



Lake Joondalup Baptist College

Child Protection Procedures 041a

Policy reviewed date: 2023

Lake Joondalup Baptist College is committed to the National Child Safe Organisation Principles, and to providing a child-safe environment which safeguards all students and promotes practices which provide for the safety, wellbeing and welfare of our children and young people. Lake Joondalup Baptist College expects all College community members including Board members, staff, volunteers, students, visitors and contractors to share this commitment.

Child Protection Procedures

Child abuse

Responding to a disclosure

- Tell the child that what they've said is really important and that you want to talk to them where no one else can hear.
- Guide the child into a place where they feel safe and other children/people are not around.
- 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.
- Be supportive and gently indicate that the child is safe to talk.
- Once you have established that they have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed, do not pursue the conversation any further.
- Tell the child what you plan to do next
- Following the disclosure, make arrangements to have the child looked after in a supportive and confidential way. For example, in the care of a nurse, counsellor or trusted staff member.
- Document the disclosure verbatim

The reaction of the person to whom a disclosure is made may affect whether the victim makes further disclosures in the future and may also affect the severity of psychological symptoms experienced by the victim. A negative response to disclosure can affect a victim's willingness to disclose again, exacerbate the impacts of the abuse, and allow it to continue.

The following is important when a child is disclosing:

- Give the child your full attention
- Maintain a calm appearance
- Believe the child
- Don't be afraid of saying the 'wrong' thing
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Accept the child will disclose only what they are comfortable with and acknowledge their bravery/strength in doing so
- Let the child take their time
- Let the child use his or her own words
- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Never criticise the offending parent/s
- Check the child's emotional state and immediate safety
- Do not confront the alleged perpetrator

What not to do when a child is disclosing:

- Don't stop the child from talking (unless you are protecting their privacy).
- Don't doubt the child or question the validity of their account.
- Don't dismiss or minimise what the child is telling you.
- Don't ask a child why they have not shared information sooner.
- Don't make assumptions about how the child is feeling.
- Don't promise that everything will be fine or that the child will be safe or happy.
- Don't ask leading questions or interview others (your role is not to investigate; this is the role of the Department of Communities and/or WA Police Force).
- Don't try to deal with the situation completely on your own.

It is important to remember your job as a mandatory reporter is not to investigate disclosures of child abuse. You do not need to prove the sexual abuse has occurred; however, you must make the notification as soon as is reasonably practicable after forming a belief the child has been sexually abused. Your role is to listen, acknowledge the child's feelings and experiences, and provide emotional support while they are disclosing.

Sexual abuse

Mandatory reporters

Mandatory reporters 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 staff working outside of the College grounds are also required to report when working in either a paid or unpaid capacity. For example, tutoring or volunteering in first aid at their own child's weekend sporting event.

Failure to make a report can incur a substantial penalty.

Forming a reasonable belief of child sexual abuse

'Believes on reasonable grounds' means that a reasonable person, doing the same work, would have formed the same belief on those grounds. Grounds for forming a belief are matters of which you have become aware, and any opinions in relation to those matters.

A mandatory reporter does not have to be able to prove that harm has occurred. Professional judgement and objective observation help to identify warning signs or possible indicators of child sexual abuse and contribute to a reporter forming a belief on reasonable grounds. Knowledge of child development and consultation with colleagues or other professionals can also contribute to reasonable grounds.

Reasonable grounds may include:

- your own observations of a child's behaviour
- your own observations of the behaviour of an adult interacting with the child
- when a child tells you they, or another child, has been harmed
- when you hear about it from someone who is in a position to provide reliable information, perhaps a relative or friend, neighbour or sibling of a child who is at risk.

Mandatory reporters must specify the grounds on which they formed the belief that a child has been, or is being, sexually abused.

It is not the role of the staff member to investigate child abuse or neglect matters, or to collect evidence such as taking photographs of injuries.

Very important! To avoid interfering with any investigative process initiated by CPFS or the Police, the staff member must not inform the parent/legal guardian of a concern of abuse or neglect.

Mandatory reporting service

A centralised Mandatory Reporting Service 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.

A verbal report is preferred in the first instance, particularly if the teacher has formed a belief that the child is still at risk of being abused, as it allows the Mandatory Reporting Service to respond quickly, ask clarifying questions and gather as much information as possible. However, it must be followed by a written report as soon as is practicable, usually within 24 hours.

Failure to follow up a verbal report with a written report as soon as is practicable may result in a substantial fine. A written report form can be downloaded from the mandatory reporting website www.mandatoryreporting.wa.gov.au.

Reporting child sexual abuse

1. Sexual abuse – belief formed

If you have formed a belief that sexual abuse is occurring or has occurred you must:

- a. Make a mandatory report by contacting DOC Mandatory Reporting Service on 1800 708 704 (see Appendix 1).
- b. Inform the Principal of the Report number and a brief description.
- c. Non mandatory reporters can seek help from the relevant Dean or Principal.

