

CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING POLICY

Rationale:

- Carwatha College P-12 is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.
- All students 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.
- Teachers, principals and teachers in training are mandated by law under section 184 of the Children Youth and Families Act2005 (CYFA) to make a report to child protection.
- Non-mandated school staff, such as administration and support staff under (section 183, CYFA 2005) who form a belief on reasonable grounds around a child's safety or wellbeing should inform the SWC/AP of their concerns.
- All adults are required to disclose to the Victoria Police if they know or reasonably believe that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16.

Aims:

- Registered teachers in the course of practising their profession may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical and/or sexual abuse. "Reasonable grounds" exist, where, for example:-
 - A child tells the professional that they have been physically or sexually abused; (Disclosure)
 - Someone else, such as a relative, friend, acquaintance or sibling of the child, tells the professional that the child has been abused; (Disclosure)
 - Observations of the child's behaviour or knowledge of children generally leads them to believe that the child has been abused; (suspicion/belief).
 - The professional observes signs or indicators of abuse. (suspicion/belief).
- All school staff who form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 need to be well aware of their responsibilities.

Implementation:

- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect.
- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.
- Ongoing staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually.
- Staff will be obliged to keep abreast of their duty of care and legal and mandatory reporting requirements and ensure they complete the DET online eLearning module when requested.
www.elearn.com.au/deecd/mandatoryreporting
- All concerns must be reported immediately to the SWC or an Assistant Principal.
- The report should be discussed by the SWC/AP and staff member and a decision made about the "reasonable grounds", if these are considered to exist, a notification will be made to DHHS by the SWC/AP.

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- A staff member at any time may choose to make the notification themselves, regardless of whether there is a shared belief about “reasonable grounds” and will at all times be supported by the SWC/AP.
 - The Department of Health and Human Services will be contacted as soon as possible to make an official notification.
 - Interviews of staff and children by the DHHS staff will only in be the presence of a Principal class member or his/her nominee.
 - Documentation will be made of all discussion, whether or not a notification is made, and kept with the AP/SWC in a secure location. The Principal will be kept informed as a part of the process
 - All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.
 - If, at a later date, the teacher believes the abuse is continuing in the same, or a different form, another notification needs to be made.
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- 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.

Sexual Offences against a Child

Under the Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014, any adult (aged 18 and over) who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child (aged under 16 years) is required to disclose that information police (unless they hold a reasonable excuse).

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....	2016	
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