

Atlantis Beach Baptist College

Child Protection Procedures

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Employee recruitment and selection

Teachers are required, through the Teachers Registration Board (TRBWA), to have a police clearance. The Working with Children (WWC) legislation requires them to have a WWC Check.

Non-teaching staff are also required to have a WWC check if their usual duties involve contact with children (see details below). College policy can be used to require these staff to have a police clearance.

Volunteers who are not parents who have contact with children are also required to have a WWC Check. The 2013 Registration Standards (section 6.1) states that volunteers who are not parents are required to have a National Police Check and/or a WWC Check.

Volunteers who are parents are exempt from getting a WWC Check, unless on an overnight camp, however, volunteers who are parents and undertake a professional role at the College need to have a National Police Clearance.

When to make a mandatory report

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 teachers working outside of the College 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.

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

Forming a reasonable belief of child sexual 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.

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

1. Can you describe the reasons why you believe a child has been, or is being sexually abused?
2. What has the child said or done to suggest they are being sexual abused?
3. Did the child disclose sexual abuse? What did they say happened? Who did they disclose to and when?
4. 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?
5. Has the child hinted that she or he has been abused?
6. Has someone else, perhaps a relative, friend, neighbour or sibling, said that they think the student may be or is being abused?
7. Has the student said that they know someone who has been abused – often a child is referring to him or herself?
8. Have you observed the presence of any of the ‘possible indicators’ of sexual abuse listed above?

If you can answer “yes” to more than one of the following questions, the child or young person at the centre of your concerns may be at significant risk if:

- the child has been injured, is the nature of the injury severe
- the child is very young
- the child has special needs that may increase their vulnerability
- there has been any disclosure from the child
- the current injury is located on the head or genital region

- the pattern of harm is continuing
- the parent or legal guardian threatened to harm the child
- an alleged perpetrator of abuse still has continued access to the child
- there is a history of a previous harm to this child or a sibling
- there is a history of family violence
- there is a current or recent episode of violence
- there is a history of the child or siblings running away.

It is not the role of the teacher 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 DCP or the Police, the teacher must not inform the parent/legal guardian of a concern of abuse or neglect.

If a teacher believes that a report of sexual abuse which provides identical information has been lodged by another member of staff, it is not necessary to make their own report.

Reporting child sexual abuse

In the independent school sector, once a teacher has formed a belief based on reasonable grounds, they are required to make the report directly to Department for Child Protection DCP. In cases of suspected sexual abuse, the teacher is the mandated reporter (MR) required to make a report to the DCP through the Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS).

In cases of child sexual abuse the teacher will provide a written report to the DCP MRS. The MRS will provide a feedback letter to the reporter outlining which DCP local office is involved, and what action has been taken. The MRS is required to forward all reports on to the WA Police.

How to make a mandatory report

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. To make a verbal report, the Mandatory Reporting Service can be reached on 1800 708 704.

Failure to follow up a verbal report with a written report as soon as is practicable may result in a fine of \$3,000. A written report form can be downloaded from the mandatory reporting website www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au .

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

Email to: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Fax to: 1800 610 614

Post to: PO Box 8146

Perth BC WA 6849

The following steps are to be taken when a teacher believes that a student may have been sexually abused.

Step 1 Record observations and/or disclosures

The staff member makes observations and keeps a record of concerns that have led them to the belief that a report may be necessary, or a student discloses abuse to them. If the teacher has a suspicion of sexual abuse but is unsure, they may speak with the Principal

Step 2 Make a report to DCP MRS

The Mandatory Reporting Service can be reached on 1800 708 704. The Principal will provide a quiet office for the mandatory reporter to make the verbal and/or written report.

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

Lodge a written report with the DCP MRS within 24 hours and provide the Principal with a copy of the lodgement receipt. The Principal will provide a quiet office for the mandatory reporter to lodge the report. Failure to follow up a verbal report with a written report as soon as is practicable may result in a fine of \$3,000.

