
- To ensure there are appropriate risk management procedures in place to minimise the possibility of child abuse.
- To develop a culture within which students are empowered to communicate their thoughts and concerns and are supported to communicate when they feel unsafe.
- To ensure the school community is aware of the procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse and these procedures are rigorously adhered to.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 All staff are mandated by law to report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect.

3.2 All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Assistant Principal or next most senior staff member in charge.

3.3 If a belief has been formed by a staff member that sexual and/or physical abuse or neglect has taken place a discussion between the staff member and the Principal Class Officer should take place. Consultation with the school nurse and Primary Welfare Officer may be beneficial. The Principal Class Officer will follow the protocol for making a notification.

3.4 The Principal will keep a record in the School Office of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern. These records will be maintained in accordance with current Privacy laws.

3.5 A written record will be made and kept in the School Office and the staff member and/or the Principal Class Officer will contact the Department of Human Services by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification. This may include reporting to the Victorian Police. (see Child First Flowchart for contact numbers)

- 3.6 Following the notification, the Principal Class Officer will keep the staff member informed as to the progress of the case in accordance with current privacy laws.
- 3.7 After discussion with the Principal, should no action be forthcoming, and the staff member still believes there is sufficient belief for mandatory reporting to occur, that staff member must make an independent report to the Department of Human Services.
- 3.8 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 Officer or his/her nominee.
- 3.9 All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential. They will be stored in the School Office in a confidential location.
- 3.10 All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.
- 3.11 While only mandated by law to report incidents of physical and sexual abuse and neglect, teachers, all staff are also encouraged to report incidents of emotional abuse. Staff should raise issues of concern directly with the Principal at all times.
- 3.12 Students who disclose to staff a desire to harm themselves or others must be reported by staff to the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- 3.13 New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.
- 3.14 Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually and to complete the compliance related training.

4 EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of an annual review in the context of the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan. The Mandatory Reporting Policy shall be reviewed as part of the school's policy review process by the Education Sub-Committee of School Council.

Review Date: May 2020

Reference: Staff Shared/Policies/Current Policies