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## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**1. INTRODUCTION** Under the Children's Protection Act, DECD has a legislated responsibility with other agencies to protect children and young people from abuse in its own settings and in the wider community. Schools and sites have the responsibility, reinforced by Anti-Discrimination Legislation and Duty of Care, to protect and care for every learner. This policy demonstrates this commitment.

The Child Protection Policy is based on these principles:

- 1.1 Protecting the safety of children and young people is a fundamental responsibility that cannot be compromised by other considerations.
- 1.2 Children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and to be protected from harm, feel and be safe in their interactions with adults and other children and young people understand, as early as possible, what is meant by 'feeling and being safe', and the support of counsellors or designated staff in their education or care setting whose role includes advocacy for their safety and wellbeing.
- 1.3 Children and young people are entitled to the rights outlined in 1.2 irrespective of their special needs, gender, race, sexual orientation or cultural, religious or family circumstances.
- 1.4 Preventing and intervening in the abuse and neglect of children and young people is a moral and legal obligation a contribution to breaking cycles of intergenerational abuse and contribution to the safety and wellbeing of everyone participating in DECD sites/services and of the wider community.
- 1.5 Child protection concerns arise within family, community and institutional contexts. The actions and efforts of people from within and outside the education and care setting are needed if interventions on behalf of children and young people are to be successful and sustained.
- 1.6 Maintaining children and young people's attendance at and engagement with education and care environments is a key contributor to their safety and wellbeing.
- 1.7 This policy interconnects with other DECD policies aimed at establishing and maintaining safe and respectful education and care environments.
- 1.8 Children with disabilities are 7 times more likely to be abused than children without a disability.

## **2. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

2.1 It is a legal requirement for DECD employees and a site's responsibility:

- i. To report all suspected cases of abuse and neglect
- ii. To ensure that all employees and volunteers have an appropriate level of training to be able to recognise abuse and neglect
- iii. To ensure that effective abuse prevention programs are implemented
- iv. To implement a curriculum that addresses issues of child protection
- v. To comply with relevant Acts, Regulations, Guidelines and Codes of Practice relating to Child Protection

## **3. DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE**

- 3.1 Physical Abuse is deliberate physical harm inflicted on a child/young person.
- 3.2 Sexual Abuse occurs when someone in a position of power involves a child/young person in sexual activity.
- 3.3 Emotional Abuse occurs when words and actions are directed at a child/young person whereby social competence and self-esteem are undermined or eroded.
- 3.4 Neglect is characterised by the failure to provide for a child/young person's basic needs.

## **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 4.1 Staff at Kangarilla PS are committed to supporting the safety and care of children and students by providing support and services to staff and families working with children and students, to enable them to access the Child Protection Curriculum and learn and grow in a safe environment.
- 4.2 When working with students, Kangarilla staff will work to ensure that children and students:
  - (i) Are able to recognise and report abuse
  - (ii) Understand power in relationships
  - (iii) Develop protective strategies, including help-seeking behaviours
  - (iv) Create positive, healthy understandings of relationships and sexuality
- 4.3 Leadership staff will:
  - i. Ensure all aspects of this policy are implemented, promoted, monitored, evaluated and regularly reviewed
  - ii. Understand the sensitivity around child protection matters and understand, respect and support any person involved or affected by any matter raised
  - iii. Seek advice from DECD about any comments that might need to be made to individuals, staff, students or the community in response to child protection matters or incidents
  - iv. Document and retain documentation on child protection matters and incidents (either prepared by themselves or submitted to them), in a secure and confidential location
  - v. Ensure that staff with responsibilities to investigate serious allegations against employees or volunteers in DECD sites/services will meet DECD job and person specifications and will have support and supervision appropriate to the critical nature of their work
  - vi. Ensure volunteers and non-registered teaching staff are screened prior to commencing at the site and have an approved current criminal history clearance

- vii. Maintain and retain records of all volunteers and visitors at the site
- viii. Monitor practice and conduct at the site to ensure it is in accordance with the requirements outlined in this policy and proactively intervene with emerging performance problems
- ix. Enable staff in designated student advocacy positions to fulfil their roles

#### 4.4 All staff will:

- (i) Contribute to and support the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of this policy
- (ii) Follow up on any matter brought to their attention, or refer it to a higher authority
- (iii) Understand the sensitivity around child protection matters and respect the need for staff and site leaders to maintain confidentiality
- (iv) Keep themselves informed of the latest developments in thinking, policy and requirements
- (v) Forward documentation of any child protection incident or matter to site leadership as appropriate.
- (vi) Adhere to the 'Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with students' document
- (vii) Not put themselves at risk of accusation or suspicious behaviour (for example, by being alone with a student in a room and not visible (e.g. doors closed or no window visibility))
- (viii) Not share toilet amenities with students under any circumstances
- (ix) Staff will approach any visitors walking or loitering around the site without obvious purpose or identification and direct them to the front office for assistance
- (x) Undertake necessary Training and Development opportunities that will be provided for all staff and volunteers
- (xi) Staff involved in teaching approved child protection curriculum will receive approved training, ongoing professional development and support

