

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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The principles are based on the fact that children are more vulnerable and less powerful than adults and are entitled to protection by the school community. The Child Welfare Act 1947 empowers Family and Children's Services, WA Police and hospital staff to take protective action on behalf of children. This statutory power is extended to other organizations or services such as the school.

While there is no mandatory requirement to report child maltreatment in Western Australia, organizations have a duty of care requirement to report cases of child maltreatment or assault to either Family and Children's Services and/or the police – depending upon the nature of the harm.

However, there is mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in Western Australia.

- All adults have a responsibility to care for children, to positively promote their welfare and to protect them from any kind of abuse.
- All children have a right to a thorough education in personal safety, including safety in relationships. Students will be educated in making a complaint reporting abuse. This is normally done through the Health lessons.
- Emmanuel Christian Community School Board and Staff is made aware of the recommendations from the St Andrew's Hostel Katanning Report.
- School Staff and Board members undertake a training program covering a range of areas, including complaint handling, duty of care and protective behaviors.

## CHILD ABDUCTION POLICY

### **Policy document information**

Policy Name	Child Abduction Response Plan
Supervisor	School Principal
Other Policy Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical Incident Policy</li> <li>• Crisis Management Policy</li> <li>• School Ground Duties – Guidelines for teachers</li> <li>• Child Protection Policy-Non-Mandatory Reporting</li> <li>• Child Protection policy – Mandatory Reporting</li> <li>• Custody Arrangements/Court Orders</li> <li>• Reporting Policy</li> <li>• Bullying Prevention (Includes Cyber-Bullying)</li> <li>• Child Protection</li> <li>• Criminal History Checks</li> <li>• Duty of Care</li> <li>• Staff Induction</li> <li>• Volunteers- obligations</li> <li>• Surveillance in the school policy</li> </ul>
Audience	All Staff of Emmanuel Christian Community School

### **Key Dates**

<b>Date of issue</b>	<b>March, 2014</b>
<b>Date Submitted to the School Board</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> May, 2014</b>
<b>Date reviewed</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Date set for review</b>	<b>Training by AISWA 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2018</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Emmanuel Christian Community School is committed to maintaining a ministry, work and student environment that manifests Christian relational values and practices.

This policy is directed specifically at ensuring that all our community (student, parents, staff and their respective families) feel safe.

This policy has been developed in response to attempted abductions of children or suspicious adults approaching students near or on school sites.

The Child Abduction Response Plan is an initiative of the Western Australian Police (Sexual Assault Squad) and will determine the actions that need to be taken by the police in the event of an attempted or successful abduction.

## 2. PROCESS

Typically this plan would be initiated by a child reporting an incident to his or her teacher or parent. The following would be the typical flow of information.

**Child** makes a report. Reports may be of an attempted abduction, attempted assault or actual assault, stalking behaviour (with or without a camera), or behaviour of a sexual nature such as an adult exposing him or herself to the child/children.

**Teacher** - The teacher who receives the report should immediately inform the Principal or Deputy principal, passing on all information reported by the child/children. The information would include what actually happened and descriptions of any persons involved. Please refer to Appendix A – 'Eyes on the Street Incident Report'. Teachers who believe that a matter is sexual in nature may also need to submit a formal Mandatory Report. Emmanuel Christian Community School recommends that teachers be requested to not speak with the Media or with any people not directly associated with the issue.

**Principal** - the Principal, or delegate, should as soon as is practicable, call the police (131 444 or 000 if it is an emergency) to lodge a formal report. Please refer to Appendix A – 'Eyes on the Street Incident Report'. The School would then contact the parents if they have not already been informed. The Chair of the School Board and the Senior Pastor of the Church should also be advised of the situation. If the School deems this to be a 'critical incident' then the Department of Education Services (DES) must also be informed as per the Registration Standards 2013. So that other schools can be informed, schools are requested to send brief details of the incident to Niki Preston the Personal Assistant to the Executive Director of AISWA, her email is [npreston@ais.wa.edu.au](mailto:npreston@ais.wa.edu.au) (cc to [cdcruz@ais.wa.edu.au](mailto:cdcruz@ais.wa.edu.au))

The School may wish to involve the Senior Pastor or the School Psychologist to assist the child/children and families concerned. The principal may also need to advise the School Community of the incident by letter. A suggested letter is attached as Appendix B.

**AISWA** - AISWA will contact the principals of other AISWA schools in the area, the Catholic Education Office and both regional offices of the Department of Education. The Department of Education will advise Police Media. AISWA will assist with any calls to the Association by the media or will, if requested, provide assistance to the School. A sample email that may be sent to schools by AISWA is noted below:

*Subject: Child Protection Incident near <Location>*

***A sentence or two with a brief description of the event and/or the person/s involved.***

*Please consider this information in the context of our school community and whether you determine a communication to your parents is needed. You may wish to consult with local police to determine the level of threat and if the report is credible before deciding whether to proceed with a communication.*

*NB Offenders and potential offenders are extremely mobile across the metropolitan area – please continue your professional vigilance in protecting your children at entry and exit times and where they are on excursions in the community at other times.*

### **3. MEDIA**

If our school would like assistance with dealing with the media we should contact the Executive Director through her PA, Niki Preston on 94411611 or [npreston@ais.wa.edu.au](mailto:npreston@ais.wa.edu.au)

AISWA recommends that Schools do not make the first contact with the media.

### **4. CONTACTING PARENTS**

We recommend that a letter (see Appendix B Sample Letter) is sent to all children's homes in the event of the attempted or successful abduction of a child. The letter could be sent home to all families by e-mail or with the children at the end of the school day. It is not considered appropriate to use SMS text messaging or other brief communication tools.

The letter has been designed by the Western Australian Police, in consultation with DoE, CEOWA and AISWA. The letter contains protective behaviour messages.

Whilst the police want parents and students to be vigilant, they do not want a letter to cause unnecessary alarm. In particular the introduction must be sensitive to the effect it will have on parents and children in the School.

The police have stressed that principals ensure that they only use known facts. For example, a child reporting that they were approached by a stranger does not

necessarily mean there was an attempted abduction. This interpretation may be incorrect and cause unnecessary alarm and fear amongst the community.

The decision to send a letter, following an attempted abduction event, is considered to be good practice by WAPOL as it keeps parents and caregivers informed. However, it is our school decision as to whether or not our community requires notice of an event.

Our Principal may not wish to send a letter home if recent events have been such that the letter would serve no real benefit and perhaps cause unnecessary fear in the school community. For example, if other similar letters have been sent home in the recent past a second letter may not only cause unnecessary fear but also the reporting by students of all “strangers” and slowly moving vehicles as attempted abductions (even vehicles travelling at the required 40km/h near a school).

The principal will liaise with the investigating police, once they have spoken to the child/children, before sending a letter to the school community. This may assist them in assessing the risk to others and the advice they give to parents. Note that when giving details of an event to parents in a letter that vehicle registration details must not be passed on. These details should only be given to the police.

Finally, when a parent receives a letter about the possibility of a person approaching children, it can cause great anxiety and ongoing fear- particularly if a report is unsubstantiated. Principals may wish to follow up with the relevant police officer to find out the outcome of the investigation and then it may be appropriate to send parents a brief letter to provide closure about the matter. Please refer to Appendix C.

## **5. RECORD KEEPING**

Along with all notes taken by the teacher and Principal (Appendix A – ‘Eyes on the Street Incident Report’), it is essential that our school record the name/s, contact number and incident report number given when the Police attend.

Please also note that, in the event of a successful abduction, unless a child is taken directly from a school, the Police will not advise the school until parents and all other relevant authorities and agencies have been contacted.

