



## **Giralang Preschool**

### **Child Protection Reporting Procedures**

The main activity of all education services is to provide care, education and a safe environment for children. Educators are mandated persons are legally obliged to make a report based on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has experienced, or is experiencing sexual abuse, and/or non-accidental physical injury. ETD staff are also required by ETD policy to report suspected emotional abuse or neglect. “Teachers, particularly in the early years, are often seen by their pupils as someone who care about them, someone they can trust, and a child’s teacher may well be the adult closest to that child, outside the family” Bishop et al (2002). This procedure was developed to provide a framework for the protection of the child and to clarify procedures for educators who may be required to make a mandated report.

#### **Child Protection Procedure Policy Statement**

##### **The goal of this procedure is to:**

- Promote the safety and wellbeing of all children attending the preschool and their families
- ensure that record keeping is sufficiently detailed to indicate possible abuse
- ensure that educators are trained and skilled in identifying possible indicators of abuse, are aware that they are mandatory reporters who are required to notify any concern or child protection issue and keep up to date on legislation so intervention is possible
- ensure staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and procedures to follow if a case of abuse is suspected → ensure that all notifications remain confidential.

#### **Definitions**

- Child- A person under the age of 16 years.
- Child Abuse Conviction- Any conviction of a person, in the ACT or elsewhere, of an offence involving child abuse, and including a finding by the court that a charge for such an offence is proven even though the Court does not proceed to a conviction. The term “allegation” must refer to a description of behaviour that may constitute child abuse and also refers to “conviction” for the purpose of this policy.
- Prohibited person- Any person convicted of a serious sex offence will not be permitted to work or seek work in employment which primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is unsupervised (in either a paid or unpaid role).

- Non accidental physical injury (Physical abuse) – any act resulting in an injury to a child or young person by a parent, caregiver or another person who has responsibility for the child or young person.
- Sexual abuse - any act or sexual threat imposed on a child or young person. Also when an adult or someone else who is bigger or older involves the child or young person in sexual activity by using their power over the child or young person and taking advantage of their trust. Sexual abuse includes any form of sexual touching, any form of sexual suggestion to children, including exposure to pornographic material, using the child or young person for pornographic videos or prostitution and exhibitionism and voyeurism.
- Emotional abuse - Chronic or repeated ill treatment of a child or young person which causes significant harm to their psychological, social, emotional or cognitive development. This includes exposure to domestic violence.
- Neglect - the failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child or young person with the basic requirements necessary for their proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision.

#### **Procedure:**

##### **Indicators of abuse**

- There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The following is a guide only. One indicator on its own may not imply abuse or neglect. Each indicator needs to be considered in the context of other indicators and the child's circumstances.
- General indicators of abuse and neglect include:
  - marked delay between injury and seeking medical assistance
  - history of injury
  - the child gives some indication that the injury did not occur as stated
  - the child tells you someone has hurt him/her
  - the child tells you about someone he/she knows who has been hurt
  - someone (relative, friend, acquaintance, sibling) tells you that the child may have been abused

The following procedures will be followed if there is suspicion of a child being at risk.

The educators will use the following procedures to assist with recognising and reporting child abuse and neglect.

When there is a concern that a child is being abused or neglected:

- Step 1 Raise the matter/concern in confidence with the Educational Leader or School Executive immediately. This concern would be based on:
  - first hand observation of the child, young person or family
  - what the child, young person, parent or other person has disclosed

- what can reasonably be inferred based on professional training and/ or experience
  - written observations of the child available for discussion.
- Step 2 Educators will complete a mandatory report with Care and Protection and the Educational Leader or School Executive either by phone or email.
- Step 3 Educators follow actions suggested by Care and Protection. This may include preparing for an interview with the child or gathering further information from observations already undertaken. Educators are not required to inform the family of the report, however there may be circumstances where this is necessary and appropriate.
- Educators who consider the risk of harm for a child who require immediate police attention should ring emergency service (000).
- Educators must report any belief on reasonable grounds that the child has experienced or is experiencing sexual abuse and/or non-accidental physical injury. Educators are also required to report any reasonable belief of emotional abuse or neglect. **Reports are to be made to Care and Protection Services Centralised Intake Service as soon as possible on 1300 556 728 or by fax to 6205 0641 (24 hours service).**
- Educators must report any suspicions or beliefs that a child or young person is experiencing or likely to experience any type of abuse or neglect to the Principal of Giralang Primary School.
- If the subject of the report is a Directorate staff member, educators must make a report to the school principal. Refer to the '*Child Abuse and Neglect Guidelines for Schools*' on Index for further information.
- If the subject of the report is the school principal educators must also immediately report the matter to the relevant School Network Leader. Please refer to the '*Child Abuse and Neglect Guidelines for Schools*' on Index for further information.
- Information about concerns of neglect or abuse and reports made to Care and Protection Services Centralised Intake Service should be stored in a secure and confidential location. This information is sensitive information and must be protected under the *Children and Young People Act 2008*. Information should not be kept on the Student Record File or files that can be accessed by or passed onto general school staff.
- Educators are required to co-operate with Care and Protection Services and the Australian Federal Police when they are investigating child abuse and/or neglect of a child or young person.

### **Responsibilities of Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader**

It will be the Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader's responsibility to ensure:

- that all staff undergo annual training in all aspects of child protection and current legislation and its implications for their work

- that parents of children in the preschool are provided with information about relevant legislation and policy
- that all educators appreciate the importance of responding as set out in the policy and legislation.

### **Acknowledgements**

The following references and documents were used extensively in the development of this policy, and are useful resources to assist in implementation of the policy:

- Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)
- Policy: Child Protection and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect in ACT Public Schools
- Child Abuse and Neglect Guideline for Schools
- Keeping Children and Young People Safe a shared community responsibility
- Bishop, A., Lunn, P., & Johnson, K. (2002). 'I would just like to run away and hide, but I won't!' Exploring attitudes and perceptions on child protection issues with early years teacher trainees on the threshold of their careers. Westminster Studies in Education