A written report form can be downloaded from the mandatory reporting website www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au

A form can be mailed if the mandatory reporter does not have access to a computer. Once the written report has been completed, it should be returned using one of the following methods:

Email to: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au
Fax to: 1800 610 614
Post to: PO Box 8146
Perth BC WA 6849

The teacher can add information to the mandatory report by quoting the receipt number or child's name to MRS and multiple reports can be made for the same child.

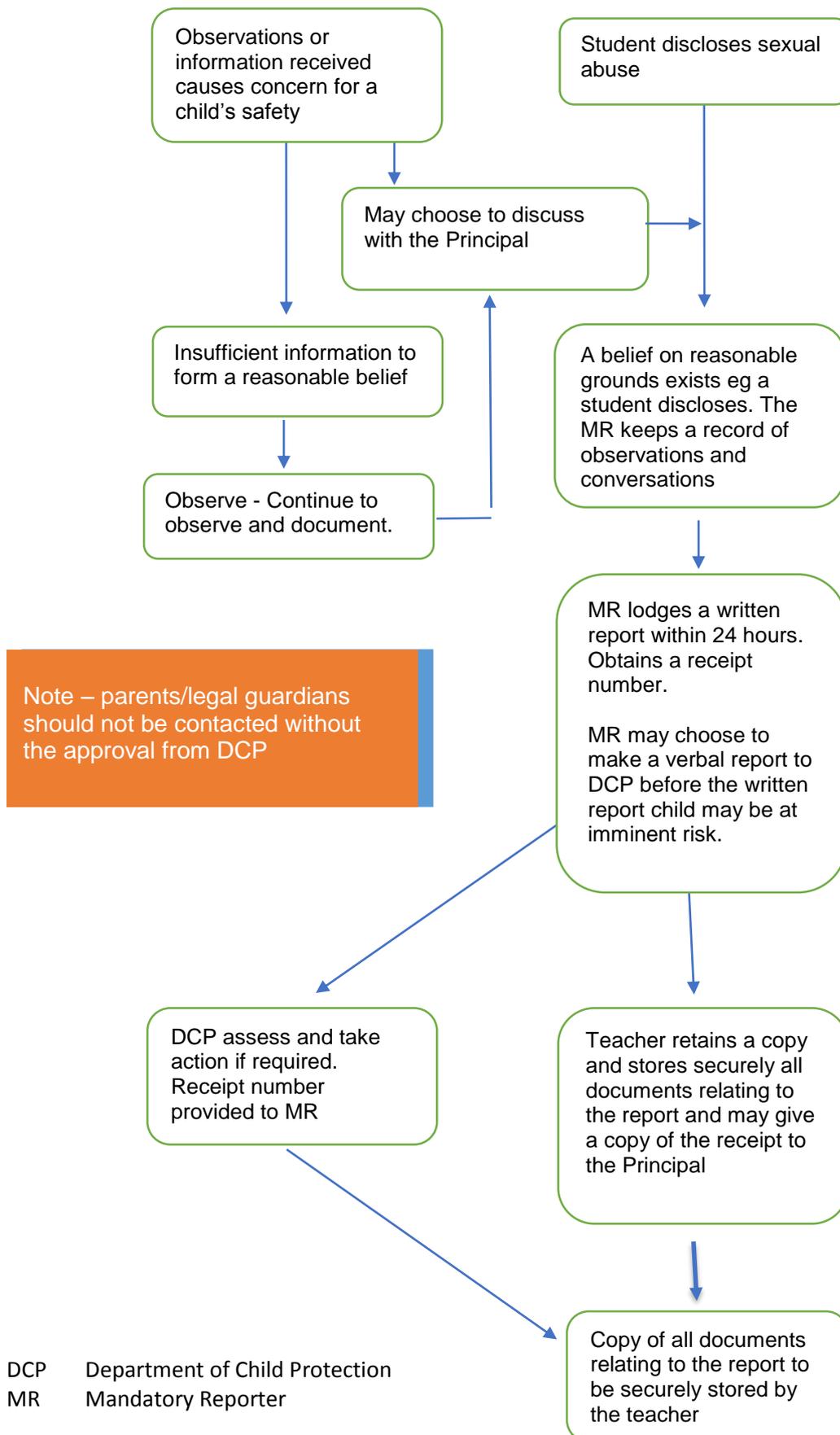
Note: The Principal will make a verbal and written report to DCP MRS for non-teaching staff.