## **6. EYES ON THE STREET**

Appendix A – ‘Eyes on the Street Incident Report’ document is self explanatory as it allows the witnesses to an event to record their recollection of both the event and the person or persons involved. The Principal would be responsible for sending the Incident Report/s to Crime Stoppers. The Principal, or delegate, should still contact the Police if the School believes that the matter requires Police intervention. Please note that training in the use of the ‘Eyes on the Street Incident Report’ is required.

## **7. CONTACTS**

Queries may be directed to:

Craig D’cruz AISWA Industrial Officer [cdcruz@ais.wa.edu.au](mailto:cdcruz@ais.wa.edu.au) 9441 1685

Senior Sergeant Mark Fleskens, State Coordinator Community Engagement Division  
[mark.fleskens@police.wa.gov.au](mailto:mark.fleskens@police.wa.gov.au) 9222 1063

Sergeant Garry Corker, Police Education Liaison Officer, Community Engagement  
Division  
[garry.corker@police.wa.gov.au](mailto:garry.corker@police.wa.gov.au) - [Garry.Corker@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:Garry.Corker@education.wa.edu.au) 9264 4531

## **APPENDIX A 'Eyes on the Street'**



## **APPENDIX B Sample Letter One**

*Dear Parents/Guardians,*

*The safety and security of all students at SCHOOL is of the utmost importance to me and therefore I endeavour to keep parents informed of anything that may impact on your child's safety.*

*Key phrases re the incident should be placed here:*

*"Today, or This morning, whilst walking to school"*

*"a student has reported to have been followed/approached/spoken to"*

*"a person was reported to (explain actions)" or "alleged to have occurred"- please use terms such as alleged rather than definitive terms.*

*"Police are investigating this report"- this last line is crucial.*

*In light of this incident, we urge all students to take care when travelling to and from school, and to report anything suspicious to parents, the School and the Police- call 131 444 to report an incident to the Police (only use 000 in an emergency) or 1800 333 000 to reach Crime Stoppers.*

*Here are some simple behaviours to help your child stay safe. Please discuss these with your child and ask your child to:*

- *Always travel in company.*
- *Walk on the right hand side of the road so that he or she always faces oncoming traffic.*
- *Wherever possible, leave space between themselves and the roadway.*
- *Stay in areas that are well lit.*
- *Stay in view- avoid going into areas that are hidden from view (such as parkland bush or behind shopping centres) and plan trips to avoid such locations.*
- *Be alert- earphones and headphones can reduce their awareness considerably.*
- *If your child carries a mobile telephone, ensure that it is turned on and ready to dial an emergency number.*
- *If a passing vehicle stops nearby, never get too close.*
- *Do not hesitate to run from a situation in which they feel at risk.*
- *Provide the same advice to younger siblings and watch out for them wherever possible.*
- *Always report suspicious behaviour to parents, the School and the Police, noting number plates of cars/vehicles and or clothing and distinguishing features of individuals.*

*If you have any queries regarding this matter, do not hesitate to contact the School or discuss your concerns with your child's teacher.*

*Yours faithfully*

*Principal*

## **APPENDIX C Sample Letter Two**

*Dear Parents/Guardians,*

*I am writing to give you further information following the recent letter/report of a student/s being approached by a person/vehicle near our school on <date> and in <location>.*

*As you know, we take all reports like this very seriously in the first instance and notify parents and, if necessary, the Police.*

*In this case, the Police have investigated the report/s and I am happy to say that they have advised me there is no information about this matter that suggests there is an ongoing threat to the children/students in our school.*

*If you have any queries regarding this matter, do not hesitate to contact the School or discuss your concerns with your child's teacher.*

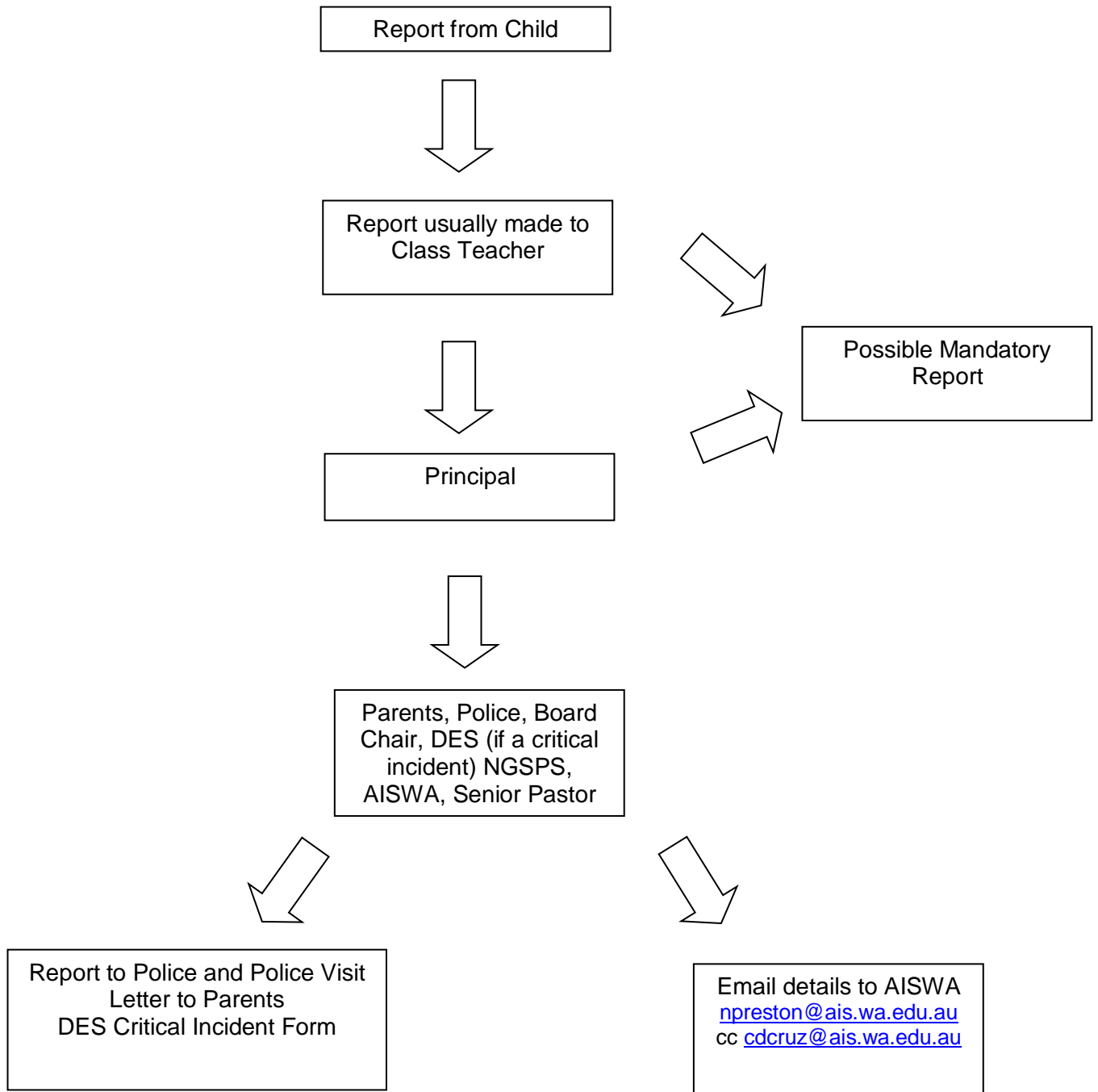
*Yours faithfully*

*Principal*

## APPENDIX D

## Sample Flow Chart

This is a very simplified flow chart. A school's flow chart should be designed to make it easy for any staff member or student to follow the process.



