



# Herne Hill Primary School

**Policy Title: RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE POLICY**

**Date Approved: 21<sup>ST</sup> May 2019**

**Review Date: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022**

## Rationale:

### Responding and Reporting to signs of child abuse

Each situation is different. In considering the most effective response that will ensure the child's safety and wellbeing, you may need to gather information and facts. These could include:

- **Make notes** – record what you observe. Date and sign the entry.
- **Continue to observe** – record what you observe, and date and sign each entry.
- **Consult colleagues** – get support and advice from your colleagues and supervisors. Compare notes and brainstorm possible strategies.
- **Develop action plans based on procedures** – familiarise yourself with your employer's procedures and processes about what to do.
- **Talk to other agencies about helping the family** – collaborate with or engage family support services, community health services, local government services, regional Department of Human Services and Child Protection contacts, and disability services. You may want to call a case conference for professionals to discuss their concerns.
- **Talk to the child** – do this with respect for the child's or young person's need for privacy and confidentiality.
- **Talk to the parent or parents** – only if you believe it will not jeopardise the safety of the child or young person.

### Responsibilities of a mandated notifier

Primary and secondary school teachers and principals, doctors, nurses and police are mandated reporters. The responsibilities and principles for mandated reporting include:

- a legal obligation to make a report to child protection if you believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection
- to make the report without delay
- to make a report each time you become aware of any further grounds for your belief
- you don't have to prove that the abuse has occurred
- to report your belief – it is not the responsibility of your boss, supervisor, principal or senior
- to make a report anyway, even in instances where the supervisor of a mandated professional directs them not to make a report, even where they believe that abuse is occurring
- that mandatory reporting requirements take precedence over professional codes of practice where confidentiality or client privilege is claimed
- that a report does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics, nor does it subject the person to any liability if made in good faith.

## Contacting Child Protection

To report child abuse, contact your regional Child Protection office as soon as possible. If you are making a report, please use the main Intake Unit number. For all other enquiries, please contact the appropriate regional office.

## How to make a report

Call the appropriate Intake Unit phone number. The Child Protection Intake Worker will ask you for certain information, including:

- **details** – the child's or young person's name, age and address
- **indicators of harm** – the reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse or neglect
- **reason for reporting** – the reason why the call is being made now
- **safety assessment** – assessment of immediate danger to the child or children. For example, information may be sought on the whereabouts of the alleged abuser or abusers
- **description** – description of the injury or behaviour observed
- **child's whereabouts** – the current whereabouts of the child or young person
- **other services** – your knowledge of other services involved with the family
- **family information** – any other information about the family
- **cultural characteristics** – any specific cultural or other details that will help to care for the child, for example, cultural origins, interpreter or disability needs.

A report should still be made, even if you don't have all the information listed above. The reporter's identity is protected unless they provide written consent for it to be disclosed or it is required by order of the Court.

## Your ongoing role when making a report

When Child Protection becomes involved, this may provoke a crisis for the family. After making a report, some of your ongoing responsibilities can include:

- acting as a support person for the child or young person during interviews
- attending a case conference
- participating in case planning meetings
- continuing to monitor the child's or young person's behaviour in relation to ongoing harm
- providing written reports for case planning meetings or court proceedings

## Evaluation:

This policy is required to be reviewed annually by School Council to confirm/enhance internal control procedures.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Principal)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Council President)

Date: 24/05/19

**Ratified by School Council**