



# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

CHRYSALIS CHILDPROTECTION POLICY V2

2023

## 1. RATIONALE

Chrysalis School is committed to being a child safe organisation through the prevention, identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect. This policy reflects the Child Safe Organisations WA Framework developed by the WA Commissioner for Children and Young People and the School's philosophy, which include our values of belonging, care and respect, Staff, Parent and Student Codes of conduct. We believe that all children have a right to be protected from harm, and Chrysalis employees owe a 'duty of care' to provide a positive and child safe environment where students feel valued and respected.

## 2. RELATED POLICIES

This document is to be considered alongside our Child Safe Framework, Staff, Parent and Child Codes of Conduct, Complaints Management, Duty of Care, Anti-Bullying and Pastoral Policies.

## 3. CHILD SAFE FRAMEWORK

Our school has adopted the **Child Safe Organisations WA** Framework developed by the WA Commissioner for Children and Young People. The Framework provides the school with a set of guiding principles in the development of a whole school approach to creating a safe and friendly school and identifies nine key elements to assist schools in planning, implementing and maintaining a safe, supportive and protective learning community that promotes student safety and wellbeing.

The nine domains of **Child Safe Organisations WA** guide the way in which Chrysalis School operates. These child-safe standards are:

- Leadership, governance and culture
- Empowering children to participate
- Involving family and community
- Child safe and friendly policies
- Managing staff and volunteers
- Safe environments – physical and online
- Child friendly complaint process and reporting
- Education and development, and
- Continuous improvement

## 4. DEFINITION OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

Child maltreatment refers to any non-accidental behaviour by adults or children that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of harm to a child or young person. The behaviours may be intentional or unintentional. Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) - What is child abuse and neglect.

It may be the result of action or inaction on the part of a person who has responsibility to care for a child resulting in harm or injury to the child. The harm may include delayed physical and/or intellectual development. The maltreatment experienced is normally described in five categories. Each category of maltreatment is described by a range of indicators listed below:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional including psychological
- Neglect
- Family and domestic violence.

Descriptions of these indicators have been taken from the Government of WA Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support Child Protection document *"Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – A Guide for Professionals"*.

### ***Physical abuse***

Physical abuse occurs when a child has experienced severe and/or persistent ill-treatment. It can include, but is not limited to injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and fractures caused by a range of acts including beating, shaking, illicit administration of alcohol and other drugs, attempted suffocation, excessive discipline, physical punishment or other forms.

### ***Sexual abuse***

Sexual abuse covers a wide range of behaviour or activities that expose or subject a child to sexual activity that is exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level. These behaviours include observation or involvement with inappropriate fondling of a child's body, making a child touch an adult's genitalia, showing pornographic material or sexual acts to a child, and sexual penetration of the child. Harm from sexual abuse may include significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infections and impaired emotional and psychological development.

### ***Emotional abuse***

Emotional abuse is a sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, confusing, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to have a reduced capacity to experience a range of emotions, to express emotion appropriately and to modulate their emotional experience. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to be fearful, withdrawn and/or resentful, distressed and despairing.

Included under emotional abuse is psychological abuse. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.

### ***Neglect***

Neglect is the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. These include adequate supervision, adequate food or shelter, suitable clothing, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial care and emotional security. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic, and can result in detrimental effects on the child or young person's social psychological, educational or physical development and/or physical injury. Neglect should be considered in the context of physical, emotional or psychological abuse.

#### ***Note 1:***

Child abuse and neglect, through the Department for Communities, Child Protection and Family Support, is defined as maltreatment done by a person who has responsibility to care for a child.

However, it is very important to note that the definitions of child maltreatment mentioned in this section can be used to describe some of the behaviour that can occur in schools by one child to another. While the treatment of such behaviour may be dealt with through other school policies such as Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Management, the victim of that 'bullying' may display some of the physical and behavioural indicators as those described in the next section of this document. The School treats these events seriously with the aim to help both parties.

It is also important to note that the child who is 'bullying' may be doing so because they have been subjected to the same inappropriate behaviour and may require assistance through the school's Child Protection policy.

## **5. INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive but contains those that will be of most use to staff. This list has been taken from the Department for Communities, Child Protection and Family Support document "*Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – A Guide for Professionals*".

Students frequently show indicators from more than one category; and the examples listed are not necessarily exclusive to a single category of abuse. Any of these indicators may suggest that a student is being abused, neglected or at risk of harm; however, indicators should be considered in the context of the student's age, medical and developmental history, and capabilities. In addition, mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence within families must also be considered.

The single most helpful item for staff to consider is the deviation from normal or baseline behaviour of a child. A child who has been abused experiences mixed emotional and physical responses to abuse and may well be confused by the disconnect between respect/love for the abuser and abhorrence or ambivalence to the abuse itself.