## **NON-MANDATORY REPORTING - Child maltreatment**

Child maltreatment occurs when a child has been subjected to emotional or physical actions or inactions, the severity and /or persistence of which has resulted in significant harm or injury to the child; or where a child has been exposed or subjected to exploitative or inappropriate sexual acts. Emmanuel Christian Community School requires that you inform the Principal or in his/her absence the Deputy Principal prior to any formal report.

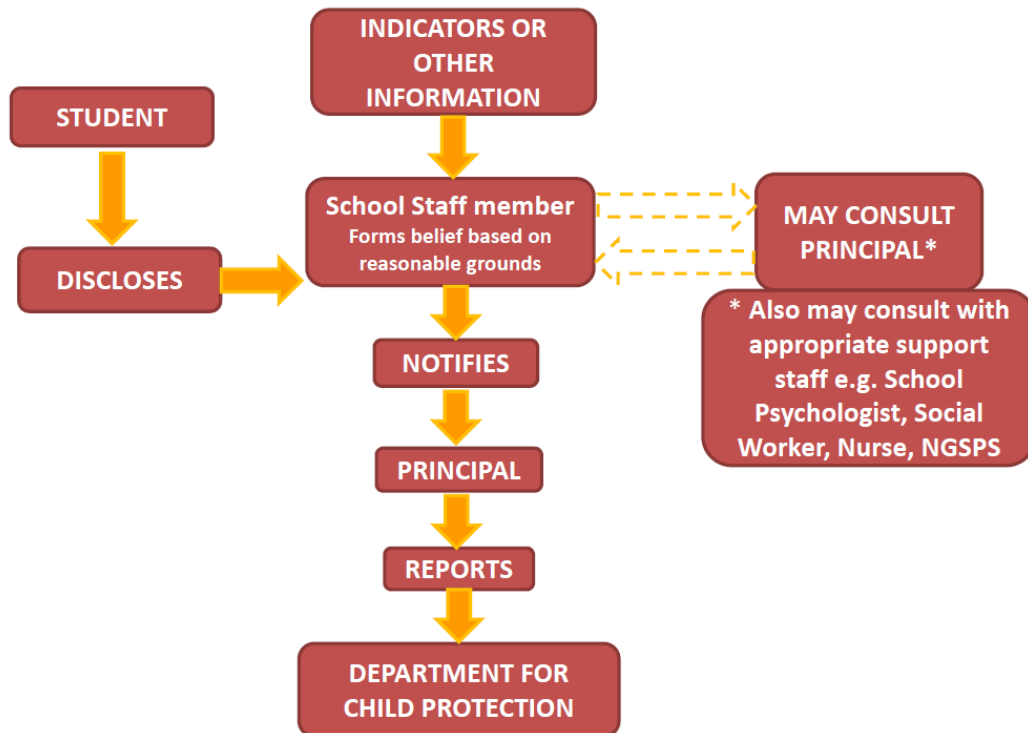
The description of child maltreatment includes situations where a child is denied available nutrition, shelter, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child has suffered significant harm.

Process:

1. Teacher or staff member becomes aware that a student has been maltreated, according to the above definition, by someone from inside the school or outside the school community (home or any other place).
2. Teacher inform the Principal.
3. Preliminary discussion with the staff member making the report. As from this point all verbal information must be written down for any possible use for clarification in the future.
4. Principal to clarify matters with persons involved if the matter doesn't appear to be serious or in doubt.
5. If the allegations do not present any basis to believe that any serious maltreatment has occurred, then the investigation will stop.
6. If there are serious implications, then the principal will inform the Department of Children protection (DCP). The Church Pastor and the chairman of the school board should be made aware of the process taking place.

**Policy updated: September 2011, September 2012, July, 2013, 2015**

## NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE – CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (NON-MANDATORY REPORT)



## MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### INTRODUCTION

The following information has been copied from the Department for Child Protection Government of Western Australia 'Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse in Western Australia' Book. The staff has been trained in dealing with this new legislation by a member from AISWA.

All children have the right to be protected from sexual abuse. The protection and care of children is a whole of community and society responsibility. The Department for Child Protection (the Department) has a major responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing<sup>1</sup> of children and to provide for their protection and care in circumstances where their parents have not given, or are unlikely or unable to give, that protection and care. The

*Children and Community Services Act 2004* provides a legislative base for the Department's involvement with families and children.

Child abuse, and child sexual abuse, occurs in all sectors of society regardless of social, economic and cultural factors. Early identification and reporting of child sexual abuse to authorities is critical to keeping children and young people safe. Mandatory reporting legislation varies across Australian jurisdictions around the types of abuse that must be reported and the range of people mandated to report.

The legislation that governs the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in Western Australia is the *Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse*

*of Children) Act 2008*. From 1 January 2009, these mandatory reporting provisions will become part of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

In Western Australia, mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse under the *Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008* are:

- doctors
- nurses and midwives
- teachers
- police officers.

The term 'mandatory reporter' is used throughout this document to mean 'mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse', in line with the *Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008*. Throughout this document, the terms 'child' and 'children' are used to refer to all children and young people under the age of 18 years. The purpose of this booklet is to support mandatory reporters fulfil their legal obligation to make a report when they form a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child has been sexually abused, or is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse. This booklet outlines the responsibilities of mandatory reporters and the mandatory reporting process in Western Australia.

## **CORE PRINCIPLES**

The following principles underpin the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in Western Australia:

- The best interests of the child or young person must be the paramount consideration.
- Every child and young person has a right to be protected from sexual abuse.
- Keeping children safe from abuse is the responsibility of individuals, families, communities and the society as a whole. This is best achieved through a collaborative approach.
- Children have the right to be heard and to be believed.
- If anyone has a concern regarding the safety of a child, it is their responsibility to make a report.
- Child sexual abuse affects everyone. Early detection is critical to reducing child sexual abuse in our community.
- Child sexual abuse is not condoned by any culture or religion. Cultural practices or traditions cannot be used as an excuse for sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.

## THE LEGISLATION

In Western Australia, the legislation covering mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse is the *Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008*. From 1 January 2009, these mandatory reporting provisions will become part of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

Legislative definition of sexual abuse

'Sexual abuse', in relation to a child, includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- (a) the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence; or
- (b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
- (c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.

## MAKING A REPORT

### What must be reported?

Mandatory reporters must report a belief, formed on reasonable grounds in the course of their work, paid or unpaid, that a child or young person has been the subject of sexual abuse or is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse, to the Department. When making a report, in good faith, about possible child sexual abuse, a mandatory reporter does not breach any employment related duty of confidentiality, professional ethics or standards and will not have engaged in unprofessional conduct.

### When must a report be made?

Mandatory reporters must report the belief that a child is being sexually abused, or has been sexually abused, as soon as practicable. This is important as the earlier a report is received, the earlier steps can be taken to protect a child, where this is necessary.

Is proof of abuse needed to make a report?

Reporters do not need to have proof that a child or young person is being abused in order to make a mandatory report. However, mandatory reporters must have formed a belief on reasonable grounds. It is critical that professionals who believe a child is being sexually abused make a report so that the Department and the Western Australia Police can conduct the necessary investigation. Mandatory reporters who fail to report a belief that a child is being sexually abused commit an offence which attracts a fine of up to \$6,000.