Once the report has been lodged, the MRS 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.

Step 3 Feedback from DCP

The MR will receive a feedback letter advising them of the District Office it has been referred to, and whether or not further action was recommended by the Mandatory Reporting Service. The MR is to provide the Principal with a copy of the letter for secure storage. The report will be filed in a secure and confidential file, to be accessed only by the Principal.

Mandatory Report Flow Chart
Notification steps for child sexual abuse



Reporting child abuse and neglect (Non sexual)

For other forms of abuse, the Principal will report all disclosures or strong concerns of abuse or neglect to the DCP and maintain a written record of this communication and subsequent actions. The DCP will then decide how to proceed. The decision to progress the matter further is the responsibility of the DCP. The DCP is required to provide feedback to people making reports on child abuse. The Principal should seek undertakings from the DCP that they will be kept informed within the bounds of confidentiality. It may be appropriate if the emergency occurs after hours, to explain to the switchboard operator that it is an emergency so they can speak to the Duty Officer promptly. When reporting to the Duty Officer, note his/her name.

The following procedures are to be followed by all College staff who have concerns about a student being non sexually abused or neglected.

Step 1 Record observations and/or disclosures

The individual staff member makes observations, and keeps a record of the concerns that have led them to the belief that a report may be necessary or a student discloses abuse to them. If the teacher has a suspicion of abuse or neglect but is unsure, they should speak with the Principal.

Step 2 Inform the Principal

The staff member should meet with the Principal and may wish to consult with the College Consultant Psychologist. If the Principal is absent, the matter should be discussed with the CMT.

1. It is vital to remember that confidentiality is required and that disclosure of this information should only be discussed with those in the College who are required to know.
2. It is not the role of the teacher to investigate child abuse or neglect matters, or to collect evidence such as taking photographs of injuries.
3. **Very important!** To avoid interfering with any investigative process initiated by DCP or the Police, the teacher must not inform the parent/legal guardian of a concern of abuse or neglect.