2. Sexual abuse – unsure

If you are unsure whether you have enough information to form a belief that sexual abuse is occurring or has occurred you must:

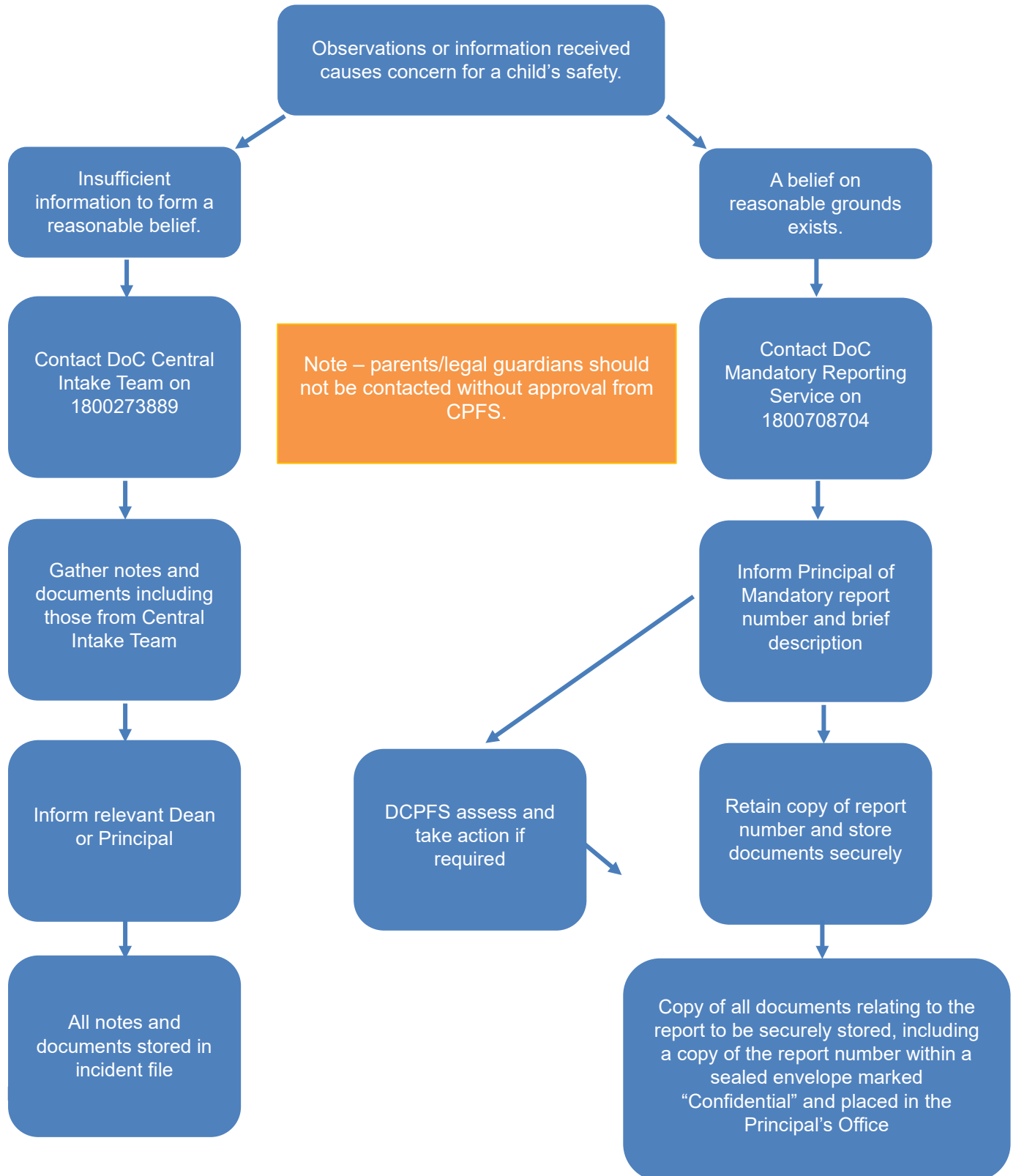
- a. Contact the DOC Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889.
- b. Gather any notes or records you have made, including any instructions from the Central Intake Team.
- c. Inform the relevant Dean or Principal.
- d. Give your notes/records to the Dean or Principal who will store them in an incident file.

Mandatory Report Flow Chart Notification steps for child sexual abuse

Legend:

DoC = Department of Communities

DCPFS = Department of Child Protection Family Services



Reporting child non-sexual abuse

1. Non-sexual abuse – specific concern

If you are able to describe the non-sexual abuse, neglect or risk you must:

- a. Consult the relevant Dean or Principal.
- b. Contact the DOC Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889.

2. Non-sexual abuse – general concern

If you are worried about a student, but there is nothing specific to report you must:

