



AL-HIDAYAH ISLAMIC SCHOOL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Signed, Chair: *u.a. arduh*

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INTRODUCTION

All staff at Al-Hidayah Islamic School are responsible for the care and protection of students (see Duty of Care Policy). Everyone in the college community has the responsibility/duty of reporting any concerns related to emotional, physical or sexual abuse and/or neglect. This policy sets out guidelines for those caring for students either directly or indirectly in the school setting in fulfilling responsibilities for Child Protection.

All children have a right to be protected from harm and schools and teachers owe a “duty of care” to all students at the school. Schools have a special responsibility to protect children when they are on school premises and also to intervene when they believe the welfare of a child is at risk outside the school.

On the 1st January 2009, the Western Australian government introduced new legislation that requires various occupations, including teachers, to report on child sexual abuse. This legislation is the *Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008* and is an amendment to the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

ISLAMIC GUIDELINES

Al-Hidayah Islamic School endeavours to protect all students from harm, to decrease risk of abuse and provide a safe Islamic environment for students to develop academically, spiritually and socially.

The notion that all children have a right to be protected from harm is an important aspect of the Islamic faith. The school community – the Governing Shurah, parents, staff and students have a strong commitment to embedding the culture of safe practice in the school.

The Prophet (PBUH) says “Every one of you is a Protector and Guardian for those who are placed under your care”. (Bukhari and Muslim).

We firmly believe that God has given all educational institutions and its leaders the responsibility of protecting all children placed in their care. Leaders and those appointed by the leaders are fully accountable for the wellbeing of each child in the school. Islam instructs us to treat our elders with respect and our youngsters with kindness. The welfare of children under our care is paramount to the school’s objectives. All staff need to be aware of the proper etiquette and manners in which to address issues of abuse or neglect. Staff are encouraged to deal with all instances of abuse with kindness and sensitivity. It is narrated that the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) kissed Hasan ibn 'Ali while Aqra' ibn Habis was sitting nearby. Aqra said, “I have ten children and have never kissed one of them.” The Prophet looked at him and said, “*Those who show no mercy will be shown no mercy.*”

Prevention of Abuse

Al-Hidayah Islamic School focuses on the prevention of abuse. It is implementing the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum that offers a comprehensive, realistic and age-appropriate personal safety component enabling students to recognise and report abuse, understand power in relationships, and develop protective strategies, including seeking help. Parents are also kept informed about the Keeping Safe program through meetings and letters. Staff have received presentations on the Islamic perspective on the Keeping Safe curriculum. Time is given at Staff meetings to discuss the implementation of the program.

CHILD MALTREATMENT

Definition of Child Maltreatment

Child maltreatment refers to any non-accidental behaviour by adults or children that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of harm to a child or young person. The behaviours may be intentional or unintentional.

It may be the result of action or inaction on the part of a person who has responsibility to care for a child resulting in harm or injury to the child. The harm may include delayed physical and/or intellectual development. The maltreatment experienced is normally described in five categories. Each category of maltreatment is described by a range of indicators listed below:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional including psychological
- Neglect
- Family and domestic violence.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has experienced severe and/or persistent ill-treatment. It can include, but is not limited by injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and fractures caused by a range of acts including beating, shaking, illicit administration of alcohol and other drugs, attempted suffocation, excessive discipline or physical punishment.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse covers a wide range of behaviour or activities that expose or subject a child to sexual activity that is exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level. These behaviours include observation or involvement with

inappropriate fondling of a child's body, making a child touch an adult's genitalia, showing pornographic material or sexual acts to a child, and sexual penetration of the child. Harm from sexual abuse may include significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infections and impaired emotional and psychological development.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is a sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, confusing, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to have a reduced capacity to experience a range of emotions, to express emotion appropriately and to modulate their emotional experience. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to be fearful, withdrawn and/or resentful, distressed and despairing.

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse is the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, isolating, neglecting, discrediting, misleading, disregarding, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. These include adequate supervision, adequate food or shelter, suitable clothing, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial care and emotional security. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic, and can result in detrimental effects on the child or young person's social psychological, educational or physical development and/or physical injury. Neglect should be considered in the context of physical, emotional or psychological abuse.

Note:

Child abuse and neglect, through the Department for Child Protection and Family Support, is defined as maltreatment done by a person who has responsibility to care for a child.