***Physical abuse could be represented by:***

- broken bones or unexplained bruises, burns, or welts in various stages of healing;
- the child or young person is unable to explain an injury, or explanations given are inconsistent, vague or bizarre;
- direct admissions from the parents that they are concerned that they might harm their child;
- a history of family violence;
- marked delay between injury and obtaining medical assistance;
- a parent who shows little concern about the welfare of their child or the treatment and care of the injury;
- repeated presentations of the child to health services with injuries, ingestions or minor complaints (this could also be an indicator of Factitious Disorder by proxy, a rare expression of physical and emotional abuse);
- the child or young person is unusually frightened of a parent or carer, or is afraid to go home;
- the child or young person reports intentional injury by their parent or carer;
- arms and legs are kept covered by inappropriate clothing in warm conditions;
- ingestion of poisonous substances including alcohol or drugs;
- the avoidance of physical contact by the child (particularly with a parent or carer).

***Sexual abuse could be represented by:***

- sexualised behaviours inappropriate to their age (including sexually touching other children and themselves);
- knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate to their years;
- disclosure of abuse either directly or indirectly through drawings, play or writing that describes abuse;
- pain or bleeding in the anal or genital area with redness or swelling;
- fear of being alone with a particular person;
- a child or young person implying that he/she is required to keep secrets;
- the presence of sexually transmitted disease;
- sudden unexplained fears;
- enuresis and/or encopresis (bed-wetting and bed soiling).

***Emotional or Psychological abuse could be when:***

- the parent or carer constantly criticises, threatens, belittles, insults, or rejects the child or young person with no evidence of love, support, or guidance;
- the child or young person exhibits extremes in behaviour from overly aggressive to overly passive;
- delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development;
- compulsive lying and stealing;

- high levels of anxiety;
- lack of trust in people;
- feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves;
- eating hungrily or hardly at all;
- uncharacteristic seeking of attention or affection;
- reluctance to go home;
- rocking, sucking thumbs or self-harming behaviour;
- fearfulness when approached by a person known to them.

***Neglect may be:***

- signs of malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food;
- poor hygiene: matted hair, dirty skin or severe body odour;
- unattended physical or medical problems;
- the child or young person states that no one is home to provide care (inadequate supervision, failure to ensure safety);
- child or young person appears constantly tired;
- frequent lateness to school or absence from school;
- inappropriate clothing, especially inadequate clothing in winter;
- alcohol and/or drug abuse present in the household;
- frequent illness, low grade infections or sores;
- Hunger.

**Myths about Child Abuse and its Prevalence**

An accurate understanding of the dynamics underlying child abuse is important because the impact of any form of abuse on the victim can be life changing. Common outcomes associated with abuse include drug abuse, suicide, eating disorders, low self-esteem, psychosomatic illness and self-mutilation.

There are many myths about sexual abuse. Some of the common ones are:

- sex between children and adults is not damaging if it is in the context of a loving relationship;
- it is not the abuse which causes the problem but the effects of the intervention by others;
- those abused turn into abusers;
- children frequently lie about sexual abuse;
- sexual abuse is more common in lower socio-economic areas and families;
- only men sexually abuse children;
- sexual abusers are readily identified by 'normal' people.

The following myths pertaining to sexual and other forms of abuse relate particularly to schools:

- There will not be a problem here because all the volunteers/employees are female
- There will not be a problem here because the young people come from privileged backgrounds and will complain if there is an issue of abuse
- If we get the selection procedures right, we will eliminate the possibility of abuse
- We use Police Clearances and Working with Children Checks here so we are covered
- It is one of the other children's parents/brothers/sisters to whom I am entrusting the child/ren, so it will be OK
- We did not need to screen Mr Smith because he is a friend of the teacher, president etc
- My workers, volunteers and casuals are youth themselves so there is no risk. We are pretty good at identifying people here who are a bit 'odd'.

## 6. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- All Chrysalis Board members, employees and volunteers have a duty to all children to ensure their right to feel safe at school and in the wider community.
- Chrysalis Montessori School explicitly forbids the use of any form of child abuse, corporal punishment or other degrading punishment.
- Chrysalis has a duty to ensure that staff and volunteers (existing and new) are adequately screened, trained and supervised.
- Chrysalis staff cannot agree to a student's demands for confidentiality or requests that parents, police or other agencies not be informed when the welfare or safety of the student or other students may be threatened.
- All strong concerns for the welfare of children believed maltreated by parents/caregivers are discussed with the Department for Child Protection or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit before advising parents/caregivers. These agencies will then decide on the provision of advice to parents/caregivers and any further action.
- The Chrysalis Curriculum Plan includes a Child Protection Curriculum Keeping Safe Program component. This is a comprehensive, realistic and age-appropriate personal safety program enabling students to recognise and report abuse, understand power in relationships, and develop protective strategies, including seeking help.
- The Chrysalis Child Protection Policy and Guidelines and Curriculum will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.
- Parents, staff and others members of the school community will be regularly informed of the content of the Child Protection Framework and child protection policy and the procedures recommended by that policy in the event that abuse is suspected or has occurred (parent and staff handbooks and newsletters).

## 7. CHRYSALIS PROCEDURES AND STEPS TO NOTIFICATION

### CHILD PROTECTION

The Western Australian State Government is responsible for receiving reports of suspected child abuse and neglect from members of the public, practitioners and service providers. Reporting child abuse and neglect is a community-wide responsibility. Anyone who suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a child is at risk of being abused and/or neglected should report it to the reporting authority.