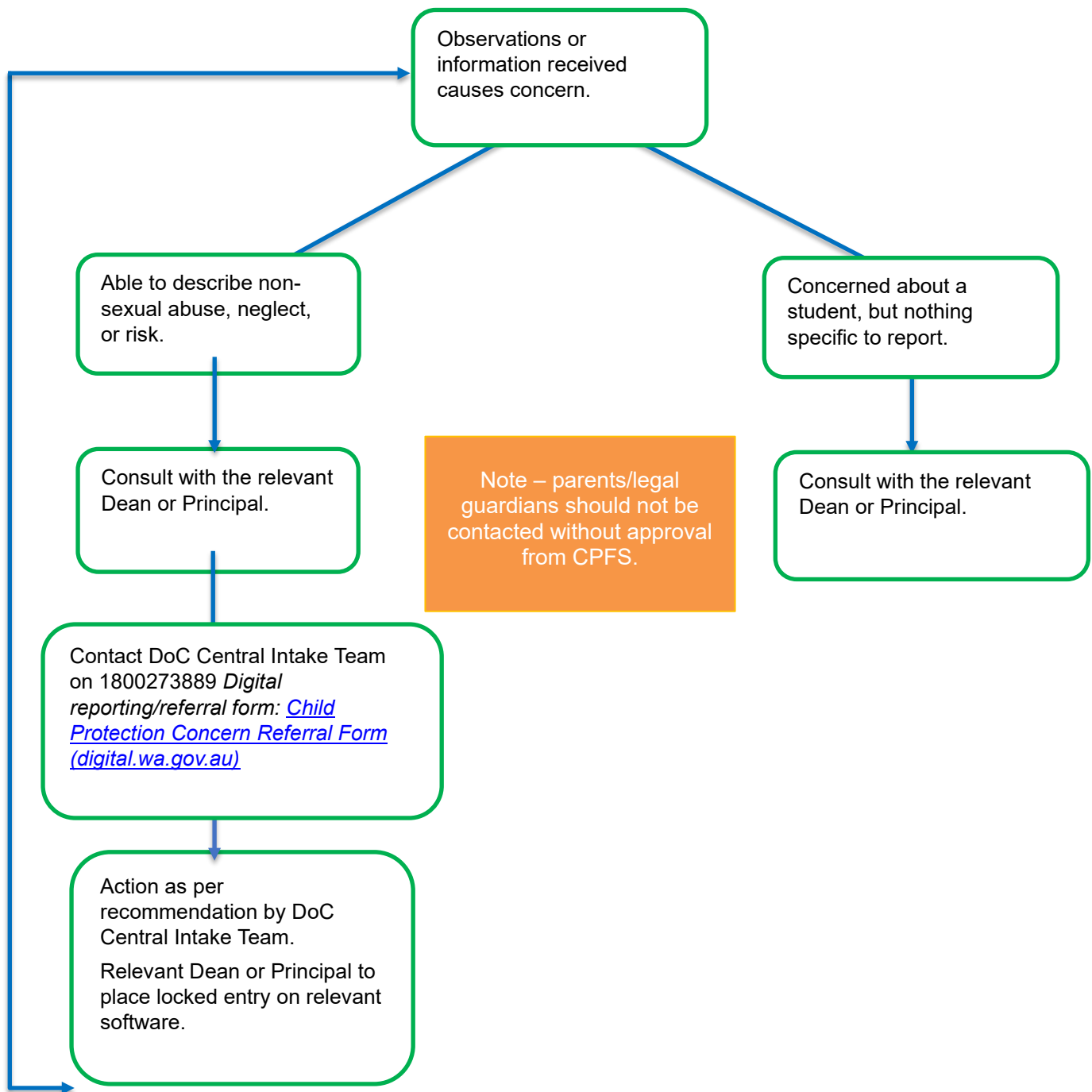
- a. Consult the relevant Dean or Principal.

Non-sexual abuse flow chart
Notification steps for child non-sexual abuse and neglect

Legend:

DoC = Department of Communities

DCPFS = Department of Child Protection Family Services



Reporting allegations of sexual abuse perpetrated by a child

Forced sexual activity involving a child constitutes sexual abuse and must be managed as a mandatory report, regardless of whether the behaviour occurred during College supervised activities or outside of College time.

In cases where the alleged victim and person alleged to have committed the abuse are both students at the College, the alleged offender should be removed from contact with the alleged victim.

Management of support for the victim may be delegated but remains the responsibility of the relevant Dean. Where possible, the College Psychologist should be involved in the development of a support plan. Support will be determined by the needs of the child and the capacity of the student. Where appropriate, the child should be provided with appropriate information and involved in decisions that directly affect them.

Consensual sex between children

Consensual sexual activity involving a child under 16 years of age does not constitute sexual abuse and is not required to be reported. Generally, if the age difference is greater than 3 years, consult with the DOC Central Intake Team. Even if the relationship is consensual, a report may be made to MRS if there is a belief on reasonable grounds that child sexual abuse has occurred.

A student who discloses consensual sexual activity to a staff member could be at risk. The staff member who receives the disclosure will inform the relevant Dean who will inform the College Principal.

1. The College will provide initial counselling and also consider necessary actions, including student disclosure to a parent/legal guardian (with support if required) after informing the College Principal.
2. The relevant Dean or delegate will inform the parents/legal guardians of the disclosure. If the relevant Dean believes that reporting the disclosure to the parents/legal guardians will pose a threat to the safety of the student, the disclosure and reasons for not contacting parents/legal guardians will be documented.
3. The relevant Dean will arrange ongoing support for, and monitoring of, the student's wellbeing within the College.
4. Written records of the disclosure and actions taken by College staff must be maintained in a secure and confidential manner.
5. If the consensual sexual activity has taken place during a College supervised activity, the investigation and documentation will include:
 - supervision arrangements
 - how the incident was brought to the attention of staff
 - the nature of the incident
 - subsequent action by staff
 - communications with parent/legal guardian.

Reporting of child protection issues involving employees and members of the College community.

Allegations of child sexual abuse that involve an employee or member of the College community must be reported to CPFS MRS.

Should a staff member become aware of inappropriate conduct towards a child by another employee or member of the College community engaged to provide a service to children, they are to immediately make a report to the College Principal. The College Principal will take action to ensure the safety of the child, adhere to all reporting requirements and keep detailed records.

All staff involved in the matter must maintain confidentiality to ensure that the interests of all involved are respected.

Appropriate staff – student relationships

In order to create a safe and secure environment for students, staff are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner abiding by professional boundaries at all times. See Appendix 5

Physical contact with students should be age and stage appropriate at all times. In situations where safety is an issue, physical contact should be used as a last resort and only to the required level.

Documented plans with guidelines for appropriate and reasonable physical contact must be developed, in collaboration with parents, for staff caring for children with disabilities who require assistance with toileting and dressing. When there is a known history of the possible need for physical

restraint, a documented plan must also include a range of strategies that may be employed, in order to prevent them from harming themselves or others.