However, it is very important to note that the definitions of child maltreatment mentioned in this section can be used to describe some of the behaviour that can occur in schools by one child to another. While the treatment of such behaviour may be dealt with through other school policies such Bullying and Behaviour

Management, the victim of that 'bullying' may display some of the physical and behavioural indicators as those described below. These events should be treated seriously by the staff with the aim to help both parties.

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.

The single most helpful item for staff to consider is the deviation from normal or baseline behaviour of a child. A child who has been abused experiences mixed emotional and physical responses to abuse and may well be confused by the disconnect between respect/love for the abuser and abhorrence or ambivalence to the abuse itself.

Physical abuse could be represented by:

- 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 a parent or carer, or is afraid to go home
- the child or young person reports intentional injury by their parent or carer
- 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 carer)

Sexual abuse could be represented by:

- 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)

Emotional or Psychological abuse could be when:

- the parent or carer 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

Neglect may be:

- signs of malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food
- poor hygiene: matted hair, dirty skin or severe body odour
- 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 school or absence from school
- inappropriate clothing, especially inadequate clothing in winter
- alcohol and/or drug abuse present in the household
- frequent illness, low grade infections or sores
- hunger

Myths about Child Abuse and its Prevalence

An accurate understanding of the dynamics underlying child abuse is important because the impact of any form of abuse on the victim can be life changing. Common outcomes associated with abuse include drug abuse, suicide, eating disorders, low self-esteem, psychosomatic illness and self-mutilation.

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.

The following myths pertaining to sexual and other forms of abuse relate particularly to schools:

- 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, chairman etc;
- 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

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).

There is no reliable profile of a child sexual abuser and institutions and communities must be vigilant for those in their care. 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, principal, church leader, 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.

Sexual abuse is more common among girls, other types of abuse are slightly more common among boys (Child Protection, Australia (2010 – 11), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).

Two-thirds of substantiations for abuse or neglect are for children aged 9 years old and under (Child Protection, Australia (2010 – 11), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).

Confidentiality

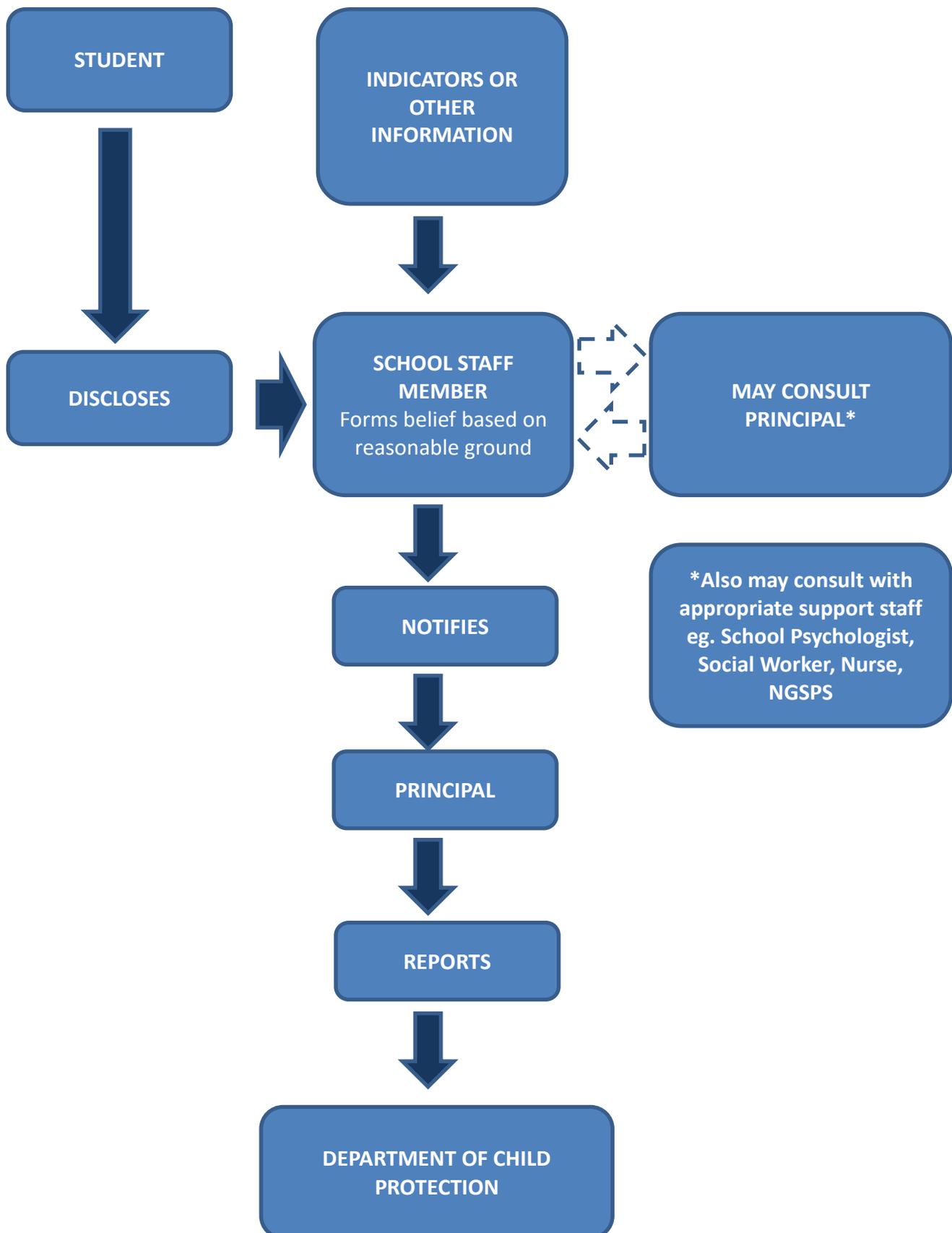
Staff cannot agree to a student's demands for confidentiality or requests that parents, police or other agencies not be informed when the welfare or safety of the student or other students may be threatened.