If a child has disclosed abuse or neglect to you, it is important to stay calm and listen to them with empathy and your full attention. Also reassure them that they have done the right thing disclosing the abuse or neglect and that you will help them to be safe by telling someone else who will be able to help.

### DEFINING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child abuse and neglect refer to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the likelihood of and/or actual physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. neglect) and commission (i.e. abuse) (CFCA, 2018). Child abuse and neglect can be face to face or online.

Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes:

- physical abuse
- emotional or psychological abuse
- neglect
- sexual abuse or exploitation
- exposure to family violence

### DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES

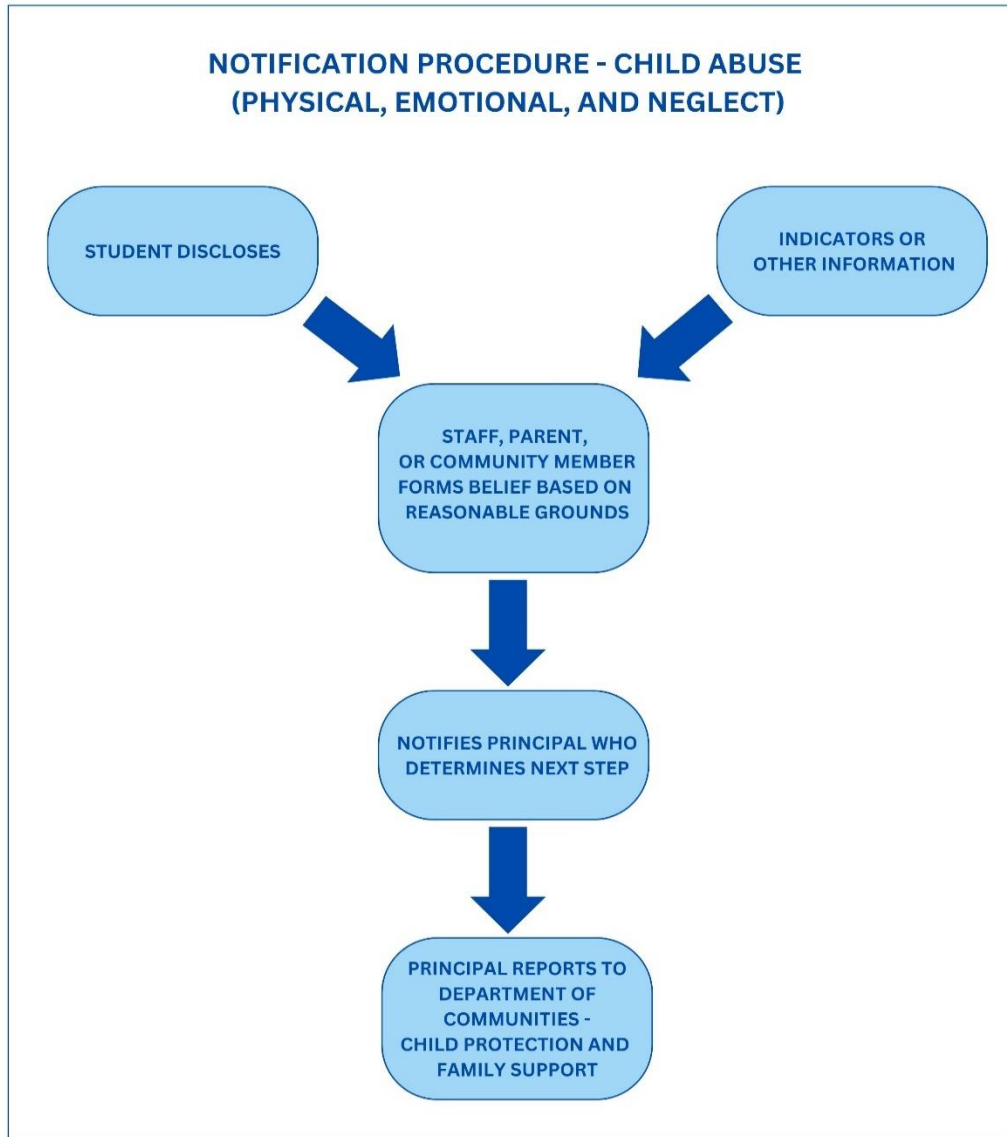
#### [Department of Communities](#)

The Department of Communities offers a range of services to support children and families in Western Australia. For further information about the process of reporting concerns about a child's welfare, refer to the department's [Child Protection](#) webpage. For information about mandatory reporting in Western Australia refer to the department's [mandatory reporting information](#) webpage.

#### Emergency Contact Phone Numbers:

- For life-threatening concerns, call 000.
- If you are concerned about a child's wellbeing, contact the Central Intake Team 1800 273 889
- After hours Crisis Care 1800 199 008, text on 0477 131 114

## NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE FLOWCHART





# Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse

## *The legislation*

Since 1 January 2009, the *Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008* has been in effect and covers mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in Western Australia. This amendment forms part of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*. The Act was further amended in 2016, to include boarding supervisors.

