



**St Andrews
Primary School
No: 0128**

**St Andrews Primary School
Caledonia Street
St Andrews, 3761
Ph. (03) 9710.1255
Fax (03) 9710.1827
www.standrewsps.vic.gov.au**

MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

1. Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to explain the roles and responsibilities of school staff to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. This policy forms part of St Andrews' Child Safety Policy to create a child safe organisation, which has zero tolerance for child abuse. This policy complements the detailed guidance that all staff in Victorian government schools must follow: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotectobligation.aspx>

2. Mandatory Reporters

All staff who are Victorian Institute of Teaching (**VIT**) registered teachers (including principals) or who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT are 'mandatory reporters'. This means that in the course of undertaking their professional duties, they must report to the Department of Health and Human Services (**DHHS**) Child Protection a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual abuse or physical injury and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. They must report as soon as practicable after forming the belief.

There may be times when two or more mandated staff members, for example a teacher and a principal, have formed a belief about the same child or young person on the same occasion. In this situation it is sufficient for only one of the mandated staff members to report to Child Protection. The other staff member is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all of the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to Child Protection.

3. Non-mandated staff members

Any person, who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, may report their concerns to Child Protection. This means that any person, including non-mandated school staff, is able to make a report to Child Protection or Victoria Police when they believe that a child or young person is at risk of harm and in need of protection, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

In order to discharge duty of care, staff members, **whether or not mandated**, need to report a belief formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief, and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

4. Failure to disclose offence

In addition to mandatory reporting and duty of care obligations, **any adult** who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence except in limited circumstances, such as where the information has already been reported to Child Protection or the child is older than 16 when the belief is formed. More information about the offence can be found at

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

5. Failure to Protect

Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer, sport coach or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under 16 years of age, who is in the care or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove that risk. Failure to take reasonable steps to protect a child in the organisation from the risk of sexual abuse from an adult associated with the organisation, is a criminal offence. In St Andrews, this will include the Child Safety Officer (the Principal, or in his absence, the designated school staff Child Safety Officer).

6. Duty of care

School staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care.

If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care it is important to take immediate action.

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

- Reporting their concerns to Child Protection, Victoria Police or another appropriate agency
- Notifying the Principal or designated Child Safety Officer of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns
- Arranging counselling and/or appropriate welfare support for the child and providing ongoing support
- Sharing information with other school staff who will also be responsible for monitoring and providing ongoing support to the child

Duty of care obligations are separate and additional to mandatory reporting and 'failure to disclose' reporting obligations.

7. Making a report

Staff **do 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.

Staff are expected to follow the Department policy for making a report set out at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/report.aspx>. Staff should use the templates provided to keep clear and comprehensive notes relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse or student sexual offending.

Reports to Child Protection and Victoria Police are confidential unless you consent or a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary in the interests of justice for your identity to be disclosed.

8. Staff training

As part of their initial induction to the school, staff will be informed of child protection reporting requirements and Department policy. Staff are to undertake yearly mandatory Reporting on-line training: <http://www.elearn.com.au/det/protectingchildren/schools/>

9. Policy Review

This policy updated June 2018 and is scheduled for review in February 2019.

THIS POLICY DOES NOT NEED SCHOOL COUNCIL APPROVAL	
Date Presented to School Council for Noting	14/06/2018