Grooming behaviour

Grooming refers to 'actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child' (Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2017, p. 9).

Gifts such as treats, online game credits, drugs and alcohol or money may be used as a means to befriend a child or adults around the child in order to gain access to the child. The behaviour remains grooming as the intention is to gain access, lower inhibition and secure secrecy for the abuse rather than an exchange of sexual favour.

Grooming often includes:

- giving gifts or special attention to the child (and/or their caregiver) to make them feel special and indebted to the person causing the abuse
- normalising close physical contact, such as tickling and wrestling
- gradually exposing the child to sexual material and/or sexual acts
- trying to control the child through making them feel guilty or ashamed (to believe it is 'their fault') as well as outright threatening them
- singling one child out and treating them as 'special'
- arranging special activities or spending extra time with them
- isolating a child from other adults or children
- encouraging a child to use alcohol and drugs
- being exceptionally helpful in supporting a family either financially, emotionally or practically.
- These tactics are used to reduce the chance the child will stop engaging in sexual activity with them and minimise the risk of the child disclosing to other adults that the abuse has occurred. Grooming also often involves trusted family members of the child, to gain alone time with the child and minimise barriers from anyone who may be protective of the child.

Guidelines for meetings with parents/legal guardians

The relevant Dean, will do so on the advice of Police or CPFS MRS only. When CPFS MRS or WA Police have directed the relevant Dean to inform parents, the Dean should avoid:

- disclosing the identity or personal information relating to the person alleged to have committed the abuse or disclose the identity of the person who made the report
- offering personal opinions or making assumptions
- question the family about matters that are unrelated to the situation
- placing blame on one of the parties involved.

The relevant Dean will ensure ongoing support for the teacher, the student and anyone else who was affected. The College Principal will assume the role of the relevant Dean if necessary.

Confidentiality and legal protection

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

There are exceptions where a reporter's identity is permitted. Even where disclosure is allowed, consideration will be given to ensuring the reporter's safety has been taken into account.

A mandatory 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.

Record keeping

A teacher, and also the College, do have obligations to keep secure and confidential any notes and reports that they prepare about individual students.

Recording information

College staff should document observations, consultations and actions involving child abuse. Records must include the dates and approximate times of observations or disclosures with exact wording of statements made by the student.

When recording information for all child protection matters, staff should record their observations and all information related to the matter.

Mandatory reports record storage

Staff who suspect child sexual abuse must complete and store their own records. Mandatory reporting obligations under The Act are obligations placed upon the teacher personally and not the College.

For all mandatory reports to CPFS it is recommended that the teacher:

- inform the College Principal that a report has been made.
- keep a copy of the report and any notes provided to the Department
- keep a copy of the receipt number provided by the DCPFS
- keep a copy of any notes of meetings with staff at the College
- retain copies of any notes, the report and the receipt of the report by the Department, when the teacher leaves the College, the notes and reports must be kept confidential and secure.
- place a sealed envelope with the receipt number in it on the student's file.

All information held by the College will be provided to DCPFS and the WA Police upon request.

Non-sexual report record storage

Non-sexual report records including physical abuse and neglect are to be stored by the College in accordance with the College Record Keeping Policy. This applies to all notes made by the teacher and all reports to CPFS.

The College will keep a copy of all documents in a sealed envelope in the Principals Office in a locked filing cabinet. The envelope will be labelled "To be opened only with the authority of the Dean of Students or Dean of Primary or College Principal".

Questions and concerns

Can the written records I keep be used in evidence?

Yes. If the investigating officers want to use the College's written records they must apply in writing to the College Principal. All types of official records kept in these cases may be the subject of court orders and the records be made available to the court and to other persons for the purposes of legal proceedings.

Is there a time limit on suspected offences?

There is generally no time limit on laying charges for offences relating to child abuse and neglect, that is a matter for the appropriate prosecuting authority. All suspected cases of child abuse (including sexual abuse) and neglect should be reported, irrespective of when they may have occurred. The mandatory reporting of sexual abuse applies to abuse which happened on or after 1 January 2009. The decision about whether to proceed with prosecution will be made by the appropriate external agency.

How soon after finding out about a case of child abuse or neglect am I expected to make a notification?

Mandatory reports must be made immediately and the Principal informed on the same day

Non-sexual abuse information is to be acted on as soon as possible, preferably on the same day as you find out.

Can I be called to give evidence?

Yes, a staff member can be called to give evidence. It is rare for a notifier to be called as a witness. It is understood that staff members are placed in a difficult position when asked to give evidence in court, and for this reason it is avoided if possible.

What will happen if I have to go to court? What legal support will be available from AISWA?

If you are called to give evidence in a child protection case, you will not lose pay. Ensure that the College Principal is informed if you are required to attend court. The College can arrange for AISWA legal support and advice on making statements.

Am I expected to report abuse if the perpetrator is a colleague or someone I know?

Yes. The identity of the perpetrator is irrelevant to the responsibility to report. The procedures outlined in this document apply, whoever the perpetrator is.

Does the offender have to be told who notified?

It is the policy of the Department for Child Protection and the Police Service not to reveal the identity of persons notifying child abuse and neglect. However, where a person who has notified an alleged offence is required to give evidence, their identity may be revealed in those proceedings. In extremely limited circumstances a court may also order that information which could identify the person who

notified an alleged offence be disclosed. Any breaches of this policy should be reported to the College Principal immediately.

