

# Mandatory Reporting Policy

## Purpose

Carrum Downs Secondary College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. School staff have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care.

## Policy

If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care they should take immediate action by notifying a member of the principal class or the Wellbeing leader of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

In the case of a child who may be in need of protection or therapeutic treatment, or where there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, school staff can discharge this duty of care by taking action which includes the following:

- reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency

## Forming a 'reasonable belief'

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused
- signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

## Types of child abuse and indicators of harm

Child abuse can have a significant effect on a child's physical or emotional health, development and wellbeing.

Types of child abuse include:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- medical neglect
- family violence
- human trafficking (including forced marriage)
- sexual exploitation (including pornography and prostitution).

A report should be made to DHHS Child Protection in circumstances where, for example:

- the child is engaging in risk-taking behaviour
- female genital mutilation has occurred, or there is a risk of it occurring
- there is a risk to an unborn child
- a child or young person is exhibiting sexually-abusive behaviours
- there are indications that a child is being groomed. For information see: Department of Justice and Regulation – Grooming offence.

**Evaluation:** This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's review cycle

**Related policies:** School Policy Advisory Guide – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

*This policy was endorsed by the College Council in June, 2016*