



Child Safe Mandatory Reporting Policy

Child Safe Standards 2 and 5

PURPOSE:

- To ensure that children's rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.
- Black Hill Primary School is committed to zero tolerance of child abuse.

AIMS:

- All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. As teachers, we 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.
- Black Hill Primary School is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing and reducing those risks.
- Black Hill Primary School is committed to the safety of children with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- This policy applies to all school environments including camps, excursions and online environments / social media.

DEFINITIONS:

Physical violence

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles).

Possible physical indicators:

- Unexplained bruises
- Burns and/or fractured bones

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)
- Fear of specific people
- Unexplained absences
- Academic problems

Sexual offences

Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.¹

Possible physical indicators:

- Presence of sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy
- Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age
- Difficulty sleeping
- Being withdrawn
- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains

- Fear of specific people
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Displaying aggressive behaviour

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

Possible physical indicators:

- Delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development
- Physical signs of self-harming

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Exhibiting low self-esteem
- Exhibiting high anxiety
- Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour
- Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful
- Self-harming

Serious neglect

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

Possible physical indicators:

- Frequent hunger
- Malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Stealing food
- Staying at school outside of school hours
- Aggressive behaviour
- Misusing alcohol or drugs
- Academic issues

IMPLEMENTATION:

- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs or risks of harm, disclosures of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect or a reasonable belief a student is subjected to sexual abuse or physical harm. If a staff member forms the belief, on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, the staff member must make a report to Child Protection.
- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
- The recruitment, selection and management of new staff includes a police check, working with children check and rigorous referee checks that may go beyond the listed referees if required.
- All volunteers in the school will be supervised and have a current or pending working with children check.
- All staff including volunteers and contractors working during school hours will be required to agree to abide by our Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities, policies and procedures as part of their induction procedure.

- Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually by attending a face to face or online professional learning session.
- All concerns raised by either a parent, student or staff member must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Assistant Principal, or in his/her absence, the next person in charge.
- The Principal will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern in the form of detailed and accurate notes.
- During these discussions the Principal will decide either to:
 - notify the Department of Human Services Child Protection by telephone as soon as possible (make a mandatory report) on (03) **9479 6222** or after school hours crisis line **131278**
 - contact the Department of Human Services ChildFIRST on **1300 369 536** and make a referral
 - consult further either with regional staff or the centrally located Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit on (03) **9637 2934** or (03) **9637 2487**
 - provide the student/s with counselling support through DET students services.
 - monitor the student/s over a pre-determined period and review their circumstances
- The police must be contacted when allegations of physical assault, sexual assault or sexual harassment occur.
- 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 member or his/her nominee.
- All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.
- All incidents 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, and neglect; 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.
- Regular updates or refresher courses to be made available to staff.

Evaluation:

This policy is to be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was accepted by School Council October 2016