Role of Non Mandatory Reporters and Notifiers

Teacher assistants are an example of people who work with children in schools that are not mandated reporters. However, all people working with children, whether mandatory reporters or not, should continue to report reasonable beliefs and suspicions or concerns about all forms of abuse. These people who work with children also have a greater knowledge of the children in their care and can be included in the consultative process with the teacher in the case of sexual abuse.

Reports by those employees who are not mandated are made to the Principal of the school. In the case where it is believed the Principal may somehow be complicit or obstructionist, the report should be made to Chair of the Governing body.

**FLOW CHART: NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE – CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT
(NON-MANDATORY REPORT)**



MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD (SEXUAL) ABUSE

The legislation

Since 1st January 2009, the *Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008* has been in effect and covers mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in Western Australia. This amendment forms part of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

In Western Australia, the mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse are the following professions in both the government and non-government sectors:

- teachers
- doctors
- nurses
- midwives
- police officers.

Definition of 'teacher'

The definition of teacher in section 124A of the Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008 has been changed to read:

- a. person who is registered under the Teacher Registration Act 2012, or**
- b. a person who provides instruction in a course that is -**
 - (i) mentioned in the School Education Act 1999 s11B(1)(a), (b) or (e)

and

 - (ii) prescribed for the purposes of this definition; or
- c. a person who instructs or supervises a student who is participating in an activity that is -**
 - (i) part of an educational programme of a school under an arrangement mentioned in the School Education Act 1999 s24(1); and
 - (ii) prescribed for the purposes of this definition; or
- d. a person employed by the chief executive officer as defined in the Young Offenders Act 1994 s3 to teach detainees at a detention centre.**

Definition of sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is defined by the Act in section 124A as:

'Sexual abuse' in relation to a child, includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- (a) the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;*
or
- (b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or*
- (c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.*

This legislation is not intended to capture all sexual activity involving children and young people. Reference should be made to consent laws in Western Australia, The Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 s. 320-322

Definition of child

The definition of 'child' is defined in section 3 of the Children and Community Services Act as a person who is under the age of 18 years. In the absence of positive evidence as to age, a child is a person who is apparently under 18 years of age. Young people aged 18 and over are considered to be adults and are not covered by this legislation. However, schools still owe a duty of care to all students at the school. In these instances, police should be informed of any assault or crime against the young person.

Duty to report sexual abuse of children Section 124B of the CCS Act 2004 states, in part, a person who... believes on reasonable grounds that a child:

- (i) has been the subject of sexual abuse that occurred on or after commencement day;
- (ii) is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse; and forms the belief;
- (i) in the course of the person's work (whether paid or unpaid)... must report the belief as soon as practicable after forming the belief.