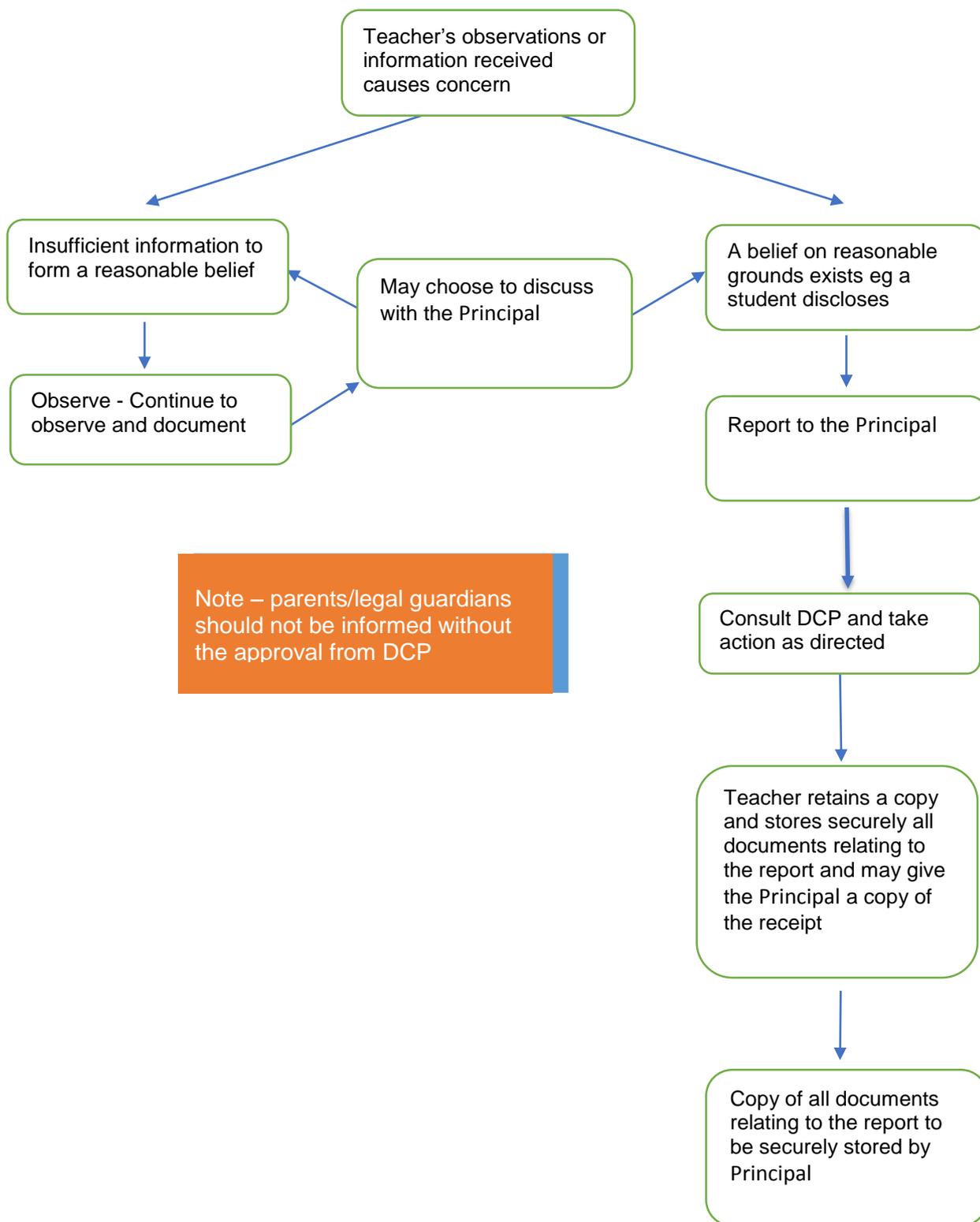
Step 3 Report to DCP

The teacher will phone the DCP Office to make a report. The teacher must record the name of the Duty Officer.

Step 4 Document and act on instructions from DCP

The teacher is to seek advice as to whether any further action should be taken by the College. The teacher will record this.

Notification steps for child abuse and neglect (Non sexual) Flow Chart



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. 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 to this code if they are making a report in good faith. The legislative requirements of The Act override internal College 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.

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.

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 DCP it is recommended that the teacher:

1. Keep a copy of the report and any notes provided to the Department
2. Keep a record of receipt by the DCP (this is usually in the form of receipt number) as evidence that the report was made to the Department
3. Keep a copy of the report and any notes of meetings with staff at the College
4. Should 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.

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

Non mandatory report record storage

Non mandatory 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 DCP.

The College will keep a copy of all documents in a sealed envelope in the individual student's file. The envelope will be labelled "To be opened only with the authority of the Principal".

Making notes

College staff, including the First Aid Officer, 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 factual information related to the matter.

Record what you have seen such as:

- the identity of the source of information you were told
- statements made by the child or parent/legal guardian, verbatim and in quotation "" marks
- professional judgements within your teaching training and experience.

Do not record irrelevant information such as:

- hearsay, information from a third party that is not directly witnessed
- opinions, for example, the parent used excessive discipline
- family history
- personal conclusions about the type of abuse suspected.

Use appropriate language such as:

- include clear, direct, precise, non emotive, objective language
- avoid jargon
- use the first person singular, for example, I saw
- avoid language that includes pronouns, for example, he, she, it, etc.
- use the names of people and 'probably' or 'possibly'. Only use these terms if there is a reasonable degree of certainty.

Responding to a disclosure of child abuse or neglect

There may be times when a student makes a disclosure of abuse or neglect. Staff should be aware of the immediate needs of these students and what to do in these circumstances.