## **HOW IS A REPORT MADE?**

Mandatory reporters are to report child sexual abuse to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Department for Child Protection, or to other persons approved by the CEO

Reporters should check to see if someone in their organization is approved by the CEO to receive mandatory reports. In practice, all reports are made to the Department for Child Protection's Mandatory Reporting Service. Organisations may also have a policy on internal reporting procedures, so reporters should check with their organisation.

### **Verbal reports**

Due to the seriousness of child sexual abuse, a verbal report is the preferred method of reporting in the first instance. A verbal report enables the Mandatory Reporting Service to ask clarifying questions and gather as much information as possible to inform the assessment, and any future intervention and planning. However, all verbal reports must be followed by a written report. To make a verbal report, mandatory reporters can telephone the Mandatory Reporting Service on 1800 708 704.

### **Written reports**

A written report must follow a verbal report as soon as practicable, preferably within 24 hours. It is an offence to fail to provide a written report after lodging a verbal report and such a failure carries a maximum penalty of \$3,000. A form for mandatory reporters,

### ***Mandatory Report - Sexual Abuse***

It can be completed online through the Department's mandatory reporting website at: [www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au).

This form can also be downloaded from the website.

Reporters should also refer to their organisation's internal processes before making a mandatory report to the Department for Child Protection. Written reports can be lodged with the Mandatory Reporting Service via:

- email to: [mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au](mailto:mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au)
- fax to: 1800 610 614
- post to: PO Box 8146  
PERTH BC WA 6849

Mandatory reporters can contact the Mandatory Reporting Service and request a blank mandatory report form to be sent via fax or mail if access to online facilities is not available

## **INFORMATION PROVISION**

There are three tiers of information to be provided in a mandatory report:

1. information that must be provided under the legislation
2. information that must be provided, if known, and

3. other important information. In order for the Mandatory Reporting Service to assess the child's safety and determine the most appropriate response, it is important that mandatory reporters provide as much information as possible.

## **1. INFORMATION THAT MUST BE PROVIDED**

There is some information that must be provided in a verbal and written Report. Information that must be provided includes the:

- reporter's name and contact details
- name of the child, or if this is not known, a description of the child
- grounds on which the reporter's belief of child sexual abuse has been formed.

Grounds for belief that the child has been sexually abused

Mandatory reporters must specify the grounds on which they formed the belief that a child has been, or is being, sexually abused. It is important to provide as much detailed information as possible, including:

- what the child has said or done to suggest they are being sexually abused
- if the child has disclosed abuse, what they said happened and who they disclosed to and when
- a description of any behaviours/ interactions with the child that are of concern, including frequency and severity of behaviours
- whether the child has any injury, or medical needs.

## **2. INFORMATION THAT MUST BE PROVIDED, IF KNOWN**

- The child's date of birth.
- The child's current address.
- The names of the child's parents or other responsible persons

### **Responding to a disclosure**

It is critical that a mandatory reporter is sensitive to a child or young person who makes a disclosure of child sexual abuse.

Mandatory reporters should:

- Listen to the child and let them tell their story.
- Believe him/her and reassure the child that telling an adult was the right thing to do.
- Comfort the child if he/she is distressed, without making any promises.
- Avoid making the child repeat their story/disclosure to another person in their organisation.
- Write down what the child says and any relevant observations.
- Not confront the person alleged by the child to be responsible for the abuse.
- Not ask leading questions.
- Not interview or investigate the allegation, as this is the role of trained professionals.
- Make a report to the Mandatory Reporting Service as soon as practicable.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REPORT IS MADE?

The Department will assess the information contained in the report to determine the most appropriate response. The Mandatory Reporting Service will provide a 'feedback letter' to the reporter advising which District Office the report has been referred to, or whether no further action was recommended. The Service must also give a copy of every written report to the Western Australia Police. When the Mandatory Reporting Service receives a report regarding possible sexual abuse of a child, an initial assessment is undertaken. The assessment process may include reviewing, collating and evaluating information from existing sources, and contacting other professionals who may be working with the child and who may be able to provide further information. The assessment process may result in a decision to investigate. An investigation may include workers from the Department for Child Protection and/or the Western Australia Police speaking with the child and the child's family or carers. A range of measures may be implemented to safeguard the child, if necessary, following an investigation.

Where possible, the Department works with the family to support them to care for their children within the family. As part of the assessment or investigation process, reporters may be contacted by workers from the Department and/or the Western Australia Police for further information. Not all reports will result in an investigation or contact with the family.

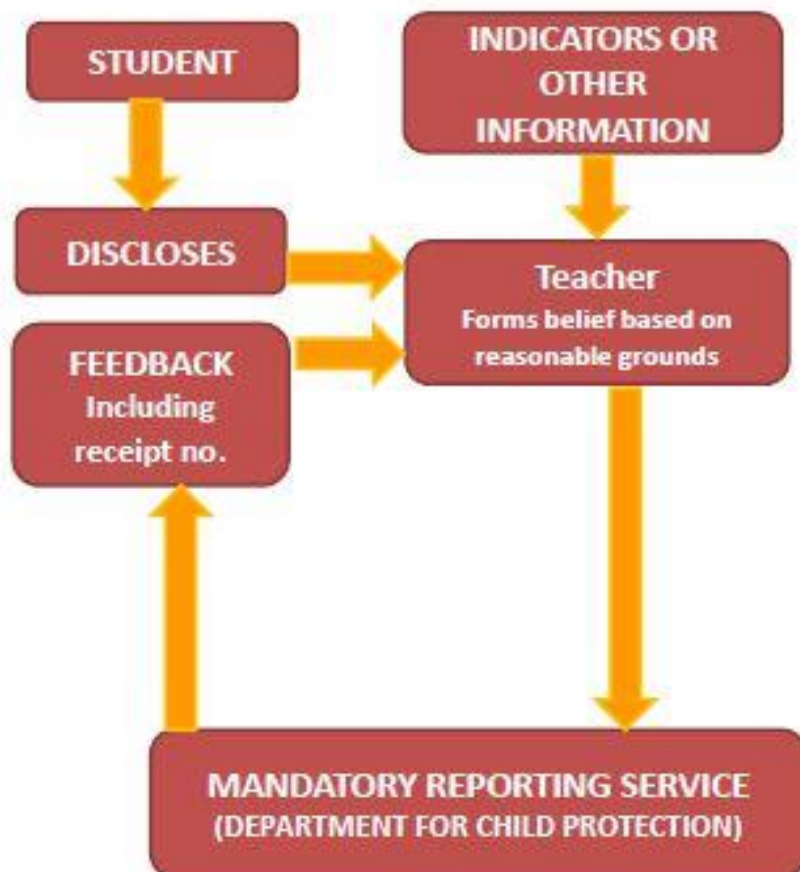
The action taken by the Department and/or the Western Australia Police will depend on the unique circumstances of each report and the information provided.

The Department will give a copy of all written reports of child sexual abuse to the Western Australia Police, as this is required under the legislation. The Mandatory Reporting Service will provide any other information that may assist the Western Australia Police in the

administration of their responsibilities. If the Mandatory Reporting Service does not receive a written report shortly after a verbal report is made, it is likely that they will contact the reporter to request the written report.

Mandatory reporters will be provided with an acknowledgment receipt when a report is made (either verbal or written). The Mandatory Reporting Service will provide a 'feedback letter' to the reporter advising which District Office the report has been referred to, or whether no further action was recommended. Mandatory reporters can contact the Department to request the outcome of the report and information will be shared with them if possible, after taking into account any legal restrictions or other relevant considerations (such as the status of any investigation).