In Western Australia, the mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse are the following professions in both the government and non-government sectors:

- teachers;
- boarding supervisors;
- nurses;
- doctors;
- police officers; and
- midwives.

## *Definition of 'teacher':*

The definition of teacher in section 124A of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 has been changed to read:

- (a) *person who is registered under the Teacher Registration Act 2012, or*
- (b) *[deleted];*
- (c) *a person who provides instruction in a course that is -*
  - (i) *mentioned in the School Education Act 1999 s11B(1)(a), (b) or (e) and*
  - (ii) *prescribed for the purposes of this definition; or*
- (d) *A person who instructs or supervises a student who is participating in an activity that is -*
  - (i) *part of an educational programme of a school under an arrangement mentioned in the School Education Act 1999 s24(1); and*
  - (ii) *prescribed for the purposes of this definition; or*
- (e) *A person employed by the chief executive officer as defined in the Young Offenders Act 1994 s3 to teach detainees at a detention centre as defined in that section.*

All parents should be informed of the mandatory requirements for teachers to report. This can be done through a letter to parents or as an inclusion in the school's regular newsletter.

### ***Definition of sexual abuse***

Sexual abuse is defined by the Act in section 124A as:

*'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.*

This legislation is not intended to capture all sexual activity involving children and young people. Reference should be made to consent laws in Western Australia, The Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 s. 320-322

### ***Definition of child***

The definition of 'child' is defined in section 3 of the Children and Community Services Act as a person who is under the age of 18 years. In the absence of positive evidence as to age, a child is a person who is apparently under 18 years of age. Young people aged 18 and over are considered to be adults and are not covered by this legislation. However, schools still owe a duty of care to all students at the school. In these instances, police should be informed of any assault or crime against the young person.

Duty to report sexual abuse of children Section 124B of the CCS Act 2004 states, in part, a person who... believes on reasonable grounds that a child:

- (i) has been the subject of sexual abuse that occurred on or after commencement day;
- (ii) is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse; and forms the belief;
- (i) in the course of the person's work (whether paid or unpaid)... must report the belief as soon as practicable after forming the belief.

### ***When does a mandatory reporter make a report?***

All school personnel at Chrysalis School must understand their obligations under the legislation and the requirements around reporting sexual abuse of children and how this impacts on the school's internal processes.

It is important to remember that the notification steps for sexual abuse will differ from the steps used to notify other forms of child abuse.

A mandatory reporter can form the necessary belief, based on reasonable grounds, by noting the presence of indicators, disclosures, injuries, signs, symptoms and behaviours that heighten concerns about child sexual abuse. Information on the indicators of sexual abuse is covered in section 3 of this document.

Mandatory reporters at Chrysalis must report a belief, based on reasonable grounds in the course of their work, paid or unpaid, that child sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring. This means that teachers working outside of the school grounds are also required to report when working in either a paid or unpaid capacity. For example, tutoring, volunteer teacher at youth centre, working as a Sunday school teacher.

### ***Guidelines in event of a disclosure***

Children will rarely use adult language or specific terms when disclosing abuse, the language used will be at the developmental level of the child, so staff may not initially pick up the nuances of the disclosure. The teacher's observations or the child's disclosure should be discussed, in the first instance, with the Principal, or the School Chair, if it is not appropriate to discuss it with the Principal.

Most disclosures are accidental, that is the child did not intend to disclose, and it is likely that the disclosure will only be partial. Staff should not attempt to elicit a full disclosure, or ask direct questions. The child should be encouraged to speak freely, ie a free narrative, but staff should not try to direct the child down a particular path of thought.

The following are suggested elements that should form part of the school policy and be discussed at staff training:

- Use 'protective interrupting' if students begin to disclose in class or in a public area to protect them from sharing the information with too many other people
- Acknowledge that you have heard them and stop them from disclosing any further
- Be supportive and gently indicate that they might tell you about it in a more private situation
- Quietly arrange to see them as soon as possible, in a situation away from other students
- Establish clear limits on confidentiality by telling the child that a report will be made to a person who will be able to provide help and protection and that you will help them throughout the process
- Put your own feelings aside and listen as if the information is not sensational
- Provide reassurance that the student is believed, that they were right to tell and it was not their fault
- Remain as objective as possible as a staff member and do not make judgements about what has happened
- Listen to students in an appropriate private location within the school that is a place where the interactions can be observed but not heard by others
- Be supportive and understanding
- Be empathetic to student feelings; the student may be confused because of the relationship with the abuser; e.g.: loving parents shouldn't do abusive things
- Acknowledge that it is difficult to talk about such things
- Try to identify students' immediate fears
- Let students tell the event in their own words; when reporting, do not paraphrase but try to be as accurate as possible
- If you are unable to answer all the questions of the child, it is OK to let them know
- Once you have established that they have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed, do not pursue the conversation any further. This is important to ensure that questions cannot be raised later about possible manipulation of the disclosure

- Allow students the option of support during any agency interview and reassure them of the availability of continuing support
- Document the conversation that you have had remembering as accurately as you can, the words and phrases used by the child to describe what has happened to them
- Document the disclosure and subsequent discussion and actions
- Explain what will happen next
- Try and stay with the student after the disclosure to provide a sense of security until necessary steps have been taken to ensure the safety and support.

