



MANDATORY REPORTING

Policy

Child Safe Standard 5: Responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

STATEMENT:

Epping Views Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse and has an active approach to the duty of care in protecting children within the Epping Views School Community. It is a requirement under *Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools* for schools to keep clear and comprehensive notes on all observations, disclosures relevant to suspect of abuse.

School teachers, principals and students in training to become teachers have an obligation to mandatory report when they believe that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

All staff will be reminded of their mandatory reporting and Child Safe responsibilities annually and new staff members will be informed of mandatory reporting and Child Safe responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.

FORMING A BELIEF ON REASONABLE GROUNDS:

A belief may be formed on reasonable grounds when a staff member feels that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

Please refer to:

- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse
- Spotting the Warning Signs of Child Abuse: For School Staff Fact sheet

GROUND FOR FORMING A BELIEF:

Reasonable grounds for forming a belief:

- when a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- when a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused. (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- when someone who knows the child states that the child had been physically or sexually abused
- when a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused
- when a staff member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on the child's safety, stability or development
- when a staff member observes signs or indicator of abuse – unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision
- when a child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.
- When a staff member forms a reasonable belief that there has been evidence of:

- Child has been spoken to in a sexually explicit way
- Child has been groomed or is being groomed for future sexual activity
- Child has been forced to watch pornography

REPORTING A BELIEF:

- All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal or the Assistant Principal/Student Wellbeing Officer.
- The Principal & or Student Wellbeing Officer will keep a record of all discussions about the student of concern through the Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse Notification document.
- All reports, information and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.
- The Principal & or Student Wellbeing Officer will report in liaison with relevant staff member according to DET – Four Critical Actions for Schools Guidelines.
- If a belief has been formed that physical or sexual abuse has taken place, the Principal or Student Wellbeing Officer will contact Child Protection – Department of Human Services on **1300 664 977**
- Members of the Department of Human Services, or associated support or intervention services may seek further information and visit the school to interview personnel involved in order to determine whether further action is required.
- Child Protection may conduct interviews of children at school without parental knowledge or consent. Child Protection Workers must provide identification before gaining access to the child.
- Interviews must be conducted in the presence of the Principal or the Student Wellbeing Officer.
- Ensure children are safe, and provide support and comfort to a child reporting abuse or safety concerns, and never blame or interrogate a child.
- Contact parents / carers as appropriate.
- Provide ongoing support (e.g. helping them understand their rights and processes that will follow), and/or make referrals for support (e.g. counselling) when applicable.

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's 4 year review process or sooner if changes in law occur.

This policy was ratified by the School Council on