1. 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.
2. Put your own feelings aside and listen as if the information is not sensational.
3. Provide reassurance that you believe them; that it is right to tell, and do not think that they are to blame or make judgements about what has happened.
4. Listen to students in a private but not secluded location within the College and:
 - be supportive and understanding
 - be empathetic to student feelings
 - acknowledge that it is difficult to talk about such things
 - try to identify students' fears
 - let students tell the event in their own words
 - if you are unable to answer all the questions of the child, it is OK to let them know.
5. 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;
6. Allow students the option of support during any agency interview and reassure them of the availability of continuing support.
7. Explain what will happen next, and try and stay with the student after the disclosure to provide a sense of security until necessary steps have been taken to ensure their safety and support.

8. 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 and subsequent discussions and actions.
9. Staff must be mindful they:
 - do not dismiss or ignore the disclosure
 - put words in the child's mouth, push for details or conduct an investigation as this could jeopardise the interviewing process of DCP and the WA Police
 - do not push for details or conduct an investigation. Other agencies have this responsibility
 - never ask leading questions, for instance 'Did Daddy hit you?'
 - make the child repeat the disclosure to a third party
 - stop the child from talking once there are reasonable grounds for forming a belief that abuse occurred
 - do not confront the person believed to be the abuser
 - do not engage in general staffroom discussion about the disclosure
 - do not express judgement of the student, perpetrator or family
 - never get angry, upset or show shock
 - never ask questions that may make the child feel guilty or inadequate
 - do not put words in students' mouths or interrogate as this could jeopardise the interviewing process of DCP and Police
 - do not promise "not to tell" when there are clear limits on confidentiality
 - never make false promises
 - do not give a lecture about right and wrong
 - do not say 'forget it', 'you'll get over it' or other such minimalising statements
 - do not give excessive pity.

If the student discloses in public, use 'Protective Interrupting'. If students begin to disclose in class or in a public area, use it to protect them from sharing the information with too many other people, for example:

- acknowledge that you have heard them and stop them from disclosing any further information
- 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.

Staff must be aware that a disclosure can arouse in them strong feelings of shock, anger and helplessness. It is important to control these feelings; they can be worked through after the disclosure.

Remember, **confidentiality must not be promised to students**, and whenever possible they must be informed about who will be involved and The Actions that may be taken.

Guidelines for meetings with parents/legal guardians

The Principal, will do so on the advice of Police or DCP MRS only. When DCP MRS or WA Police have directed the Principal 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
- place blame on of the parties involved.

The Principal will ensure ongoing support for the teacher, the student and anyone else who was affected.

The Coordinator will assume the role if the respective Principal is absent.

Physical contact with students

A student consents to a certain level of non-sexual touching; however, the consent may be withdrawn verbally or non-verbally at any time. The onus is on teachers to be on guard for signals that their contact is unwelcome, eg a hand on the shoulder may be considered intrusive. It is incumbent on the teacher to recognise the signs and take action. For example the student/s:

- does not give consent to any level of touching, eg on the thigh
- contact must not be prolonged or effusive. It must be appropriate for the situation, depending on age of the student, activity etc
- may initiate physical contact, eg hug, give consent; however, consent is not the only issue to be considered by a teacher. Perception and community standards must also be considered.

Documented plans must be developed in collaboration with parents to provide staff caring for children with disabilities with guidelines for appropriate and reasonable physical contact to carry out tasks such as toileting and dressing. When there is a known history of the need for physical restraint, a documented plan must also include a range of strategies that may be employed when restraining a student, in order to prevent them from harming themselves or others.

Reporting of child protection issues involving employees

Should a staff member become aware of inappropriate conduct by another employee towards a student, they are to immediately make a report to the Principal. The Principal will take action to ensure the safety of the student, adhere to all reporting requirements under The Act and keep detailed records.

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. Staff refers to all College employees, teaching and non teaching staff.

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 them. 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 sexual 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 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: teaching is a touching profession)
- 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.

Given today's media climate, and having in mind recent sexual abuse cases perpetrated by teachers against students in their care, teachers should be very aware of placing themselves in situations where they are not able to defend themselves should allegations be made against them.