Staff must be careful that they:

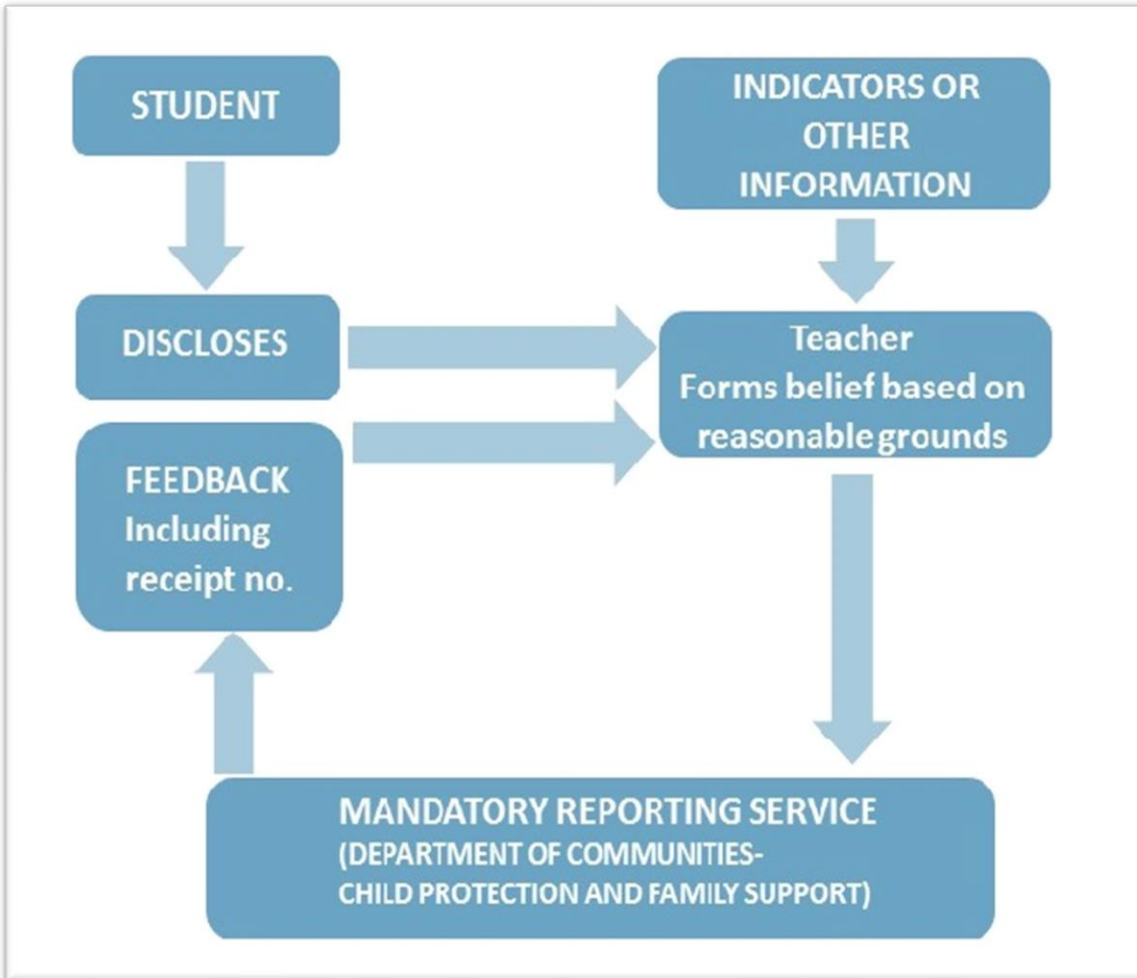
- don't push for details or conduct an investigation. Other agencies have this responsibility;
- don't express judgement of the student, perpetrator or family;
- don't get angry, upset or show shock;
- don't ask questions that may make the child feel guilty or inadequate;
- don't ask leading questions, for instance 'Did Daddy hit you?';
- don't put words in students' mouths or interrogate as this could jeopardise the interviewing process of CPFS and Police;
- don't promise not to tell when there are clear limits on confidentiality;
- never make false promises;
- don't give a lecture about right and wrong;
- don't say 'forget it', 'you'll get over it' or other such minimalising statements;
- don't give excessive pity;
- respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and do not share the information with anyone other than the Principal and either the Department for Child Protection or the Police. This includes not engaging in general staffroom discussion about the disclosure.

Staff must be aware that a disclosure can arouse within themselves strong feelings of shock, anger and helplessness. It is important to try and control these feelings and work through them after the disclosure. Even a hint of disbelief could cause a child to stop disclosing.