## MANDATORY REPORTING PROCEDURE



Please note that once a teacher has formed a belief based on reasonable grounds, they are required to make the report to DCP, not to the school principal. Prior to forming a belief, the teacher may consult with colleagues with specialist knowledge, for example, the Principal, psychologist, school counsellor. The teacher is to advise the principal after they have made the report to DCP.

The flowchart above only shows what the teacher must do once they have formed a belief. It does not include the consultation process with other school staff. At Emmanuel Christian Community School this process of consultation with colleagues or specialist staff may take place prior to the teacher forming a belief.

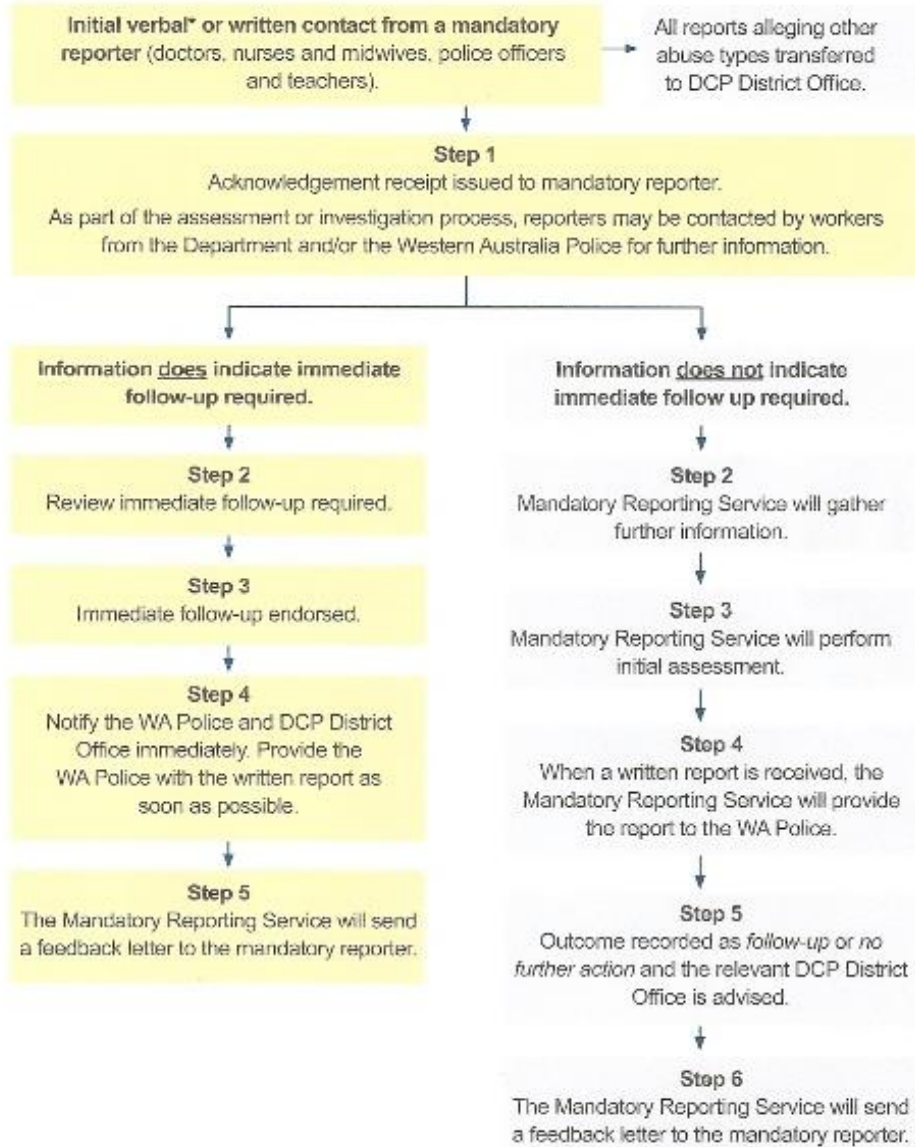
For more information refer to the Fact Sheets and the guide for Mandatory reporters as published by the Department for Child Protection of Western Australia or visit the web site [www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au)

Note: Staff undertook AISWA training. (16/3/2016)

Policy updated: 2009 , July, 2013, 2015, 2018 (Training by AISWA)



## Fact Sheet 8 - MANDATORY REPORTING FLOW CHART



## SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

### Meeting Legal Obligations

The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* prohibits sexual harassment in both the workplace and in educational institutions. This law imposes an obligation on employers in particular, to prevent sexual harassment from occurring. Employers who ignore this responsibility may be liable for any acts of sexual harassment committed by employees.

### Informing Staff and Students

Both staff and senior students should be advised what constitutes sexual harassment and that such harassment is unlawful. As Christians it also is our responsibility to ensure that all people are treated fairly and justly and in love regardless of age, sex, race or disability. Obviously, if this is done there should not be any sexual harassment. However, to meet the obligations of the above act and to ensure that staff and students are properly informed our school has drawn up this *Sexual Harassment Policy*. *All existing staff and new staff as they are appointed should be given a copy of the policy.*

### Dealing with Complaints

The school should appoint at least one male and one female staff member or a board member or sexual harassment adviser as it is necessary. These should be people who are approachable and to whom staff can turn with confidence that their complaints will be heard and dealt with justly. Advisers should be made aware of the need for confidentiality, discretion and fairness.

A senior staff member, in many cases the principal, should have overall responsibility for the implementation and publication of the process and for training advisers. This person should also become personally involved in dealing with any complaints of a serious nature.

## POLICY GUIDELINES

### What is Sexual Harassment?

Because of our Christian beliefs, the teacher or principal of the Christian school will approach this question from a rather different viewpoint from those in secular schools. The school nevertheless must ensure that it fulfils its legal obligations. There will be some activities of a sexual nature that the school will not permit to occur, whether or not they are legally defined as sexual harassment because of the Biblical standards on which the school is based. Moreover the school will want to deal with sexual harassment by children under the age of 16, but it will deal with these rather differently because there are not legal obligations to meet.

## **A Definition of Sexual Harassment**

Section 28A of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* states that a person sexually harasses another person if:

- the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the person harassed; or
- engages in other unwelcome conduct of sexual nature in relation to the person harassed.

*in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.*

Unlawful sexual harassment in employment can take place:

- when a person applies for a job;
- during the course of employment; or
- if an employee is dismissed from employment as a result of rejecting the harasser's advances.

Section 28F of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, which deals with schools and colleges provides that:

- it is unlawful for a member of staff of an educational institution to sexually harass:
  - a person who is a student at the institution; or
  - a person who is seeking to become a student at the institution.
- it is unlawful for a person who is an adult student at an educational institution to sexually harass:
  - a person who is an adult student at the institution; or
  - a member of the staff of the institution.
- in this section 'adult student' means a student who has attained the age of 16 years.

Acts of sexual harassment can take many forms including:

- the distribution or display of offensive pictures or written material;
- repeated unwelcome requests for social outings or dates;
- offensive comments about a person's physical appearance, dress or private life;
- jokes, intrusive questioning, messages or telephone calls of a sexual nature;
- direct propositioning, or subtle pressure for sexual favours;
- leering or unnecessary familiarity;
- unwelcome physical contact such as patting, pinching or touching; or
- sexual assault.

### **Harassment among Students**

Most commonly, in the school situation it will be boys who harass girls, but the reverse sometimes happens. The forms that occur commonly in schools include touching genitals, buttocks or breasts, lifting skirts, kissing, pulling down underwear, making verbal comments about the sexual attributes of a person (or lack of them), and drawings or writings of a sexual nature. As much as they may wish it were not so, Christian teachers would be naive to believe that these things do not happen in a Christian school.

