



POLICIES

Leschenault Catholic Primary School

Topic:	Child Protection		
Policy No:	2-D3		
Policy Area:	Community		
Updated:	2016	Date of Review:	2018

Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools

1. Rationale

Every staff member at Leschenault Catholic Primary School plays a key role in the pastoral dimension of a Catholic School. School staff members are key figures in the identification of child abuse. It is staff to whom a child will generally, directly or indirectly, disclose that abuse has occurred and they are responsible for ensuring that the child is protected from further harm.

Catholic schools are entrusted, in partnership with parents/guardians/caregivers who are the primary educators of their children, with the total education of the child. Catholic school staff have a duty of care to students during school operating hours and at other times when a staff/student relationship exists for example camps, retreats, excursions.

Child Protection

2. Definitions

'Child protection' refers to prevention and response to abuse against children. This includes the policies, preventative measures and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In context it applies particularly to the duty of Catholic Education and individuals associated with Catholic Education, towards children in their care.

The following list of indicators of child abuse and neglect are to be used as a guide only and are the ones that will be of most use to teachers.

Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruises and welts, particularly on face, lips, mouth, and back torso or on several body parts
- Shaped or linear bruising
- Unexplained shaped or linear burns
- Unexplained fractures
- Injuries in various stages of healing

Behavioural Indicators

- Fear of adults, particularly parents
- Startled reflex, cringes at sudden movement by adult
- Behavioural extremes, withdrawn or aggressive
- Afraid to go home
- Reports of injury from child
- Changes in academic performance

Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Speech Disorders
- Failure to thrive
- Lags in physical development

Behaviour Indicators

- Habitual behaviours not consistent with developmental stage
- Conduct disorders, destructive, violent
- Behavioural extremes
- Changes in academic performance

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Genital or anal bleeding
- Signs of pain or discomfort in the genital or anal regions
- Pregnancy
- Unexplained difficulty in walking or sitting

Behavioural Indicators

- Disclosure of involvement in sexual activity
- Inappropriate interest or knowledge of sexual matters
- Reports of sexual assault or inappropriate sexual behaviour to a staff member
- Changes in academic performance

Neglect

Physical Indicators

- Consistent hunger
- Unattended physical or medical problems
- Inadequate clothing
- Abandonment

Behavioural Indicators

- Constant fatigue
- Developmental delays
- Changes in academic performance

Dealing with allegations

3. Procedures

1. All Leschenault Catholic Primary School staff who identify concerns regarding the sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect of a child must respond according to the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.

2. Allegations of Misconduct and Serious Misconduct against Staff – Processes and Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia, is to be followed when an allegation is directed against school employees. These include teachers, administrative staff, grounds staff or any other staff member.

3. Allegations directed against any clergy or members of religious institutes should be discussed with the Director of Professional Standards and follow Towards Healing: Principles and Procedures in Responding to Complaints of Abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia as well as fulfilling other relevant requirements i.e. mandatory reporting.

4. The Principal shall ensure that staff receive induction, in relation to the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia and Mandatory Reporting within the first 12 months of appointment

5. The Principal shall ensure the school's pastoral care structures reflect the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.

6. Staff shall act in accordance with the relevant section of Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia in regard to any historic allegations of child abuse.

Dealing with allegations sexual abuse

4. Procedures for Teaching staff

A teacher is defined in the Children and Community Services Act 2004 as: a person who, under the Teacher Registration Act 2012 holds provisional registration, full registration, limited registration or non-practicing registration.

Teaching staff that form a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred or is occurring are responsible for:

1. Where the allegation is made against the principal, the Coordinator, Employment and Community Relations must be informed immediately.

2. Lodging a report with the Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS) as soon as practicable. The teacher may fulfil the statutory requirement by making the report to the principal. A verbal report can be made but this must be followed by a written report, preferably within the first 24 hours. Upon consultation, the MRS may direct the teacher to give both a verbal report and a written report, or just to submit a written report. Teachers also have the option at law to report directly to DCP.

3. Consulting with the principal. The principal may involve appropriate support staff including but not limited to psychologist, social worker, counsellor, and Coordinator from the Employment and Community Relations Team or the Mandatory Reporting Consultant based at the CEOWA.

4. Assisting in supporting any child involved where necessary.

5. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

6. Recording the MRS receipt number issued.

5. Procedures for Non-Teaching Staff

Staff at Leschenault Catholic Primary School must inform the principal of any concerns involving child abuse.

Staff that have a concern that child abuse has occurred or is occurring are responsible for:

1. Where the allegation is made against the principal, the Coordinator, Employment and Community Relations must be informed immediately.

2. Documenting the details of the grounds for their belief as well as any observations, consultations made and actions taken.

3. Notifying their principal as soon as possible (usually within one working day) of their concern and the grounds that lead to their concern.

4. Assisting in supporting any child involved where necessary.

5. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality

6. Procedures for Principal

The Principal of Leschenault Catholic Primary School is an approved “class of persons” in accordance with the Act and is able to take reports regarding child abuse. As well as informing the principal, teachers also have the option at law to report directly to DCP.

The Principal at Leschenault Catholic Primary School is responsible for:

1. In the case of a teacher, supporting the teacher to make a verbal and/or written report to the MRS as required. Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia Page 8 February 2014

2. Passing on an exact copy of the report to the MRS within one working day when a teacher chooses to lodge their written mandatory report with the principal as an approved class of person. Failure to do so can result in a \$6000 fine for the principal.

3. In the case of educators and other staff, making a notification of the concern to the Duty Officer of the local DCP district office or supporting the staff member to make the report.

4. Consulting with appropriate support staff including but not limited to the psychologist, social worker and counsellor.

5. Contacting the Coordinator from the Employment and Community Relations Team or the Mandatory Reporting Consultant based at the CEOWA.

6. Providing information to DCP or WA Police as required.

7. Reporting child protection concerns that may involve criminal behaviour to WA Police.

8. Ensuring the relevant staff member’s document any disclosures, observations and actions promptly.

9. Coordinating support for any child involved and for relevant staff where necessary.

10. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality

7. Lodging a mandatory report with the Mandatory Reporting Service

Teachers at Leschenault Catholic Primary School must either:

- make a written report only; or
- make a verbal report which must be followed up as soon as is practicable with a written report (within one working day).
- Verbal reports are required in urgent cases. If teachers are unsure as to whether the case they are reporting is urgent or not, they should phone the MRS for consultation and follow the instructions provided.

Teachers must lodge a report with the MRS in one of the following ways:

- complete the Mandatory Reporting Form and submit the written report electronically, by fax or post directly to the MRS; or

- complete the Mandatory Reporting Form and submit the written report to the principal who is authorised to receive it on behalf of the MRS; or
- make a verbal report to the MRS and then follow up by submitting a written report within one working day either directly to the MRS or to the principal.

Mandatory Reporting forms may be found on the MRS website:

www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au