Once a teacher at Chrysalis has formed a belief based on reasonable grounds, in the course of their work, it is the teacher's responsibility to make the report directly to the Mandatory Reporting Service. The Principal and other relevant staff are there to provide support if required. The teacher **may** advise the Principal of the report, but there should be no obligation on the teacher to do so. In the course of such a discussion, should the principal or other staff member, themselves then form a belief, the person forming the belief would be obliged to make a Mandatory Report. Prior to forming a belief, the teacher may, if they wish, consult with appropriate colleagues with specialist knowledge, for example, the principal, psychologist, school counsellor.

The following flow chart outlines the procedure for the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse for independent schools.

# MANDATORY REPORTING PROCEDURE



Teachers may wish to consider the following questions to assist them in deciding if their belief is based on reasonable grounds:

- Can you describe the reasons why you believe a child has been, or is being sexually abused?
- What has the child said or done to suggest they are being sexually abused?
- Have you observed, or been told about, the presence of any of the 'possible indicators' of sexual abuse?
- Did the child disclose sexual abuse? What did they say happened? Who did they disclose to and when?
- What other behaviours have you observed and/or interactions with the child are of concern to you? What is the frequency and severity of the behaviour? How long has it been occurring?

### ***How does a mandatory reporter make a report?***

A centralised Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS) has been established to receive all reports of child sexual abuse in Western Australia. This service is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Section 124C states that a written report may, but need not be in a form, approved by the CEO. However, the same section also specifies what information a report is to contain.

A report is to contain:

- (a) the name and contact details of the reporter;
- (b) the name of the child or, if the child's name cannot be obtained after reasonable inquiries, a description of the child;
- (c) if, or to the extent, known to the reporter —
  - (i) the child's date of birth;
  - (ii) information about where the child lives;
  - (iii) the names of the child's parents or other appropriate persons as defined in section 41(1);
- (d) the grounds for the reporter's belief that the child has been the subject of sexual abuse or is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse;
- (e) (ea) if, or to the extent, known to the reporter —
  - (i) the name of any person alleged to be responsible for the sexual abuse;
  - (ii) the person's contact details;
  - (iii) the person's relationship to the child;
- (f) any other information that is prescribed.

Mandatory reporters are required to submit a written report to the MRS as soon as practicable. A report may be oral or written, but in the case of an oral report the reporter must make a written report as soon as practicable after the oral report has been made.

Where a teacher has formed a belief that the child is at imminent risk of being abused, they should consider calling the Western Australian Police first, whether through the 000 or the 131444 numbers. This does not fulfil the legal obligation to report a child sexual abuse belief and the individual who has formed the belief should then make a Mandatory Report (MR), which can be complete through the following link: <https://mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/MakeaReport.aspx>

Failure to make a verbal report can incur a penalty of up to \$6,000.

Failure to follow up a verbal report with a written report as soon as is practicable may result in a fine of \$3,000. Reporters may report beliefs to CPFS on a web based form which can be accessed at the mandatory reporting website [www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au). Please note that this is a timed form for security reasons and cannot be saved on a local device.

Where a reporter does not have access to a computer, a written form can also be mailed out. Once you have completed your written report, it can be lodged using any of the following methods:

Email: [mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au](mailto:mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au)

Fax: 1800 610 614

Post: PO Box 8146

Perth BC, WA 6849

After a report is lodged, the sender will receive a standardised letter. This letter is proof that a report has been made, so it is important that the response is retained and securely stored.

### ***Processing of the Report***

Once the report has been lodged, the Mandatory Reporting Service will assess the immediate risk to the child, and determine the need for further child protection assessment and investigation. A copy of the report is sent to the WA Police. The police determine if they need to be involved on a case by case basis.

The mandatory reporter will receive a feedback letter advising them of the CPFS District Office to which the report has been referred. It is important to note that all reports are actioned by CPFS, but it may not be the response that the reporter expects. Principals may discuss ongoing concerns with CPFS and are encouraged to maintain clear lines of communication with the District Office.

If new information becomes available to the reporter, this information should be submitted to CPFS. If a new concern or belief is formed, a new MR should be submitted.

### ***Confidentiality and Legal Protection***

The identity of the reporter is required to be kept confidential, except in limited and very specific circumstances. Section 124F(2) protects a reporter's identity from being disclosed. This includes information where a reporter's identity could be deduced. (s124A) Disclosure of a reporter's identity carries a maximum fine of \$24,000 and 2 years' imprisonment.

There are exceptions where disclosure of a reporter's identity is permitted. In such cases, consideration will be given to ensuring the reporter's safety has been taken into account. Examples of when a reporter's identity may be revealed include:

- The Mandatory Reporting Service must send a copy of every written report to the WA Police
- The WA Police may need to reveal a reporter's identity in order to investigate or prosecute a suspected offence
- A Department for Child Protection officer may need to reveal the reporter's identity when certain child protection, family law or adoption proceedings are taking place
- The reporter may have provided written permission for their identity to be disclosed.

