St. Joseph’s Pre School Hindmarsh

POLICY DOCUMENT

Child Protection
Child Protection Policy
Reporting Child Abuse

Volunteers play an important role in the education of our children. We welcome volunteers in our school and acknowledge their support of our children.

Child Protection Policy
The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools has in place a Child Protection Policy which was revised in 2000. A copy of the policy is available online at:

http://web.ceo.catholic.edu.au/SACCS

What is Child Abuse?
Child abuse is about an adult harming a child. In South Australia the law states that a child is a person under the age of 18 years. Child abuse can occur through someone doing something hurtful or by someone not doing something to provide for or protect a child.

There are four types of child abuse:
1. Physical abuse is when a child’s body is injured. This can be through punching, hitting, beating, shaking, biting, burning or any actions which result in a child’s body being harmed. It can be seen in bruising, swelling, welts and broken bones
2. Emotional abuse is behaviour towards a child which destroys self-esteem, confidence and child’s sense of worth. It includes constant criticism, belittling, blaming, ‘put-downs’, withdrawal of affection, ignoring and excessive teasing. A child can be left feeling worthless, unloved and lacking self-confidence.
3. Neglect is the failure to provide a child with the basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, hygiene, education, adequate supervision, and medical and dental care.
4. Sexual abuse involves a child in any type of sexual activity.

Touching children
Caring touch is essential for a child’s health, growth and development. The caring touch between a child and trusted adult should not be confused with touching which is of a sexual nature.

What does the law say?
The law states that certain people must report their concerns if they have reasonable ground to suspect a child has been or is being abused. This covers doctors, nurses, dentists, psychologists, police, probation officers, social workers, teachers, family day carers, and people who work in places where services are provided to children (including volunteers).
A person who makes a report in good faith is protected from civil or criminal liability.

Why report Child Abuse?
Children have limited power to protect themselves from abuse and will only be protected from abuse and neglect if responsible adults take action on their behalf. In addition, schools provide educational programs to encourage children to protect themselves from abuse (often called Protective Behaviours).
Child abuse can happen to any child in any family. It hurts and can have lasting, damaging effects. Some children even die because of child abuse.
Reporting child abuse is the first step in stopping the abuse and protecting children from further harm. Reporting suspected abuse also gives Children Youth and Family Services the chance to help families in situations where a child or children may be at risk.
What to do if you have suspicion or concerns
• Call the Child Abuse Report Line 13 14 78 and request a consultation with a child protection worker as soon as possible. Your call will be kept confidential. There is an interpreting service available if required.
• If you decide to make notification it would assist Children Youth and Family Services if the following information is known
  Child’s name
  Description of injury, abuse, neglect
  Current situation and the whereabouts of the child, parent, caregiver and alleged maltreater
  Date of suspected abuse being noticed
  Even if you do not have all of the information, you are still obliged to notify.
  Discuss your concerns with the Principal, Deputy Principal, another Leadership Team member or appropriate teacher. This is optional however this may help support you should there be a need follow up.

Obligations of Mandated Notifiers
Everyone has a moral obligation to report child abuse or a child at risk.
Mandated notifiers must, by law, notify on a reasonable suspicion of ‘abuse and neglect’, as defined in the Act Section 6(1) and on reasonable likelihood of at risk in terms of Section 6(2) (b) (i) and (ii).

All reasonable suspicions must be reported without delay Mandated notifiers need to be aware that a notification to CYFS does not automatically result in an investigation.

What happens when the Child Abuse Report Line is contacted?
Suspected cases of abuse or neglect are referred to the Children Youth and Family Services district office. Social workers from the District Centre may visit the child and family to investigate the concerns. If a child is in immediate danger an investigation will occur within 24 hours, and may also involve the assistance of police and hospitals. When the risk to a child appears to be less serious, families may be invited to a meeting at the District Centre to discuss the concerns about the child’s wellbeing. They will be offered assistance so they can provide better care for their children.

Suggested printed information
Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect Mandated Notification Guidelines
Available for CYFS 8226 6045
Don’t Look Away The Child Abuse Report Line Brochure
Available for the CYFS Information Hub 8226 6735
Child Abuse Parent Easy Guide #62
Available for Parenting SA, 295 South Terrace Adelaide or 8303 1660

If You Have Any Questions
Call the Child Abuse Report Line 13 14 78

Philip Schultz
Principal

Anne Burke
School Board Chairperson

Dated: June 2015