Employee recruitment and selection

The College is committed to ensuring, as far as is possible, that people who work with children have been the subject of careful checking processes and are deemed suitable for employment. Please see 004 Clearances Policy for detailed information.

Missing students procedures

When a student cannot be located, it can be a distressing experience for staff, parents and students. More often than not, there is a simple explanation, and the student is safely located; however, all incidents must be treated seriously.

Monitoring student attendance

During normal College hours and while on the campus grounds, teachers are to maintain accurate and timely attendance records. The Attendance Officer, with the assistance of the Secondary Student Reception staff are responsible for identifying attendance discrepancies through the day and informing the Dean of Administration who in turn will inform a member of the Student Services Team.

While off campus on a College approved activity, the Teacher in Charge is responsible for the whereabouts of each student. Regular attendance checks will be conducted during excursions and camps and prior to departure.

Further information can be located in: Excursion Policy; Camps Policy

Primary student missing from the College during regular College hours

When a Primary student is found to be missing, the Dean of Primary is to be informed without delay.

The Dean of Primary will take **First Steps Action:**

- A thorough search of the College grounds will be conducted
- The Dean of Primary will inform the College Principal
- The Dean of Primary will liaise with the parent in a timely manner, informing them of the situation and suggesting that the parent stay at home or have someone stationed at the home in case student returns home.

If the student cannot be located, the College Principal will assume the role of Incident Manager or appoint a member of the College Management Team to the role. The Incident Manager may call an Emergency and Critical Incident Team meeting to plan further action.

Secondary student missing from the College during regular College hours

When a Secondary student is found to be missing, the Dean of Administration or Dean of Students if not available, is to be informed without delay.

Attendance Officer – monitoring and follow ups

1. Check with Tutors
2. Ring the Curriculum Office
3. Ring the Career's Office
4. Ring the Library
5. Check First Aid
6. Check House Centre
7. Check Chaplaincy Office
8. Check interview rooms
9. Psychologist Room
10. Complete another double visual check with the teacher that the child is not in the classroom
11. Inform HoH, who may ask one of the student's friends to call the missing student's mobile number.

Dean of Administration or Attendance Officer

1. Ask a HoH of the same gender as the missing student to check the toilets, taking their mobile phone with them
2. If no male HoH is available and the Dean of Administration is unable to search, the Dean of Administration will look for the closest male staff member for assistance.
3. Advise the Dean of Students of the missing student

If the student cannot be located after the above checks have been made, the Attendance Officer will call the parent to advise that the student has not reported to their next class and cannot be located. Ask them if the child has arrived home and inform them that the College is concerned about them. Ask them to call the Dean of Administration (give number) to advise us when their child arrives home and tell them that if no one answers the phone to please leave a message.

Attendance Officer to place entry on relevant software

Student missing after College hours

In the event that a parent informs the College that their child has not returned home after school, the College Management Team member on duty should be notified.

The College Management team member on duty will take **First Steps Action**.

1. Verify that the student was at College
2. Check the College grounds with the assistance of any available staff
3. Check the Co-curricular venues
4. Determine the names of the student's friends and ask the parent to contact the parents of these students. The College should not provide contact numbers for other parents. With the agreement of the parent/legal guardian, College staff may call the parents of students but may not provide the parent with others phone numbers.
5. Suggest to the parent that they remain at home or have someone stationed at the home in case the student arrives.

If the student cannot be located, the College Principal should be notified. The College Principal will assume the role of Incident Manager or appoint a member of the College Management Team to the role. The Incident Manager may call an Emergency and Critical Incident Team meeting.

Student missing from an off campus College approved activity

If during an excursion, camp or other off campus College approved activity a student is reported missing, the Teacher in Charge will conduct a thorough search of the area and if the student cannot be found the College Principal will be informed.

The College Principal may call an Emergency and Critical Incident Team meeting and consideration will be given to sending the Dean of Students or Dean of Primary to the location to assist staff.

Post Incident review

The College Principal will initiate an incident review and update the Critical Incident Register.

Further information can be located in the *Emergency and Critical Incident Policy* located on the College Portal.

Child Safety Alert Procedures

A Protective Behaviour Alert may be received by email from AISWA or directly from parents, students or members of the local community.

A staff member who receives a Protective Behaviour Alert should notify the College Principal or a Dean without delay.

For incidents of a serious nature in the local area, personal contact should be made with the College Principal and either the Executive Assistant to the Dean of Students or Dean of Primary.

The Executive Assistants to the Dean of Students or Dean of Primary will inform the Dean of Students or Dean of Primary.

Responding to an incident in the local area

Various actions may be taken depending on the location, time and nature of the incident.

Safety Alert Notice

A Safety Alert Notice which, when approved by the College Principal, may be emailed to all Primary and Secondary staff. If the College Principal is off campus and unavailable, the Safety Alert Notice may be approved by the Dean of Students, or if the Dean of Students is not available, by another member of the College Management Team.

Primary students

The Dean of Primary may revise the Safety Alert Notice to relate to the age of the students who will receive it. The Dean of Primary will be responsible for giving the Primary students this information. A message may also be placed on the digital noticeboard outside the Primary Reception.

Secondary students

The Dean of Students may inform Secondary students of an incident through the Student Notices or by sending student runners to each classroom with a memo for the teacher to read out to students. Parents

Once a Safety Alert Notice has been issued to students, parents may be notified by text message and a revised copy placed on the College website. The Dean of Students or Dean of Primary will liaise with the Promotions and Publications Manager or the Promotions and Publications Technician to place a copy on the College website.