Reporting allegations of abuse perpetrated by staff

Allegations of abuse that involve a staff member must be reported to DCP MRS. In addition, the allegation must be immediately reported to the Principal. Allegations made by students, employees or non-employees regarding staff conduct must be acted on by the Principal as soon as practicable. The Principal must inform the Chair of the Board as soon as the allegation is received.

If the Principal is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to support the allegation, the employee will be removed from all contact with students until the completion of a formal investigation.

All staff involved in the matter must maintain confidentiality to ensure that the interests of the staff member alleged responsible, and the victim are respected.

A child, or student over 18 years of age, can never consent to a sexual relationship with an employee by virtue of the fact that the employee is in a position of authority.

Examples of sexual behaviour that constitute misconduct include but are not limited to:

- watching children undress, for example, in change rooms where supervision is not required or justified
- undressing in front of a child
- sharing a room, inviting or allowing a child into the staff member's room during residential activities
- making references to a teacher's or child's sex life
- sexual compliments
- sexualised comments about a child's physical appearance.
- inappropriate use of sexualised language
- sexually suggestive comments
- electronic communication (via internet, e-mail, screensavers or text messages etc.) of obscene pictures, posters or cartoons, messages or jokes.

Examples of sexual behaviour that may constitute criminal behaviour include but are not limited to:

- propositions, invitations or requests for sex
- comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner
- accessing and communication of pornographic or sexually explicit material
- using electronic means to procure or expose a child to indecent material.

All staff must report allegations or concerns involving an employee's behaviour towards a student to the College Principal if:

- the allegation concerned behaviour of a staff member towards a student who is enrolled at the reporter's College
- the allegation may concern the behaviour of a staff member towards a student during or outside of College hours, on or off campus.

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. All allegations must be reported to MRS who will then inform WA Police.

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 Principal's responsibility. Where possible, the College contract 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 student. Where appropriate, the child should be involved in decisions that directly affect them and provided with information about what will happen.

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 by teachers. Generally, if the age difference is greater than 3 years, consult with the MRS who may report to the police. 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 teacher or other staff member could be at risk. The staff member who receives the disclosure will inform the 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 Principal or delegate will inform the parents/legal guardians of the disclosure. If the Principal 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 and reported immediately to DCP.
3. The Principal 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.

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 Student Reception staff are responsible for identifying attendance discrepancies through the day and informing 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.

Further information can be located in the

College Excursion Policy

College Camps Policy

Primary student missing from the College during regular College hours

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

The Head of Primary will take **First Steps Action**.

- A thorough search of the College grounds will be conducted by Office staff and teachers
- Inform the Principal and 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 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.

Student missing from the College during regular College hours

When a Student is found to be missing, the Principal is to be informed without delay.

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**.

- Verify that the student was at College
- Check the College grounds with the assistance of any available staff
- 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/guardian, College staff may call the parents of students but may not provide the parent with others phone numbers.
- 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 Principal should be notified. The 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 Principal will be informed.

The Principal may call an Emergency and Critical Incident Team meeting and consideration will be given to sending the Coordinator to the location to assist staff.

Post Incident Review

The 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 Principal without delay.

For incidents of a serious nature in the local area, personal contact should be made with the Principal, the Board and DES.

Responding to an incident in the local area

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

Student Notices

The Principal may inform students of an incident through the Student Notices.

Safety Alert Notice (Refer to the template)

A Safety Alert Notice which, when approved by the Principal, may be emailed to all Primary and Secondary staff. If the Principal is off campus and unavailable, the Safety Alert Notice may be approved by another member of the College Management Team.

Should a Safety Alert Notice be issued, the notice will be read to students in class. Student runners will distribute the notice to all Secondary classes as soon as possible and a copy will also be delivered to College Reception, Primary Reception and Student Reception.

The Principal may revise the Safety Alert Notice to allow for the age of the students who will receive it. The Principal will be responsible for giving the Primary students this information.

Once a Safety Alert Notice has been issued to students, parents will be notified by text message and a revised copy placed on the College website. The Principal will place a copy on the College website or SMS.

Newsletter

The Principal may inform the parents through the College Newsletter. This will depend on the time and nature of the incident.