From a Christian viewpoint, most of the activities cited above would be considered unacceptable whether the conduct is wanted or not. In many cases students give the appearance that it is either wanted or not resisted because of peer pressure. A boy may touch a girl sexually and she will remain docile because of fear of social disapproval, because it is considered wrong to “dob” on someone, or because she “needs” the approval of others and does not want to get a reputation as someone who is “frigid”. Many instances of sexual harassment occur in Christian schools and are unreported or unnoticed as the students affected are afraid to even react because of the strength of peer opinion.

Where unwarranted sexual behaviour occurs in a school and both parties are consenting, the school should take appropriate action. However, the matter will not be dealt with as harassment.

### **Dealing with Harassment among Staff**

Under Section 106 of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* an employer can be held liable for acts of sexual harassment done by employees *unless* the employer took all reasonable steps to prevent the sexual harassment from taking place. Ignorance of the harassment is not a defence. The School must:

- investigate all complaints quickly;
- take action to prevent further harassment; and
- ensure that further harassment does not recur.

In addition to the legal requirements the school should show compassion, understanding and concern for injured parties and should deal justly and appropriately with the harasser if the offence is proven.

Section 94 of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* makes it an offence for one person to victimise another person in relation to sexual harassment where the second person:

- has made a complaint or intends to make a complaint;
- acts as a witness or intends to act as a witness; or
- intends to support a victim.

A person is victimised if threatened, harassed, harmed or subjected to any form of detriment.

Employees or applicants for employment who consider that they have been sexually harassed in their employment, or when applying for employment have been victimised, may lodge a complaint with the Federal Human Rights and Equal

Opportunity Commission. Complaints will be referred to compulsory conciliation or, if this is not successful, to the appropriate tribunal for a decision. The Federal Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has the power to make a wide range of orders including, in some cases, the re-employment of a person dismissed, and unlimited damages where it is found a complaint of sexual harassment has been established.

Employees may bring action for wrongful termination of employment in industrial tribunals where they have been guilty of harassing a fellow employee. To minimise such risks the school's policy needs to make it clear that sexual harassment is a ground for termination of the employment of any employee.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Emmanuel Christian Community School is committed to providing a working and learning environment for its staff and students that is supportive, caring and free from wrongful discrimination and sexual harassment. The school requires that staff, students and other members of the community treat each other with respect and love. Staff are expected to display Christian love and appropriate professional behaviour in their dealings with each other and the students in their care. A sexually permissive lifestyle or actions of a sexual nature that are not in accord with Biblical standards that do not involve sexual harassment may, nevertheless, be deemed unprofessional conduct or conduct that is not in accord with the Biblical principles on which the school is based. Such actions include:

- homosexual activities;
- possession or distribution of pornographic or sexually explicit materials; and/or
- coarse, sexually oriented language.

### **Sexual Harassment is Unacceptable**

Wrongful discrimination and sexual harassment is unacceptable to the school and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. All members of the school community and the staff and senior students in particular are required to support and honour this commitment.

The sexual harassment of staff and students is unlawful under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, which prohibits:

- the sexual harassment of a student by a staff member;
- the sexual harassment of an adult student (ie a student who is aged 16 years or older) by another adult student; and
- the sexual harassment of staff or applicants for staff positions by other staff members or adult students.

While religious schools are exempt from most of the provisions of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, they are covered by the sexual harassment provisions of this Act in relation to both employment and education. As a Christian school, this school will uphold the highest standards of Christian behaviour and would not wish to discriminate unjustly or unfairly against any member of the school community or to permit any form of harassment to occur.

Appropriate action, including dismissal or expulsion, will be taken in any proven instances of harassment or unfair discrimination.

### **Definition of Sexual Harassment**

*Sexual harassment has nothing to do with mutual attraction or consenting friendships.* However, a friendship of a romantic or sexual nature between a staff member and a student is not acceptable professional behaviour for a staff member of this school.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature including comments, attention or contact by which a reasonable person would have anticipated that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be verbal, physical, written or visual. Examples of sexual harassment may include:

- the distribution or display of offensive pictures or written material;
- repeated unwelcome requests for social outings or dates;
- offensive comments about a person's physical appearance, dress or private life;
- jokes, intrusive questioning, messages or telephone calls of a sexual nature;
- direct propositioning, or subtle pressure for sexual favours;
- leering or unnecessary familiarity;
- unwelcome physical contact such as patting, pinching or touching; or
- sexual assault.

### **Determining Boundaries for Unwelcome Behaviour**

It is clear that it will sometimes be difficult to determine what behaviour goes beyond the boundaries of what is welcome. Among Christians giving a hug is not normally considered sexual harassment. The following guidelines should assist:

- If you are asked to desist from a particular action, it is a prima facie evidence that it is unwelcome.
- Avoid any jokes or teasing with sexual connotations.
- Consider the behaviour from the point of view of the person receiving it (innocent intention is no defence to sexual harassment).
- Always attempt to build up other people and do what is helpful to them not to yourself.
- Be very careful that any demonstration of affection is appropriate and err on the side of restraint; if a person shows embarrassment or any concern do not repeat the action.

### **Victimisation**

In relation to sexual harassment it is against the law to victimise a person who:

- has made a complaint or intends to make a complaint;
- acts as a witness or intends to act as a witness; or
- intends to support a victim.

A person is victimised if threatened, harassed, harmed or subjected to any form of detriment.

### **The Responsibility of Staff**

All staff members have a duty to ensure that any sexual harassment brought to their attention or witnessed by them is dealt with as promptly as possible according to the procedures set out below and is referred, where necessary, to the appropriate authority.

It is the legal responsibility of the school and all its employees to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and victimisation by enforcing this policy and by active education of students and fellow staff members.

### **Procedures if a Person is Sexually Harassed**

Staff members or students who believe they are being or have been sexually harassed should make it known that the comments, actions, attention, behaviour or contact is unwelcome and offensive.

If the person believes that the sexual harassment is continuing, or that he or she is being victimised, or if the staff member or student is unable or unwilling to handle the matter personally, he or she should contact an adviser for information, advice or to make a formal complaint. The person should follow the school policy on complaints which involves the Contact Officer appointed by the school board. However other advisers for this school include:

1. Principal
2. Deputy Principal
3. Board Chairman
4. Pastor
5. Contact Officer

Investigation of complaints will be conducted in a prompt and fair manner and as confidentially as possible. The only staff members and students who will be made aware of the complaint will be those people whose involvement is necessary to resolve the problem.

No student or staff member will be disadvantaged as a result of making a complaint unless it be proven that the complaint was mischievous.

## APPENDICES

### GRIEVANCE HANDLING

All discrimination or harassment grievances must be handled:

- confidentially;
- impartially;
- promptly; and
- according to clearly defined policy and procedures that everyone knows about.

Anyone handling a grievance should *always* keep the above rules in mind. The following steps should be followed:

- Get full information from the 'complainant' about their grievance and how they want it resolved - LISTEN to the person making the complaint.
- Decide whether you are the appropriate person to continue handling the grievance.
- If you decide you are not, immediately refer the complainant to an appropriate person.
- If you decide you are the appropriate person, put the information you have received from the complainant to the person/persons he or she has complained about and get the other side of the story.
- Decide whether the complaint is valid or not (this may involve talking with others or witnesses).
- Decide how the complaint should be resolved (again, this may involve talking with others; eg Contact Officer, Pastor or Board Chairman).
- Act on your decision, letting both parties know what is going to happen and why and telling them about other/external avenues of complaint if they are not happy with your decision.
- Monitor the outcome.
- Report the matters to your superior.
- Pray about the matter throughout the procedure.