Student care arrangements

The Heads of House and Dean of Primary will assist students to make alternative arrangements for coming to and leaving the College if needed.

Prevention education

At least once a term Secondary students will receive information through the Student Notices promoting the use of protective behaviours on the way to and from the College. Further information will be incorporated in the Protective Behaviours Program for the Primary students and through the Secondary Health Program.

Appendix 1

How do I submit a mandatory report?

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, call WA Police Force on 000.

Once a mandatory reporter forms a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child has been or is being sexually abused, they must make a report to Communities Mandatory Reporting Service. The service can be contacted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phone on 1800 708 704 to discuss the report or provide advice to the reporter.

The preferred reporting method is online via the MR Web Portal. When making a mandatory report via the MR Web Portal, the user will be guided through the system to assist with providing the required information to the Mandatory Reporting Service.

A blank mandatory reporting form can be requested from the Mandatory Reporting Service to be sent via fax or email if you cannot access the MR Web Portal. Completed forms can be emailed to mrs@communities.wa.gov.au or faxed to (08) 6414 7316.

An oral report can be made if you believe that the child is at immediate risk, but this must be followed by a written report as soon as practicable (preferably within 24 hours) after the oral report is made in accordance with section 124C (1) Children and Community Services Act 2004. Failure to submit the written report is an offence with a \$3,000 fine.

The reporter's organisation may have internal reporting procedures, and it is important that reporters check with their organisation.

By contacting the 24/7 Mandatory Reporting Service on 1800 708 704 you can:

- report immediate concerns for the safety of a child
- discuss with a specialist in child protection any grounds on which you have formed a belief that a child has been or is currently being sexually abused
- seek advice on reporting procedures.

What do I need to include in a mandatory report?

For the Mandatory Reporting Service to assess the child's safety and determine the most appropriate response, it is important that the mandatory reporter provides as much information as possible.

As a mandatory reporter, you are responsible for providing good quality information in order for Communities and WA Police Force to conduct assessments and investigations in a timely manner.

However, the Mandatory Reporting Service is aware that mandatory reporters may not know all the information they are asked to provide. It is important not to interview the child to obtain information, as this is the task of Communities and the WA Police Force.

Mandatory reporters should provide as much information as they can when making a report. The Mandatory Reporting Service may ask a reporter clarifying information and may request the reporter to follow up with the child and/or parent or others involved to ensure all necessary actions have been taken to assist with the assessment. Some of the questions they are asked may not seem relevant to the reporter but may greatly assist in determining the child's safety and circumstances.

If there has been a disclosure of abuse, it is useful to include the context of the disclosure when making the report. For example, if the disclosure occurred within the context of a protective behaviours or abuse prevention program class, this should be noted in the report.

Information that must be included

Under section 124C of the Children and Community Services Act 2004, a mandatory report must contain the following information:

- the reporter's name and contact details
- the name of the child, or, if this cannot be obtained after reasonable inquiries, a description of the child, and
- the grounds on which the reporter believes that the child has been the subject of sexual abuse or is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse.

The following information must also be provided to the extent that it is known:

- the child's date of birth
- where the child lives

- the names of the child's parents or other appropriate persons (e.g., adult relative or person who the child usually lives with), and
- the name of the person alleged responsible, their contact details and their relationship to the child.

Other important information

When a report is made, the following may be useful for Communities and WA Police Force in undertaking an assessment and/or investigation; therefore, please provide as much detail as possible in the following areas:

- the child's current whereabouts
- all telephone numbers linked to the child, caregivers and/or the child's current address
- the child's school, day care centre or kindergarten
- the child's cultural background
- whether the child has a disability or additional needs
- whether the child or family needs an interpreter
- the child's family arrangements, such as siblings and carers
- whether the person alleged to be responsible for the sexual abuse has threatened to further harm the child
- whether the child and the child's family/carers are aware of the report
- the context of the disclosure
- if the child has disclosed abuse, what they said happened and who they disclosed to and when
- a description of any behaviours/interactions with the child that are of concern, including frequency and severity of behaviours
- whether the child has any injury, or medical needs.

Appendix 2

What is sexual abuse under the Act?

The Children and Community Services Act 2004 defines a child as 'under 18 years of age, and in the absence of positive evidence of age, means a person apparently under 18 years of age'.

Under section 124A of the Children and Community Services Act 2004, 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.

These behaviours can include grooming, exposure to pornographic material, sexual penetration, inappropriate touching, exposure to other sexual acts and soliciting children for sexual exploitation. Sexual abuse occurs when a child has been exposed or subjected to sexual behaviours that are exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level. In most cases, coercion and fear is common in child sexual abuse.

Coercion involves a power imbalance between the alleged abuser and the child which may relate to:

- age and developmental level
- intellectual ability
- knowledge
- experience, and
- gender.

Fear inducing behaviour may include:

- threats of negative consequences or blackmail
- threats of harm to the child, family members or pets if they don't comply
- confusing the child into feeling responsible, and
- blaming the child.

Examples of child sexual abuse include:

- letting a child watch or read pornography
- allowing a child to watch sexual acts
- fondling the child's genitals
- having oral sex with a child
- vaginal or anal penetration
- using the internet to find a child for sexual exploitation.

Please be mindful that something can be a criminal offence in WA but not meet the threshold for making a mandatory report. It is not the intention of mandatory reporting legislation to capture instances of informed consensual sexual activity so long as the activity is age and developmentally appropriate. The individual circumstances of each case must be considered and if the reporter forms a reasonable belief that sexual abuse has occurred, or is occurring, a report must be made.

