



BEAUFORT PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY

MANDATORY REPORTING

RATIONALE

- All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. As teachers, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidences involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact, and to report instances that we believe involve physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

AIMS

- To ensure that children's rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.

MANDATORY REPORTERS

- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect. This means that all VIT registered, or probationary registered, teachers 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.
- 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 on the same occasion. If this is the case, only one report needs to be made.
- If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and that staff member continues to hold their belief, that person is obliged to make a report to Child Protection

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 includes non-mandated school staff.

IMPLEMENTATION

- In order to discharge duty of care, staff members, mandated or not, 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 their belief.
- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.
- Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually. All staff will be provided with the information and training required to fulfil their responsibilities.
- All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Leading Teacher.
- The Principal will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.
- The teacher and/or the Principal class officer will contact the Department of Human Services by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification on:

1800 000 551 or after school hours Emergency Management 95896266

- Members of the Department of Human Services, or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification, will interview staff and children only in the presence of a Principal class member or his/her nominee.
- All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.
- All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.
- While only mandated by law to report incidents of physical and sexual abuse, and neglect; teachers are also encouraged to report incidents of emotional abuse or neglect.

FAILURE TO DISCLOSE OFFENCES

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;

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

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 the duty of care by taking action including the following;

- Reporting their concerns to Child Protection, Victoria Police or another appropriate agency
- Notifying the principal or member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reason for those concerns

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

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 the parents, carers or guardians that they have done so.

Staff are expected to follow the Departmental policies for making a report, set out at;

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx

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

EVALUATION.

- Shall take place as part of the review of all programs.
- Recommendations to be made by staff and school council.