Student care arrangements

The College Management Team 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 College. Further protective behaviours information will be incorporated in the Health Education program for Primary and Secondary students and the Pastoral Care programs.

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 Child Protection 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.

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
- 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
- hair missing in large quantities
- lacerations and abrasions to the eyes, lips, gums and mouth
- missing or loosened teeth
- self mutilation.

Sexual abuse

This may include but is not limited to:

- 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
- child or young person implies that he/she is required to keep secrets
- presence of sexually transmitted disease
- sudden, unexplained fears
- enuresis and/or encopresis (bed-wetting and bed soiling)
- bloodstained underwear
- disclosure of involvement in sexual activity
- frequent or uncharacteristic changes in mood
- frequent urinary or yeast infections (eg thrush)
- obsession with neatness and cleanliness
- poor personal hygiene
- possession of pornographic materials
- pregnancy
- reluctance to form close relationships.

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 College.

The myths about child abuse

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.

Myths pertaining to sexual and other forms of abuse of particular interest to Colleges include:

- 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 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'.

The facts about child abuse

Children or young people are more often abused by a parent or legal guardian. Adults who were abused as children are at greater risk of developing psychological and emotional problems later in life, and repeating the pattern of abuse with their own children.

A child abuser can be a member of the family (father, step-father, mother etc.) or someone close to the family or the child (church member, teacher, community group leader). A child abuser usually spends a lot of time grooming the child, with the child being made to feel that they are in some way complicit in The Acts, thus making disclosure a difficult process.

On the whole, abusers are the least obvious people in our community. Many child sex abusers, for example, hold positions of trust within the community with easy access to children and their families. Occupations that some convicted child sex offenders have held include bus driver, entertainer, teacher, scout leader, librarian, College Principal, church leader, and judge.

A recent study carried out by Huddersfield University, UK found that 52% of children were sexually abused in community-based organisations. These included sports and voluntary groups and also private tuition classes.

In Australia, a case of child abuse is reported every 2.5 minutes.

Almost three times as many girls as boys have substantiations of sexual abuse but boys are more likely to be physically abused. (AIHW, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008)

Two-thirds of all substantiations are for children aged 10 years old and under (AIHW, 2008).

Children with an intellectual disability are at the highest risk of sexual abuse. Research indicates that sexual abuse statistics range between 65% and 85% for these young people (Horsley and Azzopardi, 1990).

Cyber Predators

Although the main perpetrators of child abuse and neglect are people that the child knows the continuing popularity of the internet has given credence once more to the term 'Stranger Danger'.

The internet is one of the main sources of communication for young people today. The popularity of chat rooms, discussion groups and interactive games makes them a very attractive place for predators to go as they can remain virtually anonymous whilst participating in a range of paedophilic activity.

Paedophiles conduct numerous activities online, including:

- Swapping child pornographic pictures in chat rooms or through email or P2P networks;
- Swapping children's' personal information;
- Participating in online communities with the intention to groom children for personal sexual gratification or to meet them in person;
- Forming networks with other paedophiles;
- Trading techniques on how to avoid the authorities."

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 Reciprocal Child Reporting Procedures agreement between government agencies (covering Health and hospitals, Education and Training - including Education Services, Police, Department for Child Protection etc) requires DES, if made aware of any incidents of child abuse, (eg by parents or teachers at non-government Colleges) to report it to DCP or Police as appropriate.

Department of Child Protection (DCP)

The Department for Child Protection is the state government department responsible for issues specifically related to the protection of children, including the handling of abuse and neglect cases. This website contains some excellent material for professionals, and parents and friends. Of particular interest is the information on 'Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – a guide for professionals' <<http://www.community.wa.gov.au>>

For sexual abuse reports, the Mandatory Reporting Service must be contacted through one of the following:

Telephone: 1800 708 704
Email: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au
Fax: 1800 610 614
Post: PO Box 8146
Perth BC WA 6849

This unit is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for making a report or raising concerns. Details regarding mandatory reporting can be obtained at:
<www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au>

The following facts sheets are located on the DCP website.