Communities will consider contextual elements when attempting to determine if a situation is abusive, such as the role of coercion or unequal power in a relationship. This is particularly important in relation to sexual behaviour between children, where the children's respective ages, developmental level and the nature of the relationship are important considerations.

Please consider in your decision-making process information about indicators of sexual abuse and the possibility that children, as part of the disclosure process, tend to minimise their sexual abuse.

Sometimes children may indicate the sexual activity occurred with a child of a similar age instead of the adult perpetrator for many reasons and will not disclose the full extent of the sexual abuse until many years later.

Child sexual abuse in the online context

The internet and social media have many benefits for enabling our connection to the outside world, though in doing so they also enable new opportunities for child sexual exploitation online.

Online child sexual exploitation may include:

- engaging a child in chat about sexual acts

- sending nude or pornographic images or videos to a child or exposing themselves via live stream
- asking a child to perform sexual acts, expose themselves or share sexual images or videos
- producing and sharing indecent images of children online (Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation, n.d.)
- Online grooming, where an adult makes online contact with someone under the age of 16 with the intention of establishing a relationship to enable their sexual abuse.

Appendix 3

Indicators of child sexual abuse

Not all children exposed to similar experiences of abuse are affected in the same way and for some children, the effects may be chronic and debilitating while others may experience less adverse outcomes (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2007). Harm which may result from child sexual abuse includes significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infection, and impaired emotional, cognitive, social, behavioural and psychological development.

Indicators that may suggest sexual abuse to children exist across a range of domains. While the following indicators do not prove that a child has experienced child sexual abuse and may emerge for other reasons, they may contribute to you forming a belief on reasonable grounds of child sexual abuse which would require that you make a mandatory report.

Some of the indicators of child sexual abuse include:

Type	Description
Disclosure of child sexual abuse	The most direct indicator of child sexual abuse is when a child tells someone they have been sexually abused. Disclosures may come in a number of forms and are explained further in the 'disclosures' section.
Changes in emotions and behaviour	Child sexual abuse can lead to many changes in emotions and behaviour. Children who have experienced child sexual abuse often appear scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn or more aggressive. Changes in behaviour when personal care needs are attended to, such as when being bathed or nappy changed or during toileting. Hurting themselves and obsessive and compulsive washing may also occur.
Returning to earlier behaviours	Children who have experienced child sexual abuse may display behaviours shown at earlier ages, such as thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, fear of the dark or fear of strangers. For some children, even loss of acquired language or memory problems may be an issue.
Fear of going certain places	Children who have experienced child sexual abuse may express apprehension or anxiety about leaving school or about going places with the person who is abusing them, or may exhibit an unusual fear of a familiar person or place.
Changes in eating	The stress, fear and anxiety caused by child sexual abuse can lead to changes in a child's eating behaviours, such as bingeing, fasting, or 'pickiness'.
Changes in sleeping	Children who have experienced child sexual abuse may have frequent nightmares or have difficulty falling asleep and may appear tired or fatigued as a result.
Changes in the school environment	Children who have experienced child sexual abuse may have difficulty concentrating in school, changes in their grades, or have excessive absences.
Risk-taking	Young people who have experienced child sexual abuse may engage in high-risk activities such as using drugs or alcohol, or self-harm such as cutting.
Sexual behaviour	Children and young people who have experienced child sexual abuse may display highly sexualised, risky, or harmful sexual behaviours; they may use sexually explicit language or themes in play that are outside their developmental norm.
Unexplained injuries	Children who have experienced child sexual abuse may exhibit frequent or unexplained injuries. You may also hear unconvincing explanations of a child's injuries.
Infections, disease and pregnancy	Children who have been sexually abused may experience frequent urinary tract infections or bowel problems. Sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy may also occur.

Indicators of non-sexual child abuse and neglect

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive but contains those that will be of most use to staff.

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.

Physical abuse

This may include but is not limited to:

- 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
- family history of violence
- marked delay between injury and obtaining medical assistance
- 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 adults, a parent or legal guardian, or is afraid to go home
- the child or young person reports intentional injury by their parent or legal guardian
- arms and legs are kept covered by inappropriate clothing in warm conditions
- ingestion of poisonous substances including alcohol or drugs
- hair missing in large quantities
- avoidance of physical contact by the child (particularly with a parent or legal guardian)
- frequent absences, with or without explanation from parents or legal guardians
- lacerations and abrasions to the eyes, lips, gums and mouth
- missing or loosened teeth
- self mutilation.

Emotional or psychological abuse

This may include but is not limited to:

- the parent or legal guardian 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
- aggressive behaviour
- attempted suicide
- decline in academic performance
- lethargy and/or fatigue
- obsession with neatness and cleanliness

- poor peer relationships
- ulcers, asthma, allergies and other stress-related or psychosomatic conditions.

Neglect

This may include but is not limited to:

- signs of malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food
- poor hygiene; matted hair, dirty skin or severe body odour
- untreated lice, injuries, skin disorders etc
- 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 College or absence from College
- inappropriate clothing, especially inadequate clothing in winter
- alcohol and/or drug abuse present in the household
- frequent illness, low grade infections or sores
- hunger
- developmental regression
- emaciated or distended stomach
- repeated failure by parent/legal guardian to collect child from the College.

Appendix 4

What resources are available for mandatory reporters?

Resources reporters can link families into:

Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC)

Crisis Telephone Counselling: Call (08) 6458 1828 or 1800 199 888

Between 8.30am and 11pm, any day of the week, including public holidays.