## DEALING WITH SEXUAL HARASSMENT AMONG STUDENTS

How should a school deal with sexual harassment? There are two areas of concern.

- Firstly, there is a need for education about what is appropriate behaviour and this preferably should be undertaken in single sex groups. Students of both sexes should be helped to understand what they can and should do when faced with sexual harassment. In particular, they should be aware of the complaints procedure. Students should also be taught how a Christian boy ought to treat a girl and vice versa. Students learn sexual stereotypes from the wider peer group, and these views need discussing and correcting.
- Secondly, there is the need to deal with instances of sexual harassment that have come to the teacher's attention. There will be two main groups of cases that you will need to deal with. There will be actual complaints made by the victim, and there will be activities that are observed by others (including the teacher).

### Complaints

The following suggestions are made for instances where the victim approaches the teacher:

- Take the student aside inconspicuously and listen carefully to what is said.
  - Clarify the actions or words that were said, and the name of the person or persons who were alleged to have done the action.
  - If possible, get the student to write down what happened. If this is not desirable, the teacher should write down what happened in the student's own words. It is most important if justice is to be done that the teacher should not "lead" the witness by asking questions that suggest ideas. So do not ask questions like "Did he touch your breast?" Ask questions like "What did he/she do next?"
  - Ask if there were any witnesses and get their names. Interview these before the victim goes back to class if possible, or make sure there is no chance for the victim to tell the witnesses what was said to the interviewer. Interview each witness separately. Get a written record of what was said. Do not lead the witnesses in the questioning.
  - Assure the victim that the matter will be fully looked into and warn him or her not to talk to other students about the matter. Whatever your belief about the accuracy or otherwise of the allegations made by the student. Remember that if the student was harassed he or she will need all the help and support that can be given.
  - Ask the victim to talk to his or her parents about the incident.
- Discuss the matter with a senior staff member, for example, Contact Officer, Principal, Deputy Principal, Board Chairman, Pastor or a Senior Board member.

- Take the supposed offender aside and interview him or her.
  - Ask the accused to tell in his or her own words what was done to, or said to, the accuser.
  - If the student does not own up, then obtain a detailed statement of all actions and words that took place between the accused and the accuser at the specific time. Do not use leading questions. Get him/her to read the statement and to sign it if sure that it is accurate.
  - Ask if there are any witnesses he or she knows of. Interview these witnesses and any witnesses given by the victim before you release the accused back to the class room.
  - The accused student should not be allowed back into the classroom until the matter is resolved. The parents of both students may need to be called in before the matter is resolved.
  - If there are no witnesses and both students have different stories, the two students may need to be interviewed together. This may be a problem if the offender has power or influence over the victim. The victim should have the support of a teacher of the same sex present and supporting during the interview.
  - If the offender owns up then discuss the actions he/she has done and explain why they are wrong.
- Decide on appropriate action.
  - The teacher should discuss the proposed action with the senior person consulted originally.
  - Make sure the principal is informed of what is happening.
  - Inform the parents in writing of what has happened.
- Inform the teacher who has each of the students in his pastoral care.
- If the matter is a serious problem, arrange for both sets of parents to come in separately to discuss the matter. The principal would normally conduct such interviews.
- Arrange for follow-up counselling for both students.

### **Observed Actions**

A teacher has seen an action, but is not sure whether it was imposed or whether the students were consenting.

- Take the supposed victim aside quietly and ascertain whether the action was imposed or not.
- Then follow the procedure given above.

A teacher observes an incident where one student is clearly telling another to stop, and the offender is persisting in the behaviour. The teacher should:

- intervene and tell the student to stop;
- take the offender aside and explain why the behaviour is wrong. If the matter is a serious one then take both students aside; talk to the victim first and then to the offender. If the matter is a serious problem, arrange for both sets of parents to come in separately to discuss the matter. The principal would normally conduct such interviews.

While the teacher is on playground duty a victim calls for assistance. Follow as above.

A student or a parent reports to the teacher that sexual harassment has been occurring. The teacher should:

- interview all possible witnesses discretely to get a picture of what did happen;
- interview the victim(s) discretely and privately without letting others know why the conversations are taking place; and
- follow procedure above.

### **Why is Sexual Harassment Wrong?**

Sexual harassment is sin because it is a wrong done to another person. It may arise from the sexual desires of one party, or from the need felt by a student to conform to peer values, or from some combination of both of these. Some boys act in this way to “prove their manhood” to their mates. Some girls (and boys) accept such wrong actions, not because they like them, but from fear of the disapproval of their peers, or from fear of being criticised if they report the incident. In many instances boys are not aware of the damage that their actions do to girls. It is important, therefore, to discuss these issues with students to help them come to a proper understanding of the issues.

### **A Balanced Reaction**

It is important for teachers not to over-react to a situation of possible sexual harassment. The teacher should take into account the age of the student, and to understand what that action meant to the student. For example, a five year old boy who lifts up a girl's dress would be treated quite differently from a senior high school boy doing the same action. That does not mean, however, that we should overlook such inappropriate action by the young.

Where students, especially girls, younger children or other apparently powerless groups report harassment, their charges should be taken seriously and properly investigated. The teacher should be sure to listen sympathetically, and to follow the procedure as set out for sexual harassment.

### **Teasing**

The question of teasing is a difficult problem. Teasing can, and usually does, become a form of harassment of the weak by the strong. Students need to understand the law of love - "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Teasing that is gentle and does not damage a person is acceptable. Humour should be used to build up and not to expose or humiliate each other.

## **ISSUES BETWEEN THE STAFF AND STUDENTS POLICY**

### **Students Need Protection**

In recent years most people have become aware of the reality of child abuse. This abuse may be physical, emotional or sexual or more often a combination of the above. Recent publicity has made parents aware of the possibility of children being targeted by paedophiles. Christian schools need to be as vigilant as anyone else about these issues. We cannot assume that because a School seeks to be a Christian learning community that it will be exempt from problems of this nature. Instead we should be mindful that Satan will attempt to exploit the vulnerability and the innocence of Christian children. Christian schools thus should be especially vigilant. Offenders will often be likeable people who are gifted and appear to have an excellent relationship and rapport with young people. Christians would prefer not to acknowledge that such people could be found in a Christian ministry. Recent history is a clear testimony to the fact that such people always have and continue to prey on vulnerable and innocent children. This policy deals in particular with the need to screen staff both employed and voluntary who are in contact with students.

### **The Integrity of the Staff Also Should Be Preserved.**

In our effort to protect our students we must be careful not to create an atmosphere of fear and distrust and undermine the confidence of staff to deal lovingly and properly with the students under their care. If fear leads staff members to depersonalise their relationship and to deprive students of loving care and affection our students are double losers. On the other hand lack of wisdom among some staff often lead to suspicions and accusations which even though the accused is innocent wreak terrible consequences on them and their relationship with the students and their fellow staff members.

Care is needed in explaining to staff why screening is needed. Staff should be made aware that because they are people of integrity they would have nothing to fear from such screening. If there are problems which the screening will show up staff should be informed that this would be confidentially dealt with. Past problems with the police that have no particular reference to their teaching ability will not be disclosed to other people. Where there is a problem that sexually related it is better for the person to be removed from situations where further problems may occur.

### **The Reputation of the School (The Church) Should be Protected**

Christian schools have a biblical responsibility to protect children. (Mat 18:6 NIV) *But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. (Luke 17:1-2 NIV) Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.* In both these Scriptures the word-translated "sin" really means "to stumble". Schools and their staff have a moral and spiritual responsibility as well as a legal duty of care towards the students in the school.