When does a mandatory reporter make a 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 school 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 weekend religion teacher.

Please note that in the independent school sector, **once a teacher has formed a belief based on reasonable grounds, they are required to make the report to CPFS, not the school principal.** Prior to forming a belief, the teacher may, if they wish, consult with colleagues with specialist knowledge, for example, the principal, school psychologist, an Inclusive Education Consultant.

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 (refer to the indicators of sexual abuse that is covered on page 7 of this document).

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

- Can you describe the reasons why you believe a child has been, or is being sexually abused?
- What has the child said or done to suggest they are being sexual abused?
- Have you observed, or been told about, the presence of any of the 'possible indicators' of sexual abuse?
- Did the child disclose sexual abuse? What did they say happened? Who did they disclose to and when?
- 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?

How does a mandatory reporter make a report?

A centralised Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS) 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 report is to contain:

- (a) the name and contact details of the reporter;
- (b) the name of the child or, if the child's name cannot be obtained after reasonable inquiries, a description of the child;
- (c) if, or to the extent, known to the reporter —
 - (i) the child's date of birth;
 - (ii) information about where the child lives;
 - (iii) the names of the child's parents or other appropriate persons as defined in section 41(1);
- (d) the grounds for the reporter's belief that the child has been the subject of sexual abuse or is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse;

- (e) (ea) if, or to the extent, known to the reporter —
 - (i) the name of any person alleged to be responsible for the sexual abuse;
 - (ii) the person's contact details;
 - (iii) the person's relationship to the child;
- (f) any other information that is prescribed.

Mandatory reporters are required to submit a written report to the MRS as soon as practicable. A report may be oral or written, but in the case of an oral report the reporter must make a written report as soon as practicable after the oral report has been made.

Where a teacher has formed a belief that the child is at imminent risk of being abused, they should consider calling the Western Australian Police first, whether through the 000 or the 131444 numbers. This does not fulfil the legal obligation to report a child sexual abuse belief and the individual who has formed the belief should then make an Mandatory Report (MR), which can be complete through the following link: <https://mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/MakeaReport.aspx>

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

Failure to follow up a verbal report with a written report as soon as is practicable may result in a fine of \$3,000. Reporters may report beliefs to CPFS on a web based form which can be accessed at the mandatory reporting website www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au. Please note that this is a timed form for security reasons and cannot be saved on a local device.

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

Email: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Fax: 1800 610 614

Post: PO Box 8146

Perth BC, WA 6849

After a report is lodged, the sender will receive a standardised letter. This letter is proof that a report has been made, so it is important that the response is retained and securely stored.

Processing of the Report

Once the report has been lodged, the Mandatory Reporting Service 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.

The mandatory reporter will receive a feedback letter advising them of the CPFS District Office to which the report has been referred. It is important to note that all reports are actioned by CPFS, but it may not be the response that the reporter expects. Principals may discuss ongoing concerns with CPFS and are encouraged to maintain clear lines of communication with the District Office.

If new information becomes available to the reporter, this information should be submitted to CPFS. If a new concern or belief is formed, a new MR should be submitted.

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 and Family Services 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 school 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.