SARC Face-To-Face Counselling: Call (08) 6458 1828

Between 8.30am to 4.30pm AWST to request an appointment.

Crisis Care

Crisis Care provides Western Australia's after-hours response to reported concerns for a child's safety and wellbeing and information and referrals for people experiencing crisis.

If you are assisting someone who does not speak English, first call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50. They can connect you with the service of your choice and interpret for you.

Crisis Care: Free call 1800 199 008

1800RESPECT

Counselling and support service: Call 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732),

This service is available 24 hours, any day of the week, including public holidays.

Lifeline

Crisis support and suicide prevention services: Call 13 11 14

[Chat online](#)

Text: 0477 13 11 14

These services are available 24 hours, any day of the week, including public holidays.

Kids Help Line

Counselling service: Call 1800 55 1800

[Email](#)

[Chat online](#)

Perth Children's Hospital - Child Protection Unit

The Perth Children's Hospital (PCH) Child Protection Unit (CPU) is a specialised, hospital-based service providing medical, forensic, social work and therapeutic services for children and their families when there is a concern that a child has or may have suffered from child abuse.

The PCH CPU is the only hospital-based service of this kind in WA.

Please send all CPU referrals to PCHcpuDuty@health.wa.gov.au

Referrers are to inform CPU if the parents/carers know about the referral.

Blue Knot

Helpline and Redress Support Service: Call 1300 657 380

Between 9am to 5pm AEST, any day of the week, including public holidays.

Email helpline@blueknot.org.au

Resources for reporters who need support

- Check with your employer how to access their Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Consult your General Practitioner for a Mental Health Care Plan and referral to mental health support
- Beyond Blue
 - Beyond Blue Support Service: Call 1300 22 4636
 - [Chat online](#)
- Lifeline
 - Crisis support and suicide prevention services: Call 13 11 14
 - [Chat online](#)
 - Text: 0477 13 11 14
 - These services are available 24 hours, any day of the week, including public holidays.

Appendix 5

To maintain professional boundaries staff are to:

- work in an open environment, for example, in confidential interviews or a one-to-one meeting, the door should be open with visual access. Exceptions apply for professional counsellors with strict confidentiality requirements
- consider the child's age, developmental level, maturity and level of care required, for example, touching a child to gain their attention, guiding or comforting a distressed child
- be alert to cues from students about how comfortable they are in your proximity and respect their need for personal space
- be sensitive when interacting with students who may misinterpret your actions, such as those students who may have been traumatised by abuse or adolescents seeking attention from a member of the opposite sex
- be aware of cultural norms that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour towards students
- be cautious about physical contact in games or practical instruction. If you need to make physical contact for demonstrations, explain the activity and what you will do and maintain a safe and appropriate distance
- use only physical contact that makes students feel comfortable, for example, shaking hands, a congratulatory pat on the back or with young children by gently guiding them or holding their hand for reassurance. Physical contact such as stroking hair or limbs, or allowing a student to sit on your lap should be developmentally appropriate and in full public view. It may be appropriate for a very young child who is distressed but can never be justified for an older student in any circumstance
- refrain from massaging a student or allowing a student to massage you. This is inappropriate physical contact even in full view of others
- refrain from using images of students as screen savers or backgrounds on personal electronic devices is not appropriate. The collection and storage of photographs of students must be for educational purposes only
- be aware that the giving and receiving of gifts, giving extra attention, accepting a different standard of behaviour from a child or having 'special time' with a child must be appropriate and justified as a strategy to meet teaching and learning outcomes
- refrain from talking about sex or making comments of a sexualised nature outside of the Health Curriculum. This behaviour may be perceived as sexual harassment, misinterpreted and/or cause distress to a child
- obtain parental permission when meeting with students off the College grounds for outside of College activities
- refrain from giving out your personal address or other such information that cannot be fully justified as being required for educational purposes.

By being aware of the following 'danger signals', staff can remove, or limit, any risk to themselves, as well as being in a position to recognise behaviours which should be brought to the attention of the College Principal.

These may include but is not limited to:

- generally, instances of staff being alone with students without adequate reason
- specifically, instances of staff being frequently alone with one student, or a very small group of students
- staff, (such as counsellors and instrumental music staff), whose job requires they be alone with individual students, conducting sessions where their activities are not visible to outside observers; (obviously, the need for confidentiality or noise reduction might require a closed door, but covering up a window to shut out all visibility gives reason for suspicion)
- staff who have an individual student alone with them in their classroom during recess, lunchtime, or after College
- staff who sit students on their knee
- staff and counsellors who use elaborate red, green and amber light systems to control entry to their rooms
- staff who repeatedly touch students inappropriately ('inappropriate' is stressed)

- staff who repeatedly single out individual students for rewards and for rides in their motor vehicles
- staff who conduct inappropriate written correspondence including text messaging, social networking sites and any other form of electronic communication with individual students
- staff who share dirty jokes and sexual innuendos with students
- staff who meet socially with individual students outside College hours, without the knowledge of their parents
- staff who spend excessive amounts of time supervising student toilets, dressing rooms and showers
- staff who enter toilets, dressing rooms or showers of students when there is no reason to do so
- staff who inappropriately display their genitals to students, while changing for swimming or athletics training in the same change rooms
- staff who, at camps, without official reason enter students' sleeping quarters at night in non-emergency situations or stay unnecessarily long in their routine supervision of such venues
- staff who visit students in their homes in the absence of the student's parents
- staff who invite students to stay at their own home or resort venue during holiday periods.