The school not only needs to take adequate steps to carry out this responsibility but it also needs to be able to demonstrate that it has done this. It needs to be stressed that this duty of care involves not only proper care in the selection and supervision of paid staff but also voluntary staff and parents who are in the classroom for a variety of reasons.

## **RECRUITING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

### **Understanding the Problem**

Many people who may be involved in inappropriate sexual activity with children will appear to be credible, sometimes very charming, friendly and competent persons. They may have had a long association with Christian Churches, which enable them to have written references that appear credible. There will be two groups of such people. The first group will include people who genuinely want to help children but they have confused motivation and lack restraint or are unable to maintain appropriate sexual boundaries. The second group will want to prey on children for their own sexual gratification and are devious and competent in covering up their predatory behaviour. Children need protection from both groups.

In the past Christian organisations including Christian schools have accepted on face value apparently well-intentioned persons from Church background because they spoke the right language or appeared to have the right references. This is not an acceptable practice. For any activity involving the care of minors there is a clear legal duty of care that means schools have to take effective methods of screening applicants.

### **Steps to Be Taken before the Offer of Employment**

- All applicants for staff positions in Christian schools whether permanent or casual part time or full time, should be advised on making application that there would be a check of police criminal records should they be short-listed. This check should be made prior to any offer of employment in all cases.
- *No application for a position should be finalised without first contacting Churches/schools and people who have been given as referees or who were previous employers.*
- Staff members should also be made aware of and give their consent to a policy that involves possible periodic checks of police records from time to time and

immediate checks if there is any allegation of sexual misconduct made against the staff member.

- Include in the application form a declaration to be completed by the applicant that certifies that the person has never been involved with or convicted of nor is currently being investigated for, violence, sexual assault, or any crime against a minor.

### **Volunteers and visitors**

A number of people who are not employed by the school will have contact with the students either on a regular or ad hoc basis. Proper steps to ensure that children are protected from adverse contact with these people is also necessary.

#### ***Volunteer Assistants***

In a school there will be a wide range of volunteers. Where a volunteer is assisting the school on a regular basis he or she should be asked to go through a screening approach including a police Check. The best way to do this is to develop a form in which the volunteer makes a declaration that certifies that the person has never been involved with or convicted of nor is currently being investigated for, violence, sexual assault, or any crime against a minor; and also agrees to a police probity check being carried out.

#### ***Occasional Helpers***

People may offer to help in a variety of ways ranging from the occasional help of a parent in the class room, being on a roster to help in the canteen or the cleaning, providing adult supervision for children on excursions, offering to drive children to or from the school to places where an excursion or camp is being held. Apart from circumstances where parents are involved at school or on a school activity with their own children, teachers need to exercise care to ensure children are safe from untoward incidents. In most cases it would not be wise for parents to be driving children other than their own except with express permission of the parents of the children being given transport.

A particular area of concern might be how to deal with visitors who come to the school, or tradespeople who are working at the school. The teacher should ensure that students are not left alone with visitors for whom there is no adequate screening.

### **Training and Supervision**

School staff should be taken through training courses to make them aware of the way they can protect themselves, of the legal implications of their actions. They should understand ways that they can properly show their students care and affection without breaching ethical boundaries.

They should be given a clear understanding of their responsibilities and of the actions that would be taken by the school if there were an allegation of unlawful or unethical conduct.

This training should be done as part of the normal staff training but where there are Christian groups who can provide a Christian perspective their help could be sought. The following guidelines are suggested to help the school in Training. Those who have a supervisory role in the school have a responsibility to ensure as far as practical that teachers they are supervising are aware of their responsibility towards and their duty of care to the students in their charge.

## **Guidelines**

### ***Principles governing physical contact between staff and students***

Staff members should not be discouraged from showing affection to students by physical contact, However some care is needed and staff might be encouraged to discuss the principles set out below.

1. Staff members should be relaxed about normal physical contact such as a touch on the arm or shoulder. They should not repulse a child who gives a hug but they should not deliberately encourage it
2. Care in the above however should be taken as children are older and particularly with the onset of puberty. Teachers should not:-
  - Place an arm around the shoulders or waists of children except perhaps when comforting very small children when they may need a cuddle.
  - Be alone with a child of either sex. Make sure you are not alone with a child in a closed room.
  - Kiss a student
  - Hold a student's arm
  - Pat a student on the legs or buttocks or breast
  - Take a single student in a car or allow themselves to be in a position where the teacher is alone in a car with a student
  - Normally pick up a child unless the child is incapable of getting up unassisted.
  - allow students to continue in sexually provocative actions. Calmly inform them that their behaviour is not appropriate.
  - allow any sexual references or jokes, double meaning or the like.

### ***Some Ethical Principles and Legal Implications***

- Because of the position of power and authority a teacher has in relationship to a students in his or her care any sexual contact must be regarded as unethical and thus subject to discipline. The relationship of unequal power and authority thus must limit the possibility of a student giving genuine consent. Thus even where the students is not legally a minor it is unethical for a teacher to have a sexual relationship with a student in his or her charge,
- The school has a greater duty of care towards the students than towards its staff. Thus where a staff member or potential staff member has been in the past a sexual offender it would be generally unwise to expose them or their charges to the possibility of re-offending. This has nothing to do with whether or not the person is forgiven. God forgives those who truly repent and he alone knows the state of their heart. While we should, not judge the motives of a person or whether or not they are truly repentant we should not expose children to risk because of a desire to be compassionate to an adult who has been an offender in the past.
- Where a child has been subject to sexual harassment or abuse by a teacher the school may have a legal responsibility to report the matter either to the police or to a government department. Where there is any doubt the Principal should contact the authority without identifying either the school or him or herself and seek clarification after giving broad details of the possible complaint. Where a student is a minor any sexual contact with an adult is probably illegal and thus the offender punishable under criminal law.

## **Procedures**

### **Screening**

The school should develop standard forms of application and letters of inquiry for all applicants for position. These forms should include an appropriate form for volunteers.

The school should set in place procedures for review of status of teachers when, if necessary probity checks can be carried out. For example if the school has a process of cyclical staff review this could be an appropriate time for probity checks, perhaps of a random nature to be carried out.

As part of the normal supervision of staff supervisors should comment on aspects of the way staff members relate in the giving of care, use of physical contact etc.

### **Personnel**

It would be wise to nominate a male and a female senior staff member who students can approach if there are allegations of sexual harassment or abuse by fellow students or by adults. While students need to have clear information of their right to have access to such a person care needs to be taken not to suggest to young people who may be suggestible to look for sexual activity where it does not exist. Nominated personnel should have a clear understanding of all the principles involved and should understand that they have the responsibility of immediately informing the Principal where any allegation is made whether or not it turns out to be legitimate, a mistake or mischievous.

## **Handling Complaints**

### **Complaints**

1. Handle all complaints sensitively so that the handling of the complaint does not aggravate the injury done. Follow the school procedure as described in this handbook.
2. Act with natural justice towards both the accused and the accuser and the alleged victim. This includes
  - not presuming a person is guilty until proved so
  - not exposing an alleged victim to supervision by the teacher against who the allegation is made
  - ensuring that the person accused is entitled to know the details of the complaint being made
  - Justice must be seen to be done
3. Seek to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties
4. Act promptly in dealing with the issue and ensure all people who ought to be notified are given appropriate notice.

***Support***

Where an allegation is made against a teacher ensure that both the teacher and the alleged victim have appropriate support.

Where it is necessary to suspend a staff member pending investigation ensure that there is ongoing support from the school until the matter is properly resolved.

**Policy updated: 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015**