#### 4.5 Volunteers, student teachers and work experience students will:

- (i) Be required to provide evidence of criminal history clearance before commencing
- (ii) Be required to attend an induction course at the site which includes information about their responsibilities as mandated notifiers
- (iii) Be required to sign a statement verifying that they have been informed and have understood this policy and their responsibilities as mandated notifiers
- (iv) Attend a site induction course as detailed in the DECD Volunteers Policy

#### 4.6 When visiting families and children on and off site, staff will:

- (i) Provide families with information and opportunities for questions and comments
- (ii) Be sensitive to students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous students and students with disabilities and learning difficulties
- (iii) Include the provision of an ethical climate where adults respond to, listen to and respect children and young people in a supportive learning environment
- (iv) Ensure resources are safe, appropriate and effective
- (v) All staff on site and visiting other sites will follow approved child or student attendance and behaviour policies and site processes

## 5. SITE PROCESSES

### 5.1 The site will ensure:

- (i) All persons visiting the site sign a visitors sign-on book
- (ii) All visitors will wear some form of identification or pass, or in the event of large numbers are contained as much as possible within one room or location
- (iii) Students who are expected to attend the site, but who are absent will be followed up as a priority at the earliest convenience
- (iv) Staff and team meetings are used to raise and disseminate child protection information
- (v) Child protection and safety issues are raised with the Principal or CPW
- (vi) Child protection issues affecting staff are raised with the Principal or CPW
- (vii) School policies will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with any impacting child protection legislation or DECD requirements

## 6. CURRICULUM

### 6.1 The site will:

- (i) Provide resources, services and support to assist children and students access the Child Protection Curriculum
- (ii) Ensure all children and young people in preschools and schools can access the approved child protection curriculum
- (iii) Ensure students and young people receive explicit instruction about child protection
- (iv) Work toward developing social skills and assertiveness skills in children
- (v) Ensure a range of child protection resource documents, literature and resources are available for use by staff and clients
- (vi) Ensure Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment policies exist at the site and are reviewed annually for their effectiveness

## 7. CRIMINAL HISTORY SCREENING

### 7.1 The site will :

- (i) Have procedures in place to screen regular visitors (ie, parents, Governing councillors, volunteers, Committee members, OSHC employees, sports coaches)
- (ii) Have a designated person responsible for submitting, processing and recording Criminal screening forms and applicant names
- (iii) Pay the cost of criminal screening for regular volunteers
- (iv) Maintain accurate records of screened persons
- (v) Store all criminal screening forms confidentially and with discretion and limit access to the site leader and person managing the screening process

## 8. FACILITIES

### 8.1 The site will :

- (i) Ensure staff with duty of care are consulted or represented in any discussion about facility projects
- (ii) Ensure grounds, buildings and site aesthetics are attractive, warm and comfortable for children and young people
- (iii) Ensure required repair and maintenance work is carried out expeditiously
- (iv) Ensure that equipment used by staff and clients at the site is regularly checked (where required) and replaced if necessary

## 9. WELL-BEING

### 9.1 The site will :

- (i) Ensure a dedicated person on staff is charged with being the contact person for child protection matters and advice. This person may not necessarily manage issues or responses, but rather, act to direct staff to relevant resources, personnel or processes
- (ii) Have at least one Grievance Officer (and preferably two, of different gender), appointed to the site to document and communicate concerns or, support staff affected by Child Protection issues at the site
- (iii) Recommend to staff that the site leader be kept informed about mandated notifications to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL), in the event the site receives a response call from SA Police, Families SA or family members of a child
- (iv) Ensure that children have at least two people at the site that they can approach to discuss confidential matters or incidents, if required
- (v) Ensure that children or students are not left alone or unsupervised within the site grounds, buildings or rooms
- (vi) Ensure that staff, visitors and adults are not placed in compromised positions by being alone with children (e.g. alone in a room with a child, using the same toilets, alone in a vehicle with a child)

## 10. CONFIDENTIALITY AND LEGALITY

### 10.1

- (i) All staff and persons involved in incidents involving alleged or actual child protection matters shall minimise the risk of defamation and maintain their own personal safety by remaining confidential and sensitive around child protection matters
- (ii) Site leaders shall consult DECD for advice on child protection matters and keep their line manager informed of the progress of events in a timely manner
- (iii) Site leaders shall consult DECD and their line managers for the appropriateness of any written comment that might need to be made to site communities in the event of an alleged or actual incident involving child protection issues
- (iv) Site leaders will refer all media enquiries to the DECD media communications unit