- General information about mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse.
- Background information and statistic data about child abuse and neglect.
- Information about confidentiality issues and mandatory reporting.
- Useful resources for mandatory reporters.
- Information about responding to a child who discloses sexual abuse.
- Information about indicators of child sexual abuse.
- A guide about what information should be provided in a mandatory report.
- A flow chart about the mandatory reporting process.
- A sample mandatory reporting form, showing information that is required in a mandatory report.

Students aged 18 and over are legally considered adults and as such DCP does not have a child protection mandate for them. However, students considered potentially vulnerable and in need support are owed duty of care towards them.

Services and agencies

Details of these are listed in Section 16 of this document. Colleges should contact the Police if they are aware of any assault or crime against a young adult.

DCP's legislative powers include:

- an authorised officer who believes there is an unacceptable risk to the wellbeing of a child, may have to remove a child from his/her parents and take the child into care
- an authorised DCP officer or police officer, who suspects there is an immediate and substantial risk to the child's well-being, may enter any place and search for the child for the purpose of taking the child into provisional protection and care without a warrant.

Interviewing a child

- DCP has the authority under The Act to interview a child at College before contact is made with the parents/legal guardians.
- DCP will advise the College Principal of their intention to interview a child on site.
- The College Principal should sight the DCP officer's identification.
- The College Principal will be informed of The Actions planned by DCP.
- If DCP interview a child on the College grounds without the parents' knowledge, the child may be asked if they would like a trusted staff member to be with them. This person must be over 18 years of age. If a staff member is reluctant to act as a support, an alternative should be arranged. The support person should be briefed by DCP about their role before the interview.

Removal of children from the College

DCP officers may remove a child from the College for an interview if they have the permission of the parents/legal guardians. If parental permission is not given, DCP officers will apprehend the child. The College Principal or delegate should check that these conditions have been met before allowing the removal of a child from College. Verbal communication is adequate but the College Principal or delegate must document the conversation and details of the DCP officers.

Medical examination

The medical examination of a child can only be authorised by DCP or the WA Police and is carried out by the Child Protection Unit at Princess Margaret Hospital or the Sexual Assault Referral Centre according to the child's age and type of abuse under investigation. DCP may require that a medical examination occurs as soon as possible, so that bruising, marking and other symptoms can be recorded. If parent/legal guardian permission has not been obtained for the medical examination, DCP will apprehend the child.

Western Australian Police

The Western Australian Police also have a role in responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect. The WA Police Service Child Abuse Investigation Unit intervene in instances where it is believed that a criminal offence has occurred which may lead to criminal charges being laid. In the case of a report of child sexual abuse, the DCP will forward all reports to the WA Police.

Where abuse and neglect has occurred within a family and there is the possibility of criminal charges being laid, the police and the DCP may undertake a joint investigation to reduce the trauma of the interviewing process to the child or young person.

Other Support Services

Child Abuse Services WA
9223 1111/1800 199 008

Crisis Care

9223 1111/1800 199 008 (a 24 hour telephone service for people in crisis and needing urgent help)

WA Police Service Child Abuse Investigation Unit

Information and advice may be obtained from police on **131 444**.

In the case of paedophilia, you can also report child abuse to the Child Protection Squad on **9492 5444** or email them on Child.Abuse.Investigation@police.wa.gov.au

Crime Stoppers on **1800 333 000** or go to your local police station.

WA Police Cyber Predator Team can be contacted on 9492 5444 or complaints can be lodged on the WA Police Website www.police.wa.gov.au

The websites below contain information on cyber predators for both parents, teachers and students to use.

www.acma.gov.au

www.constablecare.org.au

www.cybersmartkids.com.au

www.netalert.net.au

www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com

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 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? Am I expected to report an offence that happened, for example, five years ago?

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?

The reporter must report the situation to the Department for Child Protection in a timely manner. It is recommended that you make the report on the same day as you find out.

Can I be called to give evidence?

Yes, a teacher can be called to give evidence. It is rare for a notifier to be called as a witness. It is understood that teachers 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 available from AISWA?

If you are called to give evidence in a child protection case, you will not lose pay. Ensure that the 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 of teachers 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 Principal immediately.