

MANDATORY REPORTING (OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT)

Section 14 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas) (CYPF Act) requires prescribed persons to inform authorities of concerns about abuse or neglect. These persons are referred to as Mandatory Reporters.

Who is a Mandatory Reporter?

Mandatory Reporters include:

- registered nurses and medical practitioners
- psychologists
- teachers
- police officers
- principals
- any employee or volunteer that works in an organisation that provides education services and receives any funding from the Government.

Under this definition of Mandatory Reporters, the following groups of persons at the College are Mandatory Reporters:

- all staff, including teaching, non-teaching, casual and temporary staff
- the Principal
- Board members
- Volunteers
- Third Party Contractors employed by the College
- External Education Providers engaged by the College if the Provider receives Federal funding.

What Must Be Reported?

Mandatory Reporters must report when, in carrying out official duties or in the course of their work, they **believe or suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected**, or is an affected child as defined in the Family Violence Act 2004 (Tas). A child is a person under 18 years of age so this reporting obligation applies to both children and young people (a child who is 16 or 17 years old).

An “affected child” as defined in the Family Violence Act is a child whose safety, psychological wellbeing or interests are affected or likely to be affected by family violence.

While grooming is not conduct which must be reported, it is the College’s policy that such conduct must be reported by Mandatory Reporters.

Mandatory Reporters are required to safeguard the privacy of the child with the exception that they are required to inform the Principal that a report has been made about the child as soon as practicable. In the event that a Mandatory Reporter is not comfortable raising their issue of concern with the Principal, perhaps due to a perceived conflict of interest, they are to inform the Department of Communities Child Safety Services.

It is an offence under the CYPF Act if a Mandatory Reporter does not make a report.

What Are Reasonable Grounds?

Child Safety Services provides guidance on what 'reasonable grounds' for suspecting abuse or neglect may include. Whether someone has reasonable grounds for suspected abuse or neglect is a question of fact that will vary depending on each unique child protection incident or circumstance.

You may have formed a belief or suspicion on reasonable grounds if:

- a child has told you that they have suffered sexual abuse, physical or emotional injury, or neglect;
- someone else tells you that a child has been abused; or
- your own observations of physical and behavioural indicators of abuse lead you to believe that the child has suffered abuse or neglect.

For more information about physical and behavioural indicators of abuse and neglect refer to **Child Abuse - Definitions and Key Risk Indicators (Appendix 1)**.

How to Make a Report?

Mandatory reports may be made directly to Child Safety Services . - Referral Line on 1800 000 123

Emergencies or urgent concerns can be reported at any time.

All other notifications should be made between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. During business hours, your call will automatically be referred to the office in the area from which you are calling.

Notifications can also be made Gateway Services on 1800 171 233 if there is no immediate concern for the child.

Gateway Services are for children and families which are in need of family support and are a non-government service. A community-based child protection worker is based in each of the Gateway Services and is able to act on notifications of neglect and abuse.

DHHS Child Safety Services prefers reports to be made by phone so that all required information is collected in the first instance. However, an **online notification form** is also available https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/children/child_protection_services

.

The report must include a statement of the observations, information, opinions and other grounds upon which the belief, suspicion, or knowledge is based.

What Happens After a Report is Made?

Child Safety Services will assess the report.

If it is assessed that there is no risk in the report, or that the risk is being managed and the child is safe, there will be no further action.

If the report is serious and requires further assessment, Child Safety Services will carry out an investigation.

If an investigation is necessary, the child will be seen, other services and agencies will assist, and a decision will be made about whether there is a substantiated risk. Child Safety Services will then take further steps, including short-term protective intervention and support, or longer-term protective intervention and support.

What to Do If You're Unsure About Reporting

If you are not sure whether your concern for a child reaches the threshold for Mandatory Reporting, you can contact Gateway Services on 1800 171 233. As they are a non-government entity, it is possible to raise and address concerns about a child without the need to initially engage the statutory child protection system.

By reporting to Gateway Services, you are meeting your legal requirement to make a Mandatory Report.

Developed 2020

Reviewed 2021

To be reviewed annually