



CANBERRA CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

NURTURE | LEARNING | CHARACTER

CHILD PROTECTION

Policy and Guidelines

Child Protection Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to assist employees, volunteers and visitors to Canberra Christian School to understand and fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child protection and in responding to suspected child abuse and neglect.

POLICY STATEMENT

The safety, protection and well-being of all students is of fundamental importance to the school. This policy supports the premise that all children have a right to feel emotionally and physically safe and to be safe. It sets out the relevant guidelines, that all school staff, volunteers and visitors, have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to all incidences involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom they have contact, and to report instances that they believe involve physical abuse or neglect.

DEFINITIONS

Mandatory Reporting: Section 356 of the *Children and Young People Act 2008* outlines the legal requirement of a Mandated Reporter to report suspected cases of child abuse when they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person has experienced, or is experiencing, sexual abuse and/or non-accidental physical injury.

Voluntary Reporting: Section 354 of the *Children and Young People Act 2008* enables anyone to make a voluntary report to Care and Protection Services if they believe or suspect a child or young person is being abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse or neglect.

Prenatal Reporting – anticipated abuse and neglect: Section 362 of the *Children and Young People Act 2008* enables a person to make a voluntary prenatal report if they suspect or believe a child, once born, may be in need of care and protection.

Child and Young Person: The *Children and Young People Act 2008* defines, a child as a person under the age of 12 years. A young person is a person who is 12 years old or older, but not yet 18 years old.

Child Abuse: Child abuse describes different types of maltreatment that endanger a child's or young person's safety, wellbeing and development. Child abuse can be a single incident or a chronic pattern of behaviour over time and may be intentional or unintentional. Child abuse may be experienced in families, the broader community and within schools.

Neglect: Refers to a failure to provide a child or young person with the basic needs for his or her physical, emotional/psychological and intellectual development and may be chronic or episodic in nature.

Child abuse and neglect may lead to long term harm to the physical or emotional well being and development of a child or young person.

Mandated Reporters: The *Children and Young People Act 2008* requires teachers, teacher assistants, persons employed to counsel children or young people in a school, and individuals who work with or provide services personally to children, young people and their families or who has contact with children and young people and their families, to notify Care and Protection Services Centralised Intake Service when they believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has experienced, or is experiencing, sexual abuse and/or non-accidental physical injury.

If you are unsure that you are a mandated reporter please refer to '*Keeping Children and Young People Safe: A Shared Community Response – A guide to reporting child abuse and neglect in the ACT*', which is available at: http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/services/care_and_protection or contact Care and Protection Services Centralised Intake Service on 1300 556 728 for clarification.

Required Reporter: Anyone who is employed or contracted by the Directorate and is not a mandated reporter.

Reasonable Grounds: A belief that a child or young person has experienced or is experiencing abuse or neglect may be formed when the abuse is disclosed, someone advises you, or your own observations of the physical condition, or observations of the behaviour of the child or young person or someone who has responsibility for the child or young person indicates abuse may have occurred or is occurring.

Visitor: People from the wider community who provide services directly to students or in support of students for financial gain through a sponsoring or employing organisation, or are self employed.

Volunteer: a person who supports educational programs of schools either through direct contact with students or through school activities without financial gain or reward. They may volunteer either directly to a school as individuals or through the auspices of a community or other organisation.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS/REFERENCES

- Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)
- Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- A guide to reporting child abuse and neglect in the ACT'
http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/services/care_and_protection

SIGNATURE(s):



Date: 30 / 06 / 2014



Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Canberra Christian School will abide by the legislation pertinent to child protection. The key piece of child protection legislation in the ACT is the Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT) and the key agency for child protection is the Office of Care and Protection Services Centralised Intake Service. Child protection reports should be made to Care and Protection Services through the Principal.

All staff are to undergo appropriate professional development in child protection and mandatory reporting. The Principal will keep thorough records of all child protection issues and all reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.

School Responsibilities

Canberra Christian School's responsibilities with regard to child protection may be summarised as follows:

All Staff, Volunteers and Visitors

- Staff, volunteers and visitors who consider the risk of harm for a child or young person to require immediate police attention should ring emergency service (000).
- Mandated and required reporters must report any belief on reasonable grounds that the child or young person has experienced or is experiencing sexual abuse and/or non-accidental physical injury. Mandated and required reporters are also required to report any reasonable belief of emotional abuse or neglect. Reports are to be made to Care and Protection Services Centralised Intake Service as soon as possible on 1300 556 728, by fax to 6205 0641 or Email: childprotection@act.gov.au
- Mandated and required reporters and visitors must report any suspicions or beliefs that a child or young person is experiencing or likely to experience any type of abuse or neglect to the Principal of the school.
- If the subject of the report is a staff member, mandated and required reporters and visitors must make a report to the school principal.
- If the subject of the report is the school principal mandated and required reporters and visitors must also immediately report the matter to the Schools Company and/or Education Director. Please refer to the 'Child Abuse and Neglect Guidelines for Schools'.
- Information about concerns of neglect or abuse and reports made to Care and

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Protection Services Centralised Intake Service should be stored in a secure and confidential location. This information is sensitive information and must be protected under the Children and Young People Act 2008. Information should not be kept on the Student Record File or files that can be accessed by or passed onto general school staff.

- All staff are required to co-operate with Care and Protection Services and the Australian Federal Police when they are investigating child abuse and/or neglect of a child or young person.

Responsibilities of Principals in protecting children and young people from harm

Canberra Christian School Principal will act to protect children and young people from harm by:

- providing annual training in mandatory reporting processes and procedures and in codes of conduct for all staff,
- keeping a record of attendance of staff attending mandatory reporting training,
- induct new staff who have missed training into their responsibilities under the policy,
- informing visitors of the requirement to report to the principal suspicions or beliefs of abuse or neglect developed in their work at school,
- ensuring lessons for children and young people in protective and safe behaviours are delivered,
- ensuring lessons for children and young people to enhance social and emotional skills are delivered, and
- ensuring appropriate pastoral care and protective behaviours programs are delivered.

Responsibilities of Teaching staff in protecting children and young people from harm

Teaching staff will act to protect children and young people from harm by:

- adhering to the principles of the Teachers' Code of Professional Practice,
- training annually in mandatory reporting processes and procedures and in codes of conduct,
- delivering lessons for children and young people in protective and safe behaviours,
- delivering lessons for children and young people to enhance social and emotional skills.