

<p style="text-align: center;">Jells Park Primary School Mandatory Reporting Policy</p>
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Purpose

All children and young people have the right to be protected from abuse and neglect. Jells Park Primary School has a legal responsibility and duty of care in the prevention and reporting of child abuse and neglect to protect all its students.

Guidelines

- This Policy refers to abuse and neglect of a student caused by family members and extended family and friends and is guided by Section 184 of the 'Children, Youth and Families Act 2005'. Abuse and neglect by others outside the family should be directly referred to the Victoria Police.
- Any person who is registered as a teacher under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, or any person who has been granted permission to teach under that Act, including principals, is mandated to make a report to Child Protection. In the course of undertaking their professional duties, mandated staff members are required to report their belief, when the belief is formed on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual abuse or physical injury.
- All staff must be fully informed about their responsibilities and understand how to discharge them
- Staff may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury, sexual abuse or neglect, and the child's parent/s or caregivers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect the child from such harm.
- Proof is not required that abuse or neglect has occurred or is likely to occur. A belief is sufficient. It is the role of the Department of Human Services to determine whether that belief should be investigated.
- Indicators of abuse or neglect must be interpreted with regard to the individual child's or young person's normal level of functioning and developmental stage.
- Under no circumstances should a staff member undertake a physical examination of a student, in order to investigate a concern about abuse.
- Emotional abuse is most prevalent as a corollary of other forms of abuse or neglect. However, sometimes emotional abuse exists as the primary form of abuse or neglect. There are few physical indicators of such abuse or neglect. Emotional abuse can cause delay in physical, emotional and mental development.
- Neglect includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to such an

extent that the child's health and development are impaired or placed at serious risk. A child is neglected if they are left uncared for over long periods of time or abandoned.

- A staff member does not require the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to Child Protection, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so.

Implementation

1. All teachers will be required to attend a Mandatory Reporting professional development session provided by DEECD. A cumulative record of attendance will be kept by the school. Any newly appointed teachers will be required to attend a Mandatory Reporting session as soon as possible after appointment, if they have not done so previously.
2. It is a DEECD requirement that all staff complete the Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module annually. This is to be completed by the end of Term 1 in each school year.
3. Any teacher who forms belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child has been abused or neglected will discuss such concerns with the Principal, or other designated person, if the Principal is unavailable. During such discussions a decision would be made to do one or more of the following:
 - notify the Department of Human Services Child Protection (make a mandatory report)
 - contact the Department of Human Services ChildFIRST and make a referral
 - consult further either with regional staff or the centrally located Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit on 9637 2934 or 9637 2487
 - monitor the student/s over a pre-determined period and review their circumstances
 - keep detailed and accurate notes, that include the following:
 - A description of the concerns (eg; physical injuries, student behaviour)
 - Source of these concerns (eg; observation, report from a child or another person)
 - Actions taken as a result of the concerns (eg; consultation with principal, report to DHS)
4. A Report may be made by the Principal or the teacher who has formed a belief of abuse or neglect.
5. A teacher may make a Mandatory Report independently and without discussing it with anyone, or when a Principal disagrees with the teachers' beliefs.
6. The report must be made to the Department of Human Services Child Protection. It should be made on the same day as the belief is formed or a disclosure has been made. Further reports can be made if the teacher becomes

aware of further reasonable grounds that continued abuse or neglect has or will occur.

7. Full and thorough notation of any information will be systematically recorded and kept for future reference in a secure place within the school.
8. After making a mandatory report to the Department of Human Services or the Police relating to an allegation or a disclosure of sexual assault, notify immediately the Department of Education's Emergency & Security Management Unit.

References:

- *Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault – procedures for Victorian Government Schools*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide*
- *DEECD 'Child Protection – Mandatory Protection' Policy at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>*

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four yearly review cycle, or earlier if necessary.