A mandated reporter who is normally governed by a code of confidentiality or secrecy, professional ethics, standards or principles of conduct (eg. Doctor/patient) is protected from a breach of this code if

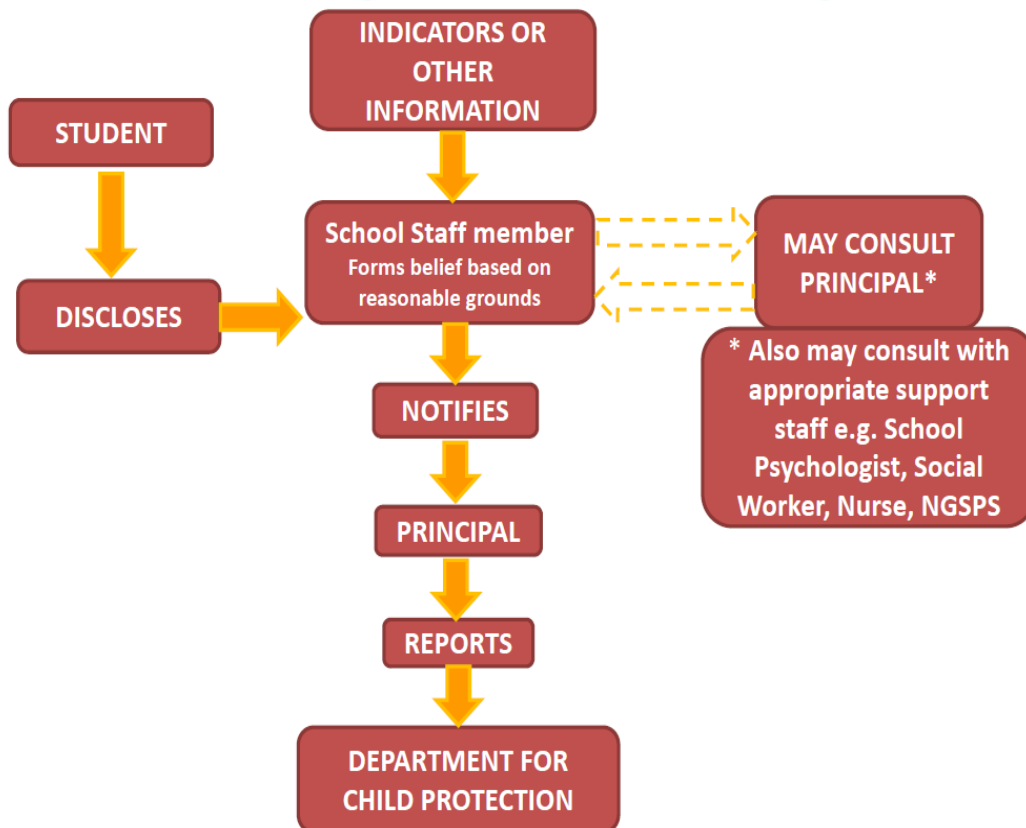
they are making a report in good faith. The legislative requirements of the Act override internal school policies, professional codes or confidentiality requirements. A mandated reporter is also protected from liability. If a report is made in good faith, they will not incur any civil or criminal liability by making a report.

## Non-Mandatory Reporters of Child Sexual Abuse

Teacher assistants, school chaplains and school psychologists are examples of people who work with children in schools that are not mandated reporters. However, all people working with children, whether mandatory reporters or not, should continue to report reasonable beliefs and suspicions or concerns about all forms of abuse. These people who work with children also have a greater knowledge of the children in their care and can be included in the consultative process with the teacher in the case of sexual abuse.

Reports by those employees who are not mandated are usually made to the Principal of the school. In the case where it is believed the Principal may somehow be complicit or obstructionist, the report should be made to Chair of the Governing body.

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





## Notification Procedures for Non Sexual Child Abuse (Physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect)

It is not the role of the teacher to investigate child abuse or neglect matters. They must report concerns to the Principal.

The teacher and Principal may wish to consult with a member of the Non-Government Schools Psychology Service.

Note: It is vital to remember that confidentiality is paramount and that disclosure of this information should only be discussed with those in the school who are required to know.

## 8. POLICY AND PROCEDURES TO RESPOND TO GROOMING LAW AND BEHAVIOURS

### Grooming Behaviour

Grooming in a child protection context refers to deliberate actions undertaken to engage in sexual activity with a child. It differs from sexual abuse in that it does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity – for example it may involve establishing a relationship with a child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

Grooming is a subtle, gradual, and escalating process of building trust with a child and those around the child, both children and adults, with the express purpose of the sexual gratification of the perpetrator and generally involves engaging in sexual activity with the child. It is deliberate and purposeful and occurs both before and after the abuse. Abusers may groom children and supporting adults for weeks, months, or even years before any sexual abuse actually takes place. The grooming may occur in person or via cyber media.

In the early stage, a committed offender will employ grooming behaviour and because it is so subtle and gradual the child may not be aware of the actual abuse when it occurs and that it is wrong or harmful. The grooming occurs not only with the child but also with those supporting networks around the child which might act as a deterrent or protective element. The perpetrator will invest significant energy and patience to minimise the risk of detection and exposure.

The groomer will employ manipulation, guilt, shame, bribery, coercion or exploit low self-esteem to psychologically manipulate the child and as a result the child becomes increasingly dependent on the groomer and increasingly alienated from protective elements including possible sources to disclose to. Plausible deniability is part of the strategy that the groomer employs to ensure that staff don't take seriously the possible disclosures of a child. This is a deliberate strategy employed to maintain the secrecy of the abuse, so that the abuse is concealed and to ensure the silence of the child.

The groomer will exploit vulnerabilities of the protective elements around the child, including parents and family circumstances, organizational and systemic weaknesses. Groomers are very adept at identifying anomalies, boundary ambiguities, and the lack of systemic awareness; at deflecting attention from their own actions and intentions.

While distinguishing between appropriate intent and inappropriate intent is very difficult, particularly for a child, it is essential that schools have very clear expectations and boundaries around behaviours so that there can be rigorous accountability when dealing with children.

Grooming behaviour with children may include, but is not limited to:

- selecting, befriending a child and gaining his or her trust, exploiting the child's vulnerabilities;
- testing a child's boundaries through telling inappropriate jokes, roughhousing, backrubs, tickling, or sexual games;
- moving from non-sexual touching to "accidental" sexual touching. This typically happens during play so the child may not even identify it as purposeful, inappropriate touching. It is often done slowly so the child is gradually desensitized to the touch;
- manipulating the child to not tell anyone about what is happening. The abuser may use a child's fear, embarrassment, or guilt about what has happened. Sometimes, the abuser uses bribery, threats, or coercion;
- causing the child to feel responsible for the abuse. Children may not notice or may become confused as the contact becomes increasingly intimate and sexual.

Grooming behaviour with adolescents may include additional strategies, such as:

- identifying with the adolescent. The abuser may appear to be the only one who understands him/her;
- displaying common interests in sports, music, movies, video games, television shows, etc;
- recognizing and filling the adolescent's need for affection and attention;
- giving gifts or special privileges to the adolescent;
- allowing or encouraging the adolescent to break rules (e.g., smoking, drinking, using drugs, viewing pornography);
- communicating with the adolescent outside of the person's role (e.g., teacher, or coach). This could include, for example, texting or emailing the teen without the parents' knowledge.

In addition to grooming the child, the groomer will use deflection strategies to remain unchallenged. Some of these strategies may include where the perpetrator:

- promotes self and creates a reputation as caring, child-loving, competent, available, trustworthy, truthful;
- raises doubts about the motives, mental health, reliability of the child or anyone else who might approach support services with allegations;
- fosters dependency as someone the family can rely on; and

- positively represents child to others so as to be perceived as someone who would never harm the child.

### **Preventing or interrupting the Grooming process**

At Chrysalis School all staff members are accountable to the Staff Code of conduct. Employees and volunteers, and others, are expected to have very clear understandings of the expectations around interactions with students and processes for reporting concerning behaviours. Where an employee is investigated for behaviours considered to be grooming, school authorities are obligated to report this to both the Director General of the Department of Education Services and the TRBWA (Standard 9).

#### Implementation:

- When staff members form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, they are ethically bound to take action to protect the safety and wellbeing of that child or young person
- Prompt and full responses to any allegations will be undertaken promptly, with well documented records retained securely and confidentially
- Risks associated with 'Grooming' will be included, assessed and mitigated in the School's ongoing risk identification and management processes
- The matter must be reported to the Police and the Principal.
- Police has primary responsibility for conducting investigations into the alleged matter
- Staff will be fully informed annually of and committed to their obligations and responsibilities to proactively protect children from abuse
- School staff will be trained in personal safety and the identification of possible sexual abuse, including the recognition of 'grooming'

When necessary, the Principal ensures the child/young person and the child's/young person's family have access to appropriate services in order to reduce any long-term effects of grooming abuse.

All allegations and retaining records are documented and stored in a secure area, ensuring their confidentiality.

## **9. CYBER PREDATORS**

The internet is one of the main sources of communication for young people today. The popularity of various social media as well as chat rooms, discussion groups and interactive games makes them a very attractive place for predators as they can remain virtually anonymous whilst participating in a range of paedophilic activity. There are significant concerns in this area, and schools, parents and students need to be informed consumers of this space.

The *Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006* is the legislation in Western Australia that protects children under the age of 16, or that the offender believes is under the age of 16, from an adult

who uses electronic communications with the intent to procure the child to engage in sexual activity; or to expose the child to any indecent matter.

The Office of the Children’s e-safety Commissioner (esafety.gov.au) is an excellent starting point for schools in promoting safety awareness for all.

Schools should seek advice from: <https://www.thinkuknow.org.au/>

Australian Federal Police: <https://www.afp.gov.au/>. Also on the AFP site is the Child ID App for missing or abducted children, a useful tool to consider.

Approved by Mark Panaia, Principal

<b>Status</b>	Final
<b>Owner</b>	Board and Principal
<b>Principal Author</b>	Veronica Massang
<b>Reviewed</b>	May 2023
<b>To be reviewed</b>	May 2026