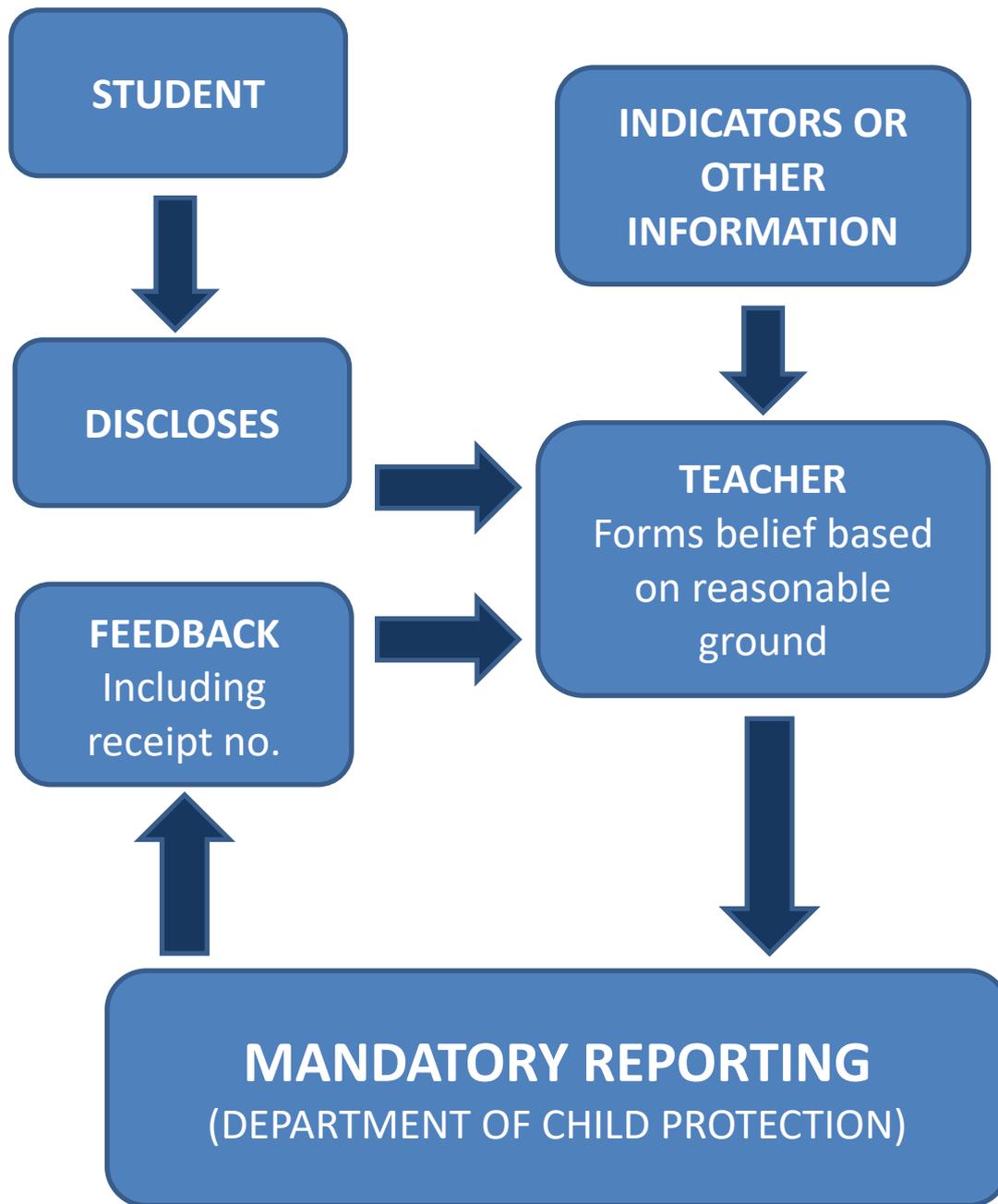
Note:

If the teacher concerned wishes, the Principal and other relevant staff may be involved in discussions with the teacher in relation to a specific child, **prior** to the teacher forming a belief based on reasonable grounds.

In the course of such a discussion, should the principal or other staff member, themselves then form a belief, the person forming the belief is obliged to make a Mandatory Report. It is the teacher's responsibility to make the report directly to the Mandatory Reporting Service when the teacher forms a reasonable belief that sexual abuse has occurred, or is occurring. The teacher **may** advise the Principal of the report, but there should **be no obligation on the teacher to do so.**

The flow chart on the following page outlines the procedure for the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse for Al-Hidayah Islamic School.

FLOW CHART: MANDATORY REPORTING FOR CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE



This flow chart shows that once a teacher has formed a belief based on reasonable grounds, they are required to make the report to CPFS, not the school principal. **Prior** to forming a belief, the teacher may, if they wish, consult with colleagues with specialist knowledge, for example, the principal, psychologist, school counsellor. The teacher may also wish to advise the principal after they have made the report to CPFS.

Note:

The teachers can refer to the indicators of child abuse and neglect list in this document as a guide to help them to form a belief based on reasonable grounds.

The flowchart above only shows what the teacher must do once they have formed a belief. It does not include any consultation process with other school staff. The school's policy and procedure is clear that a consultation process may occur **prior** to the teacher forming a belief.

Any such discussions or documentation must remain highly confidential and staff are reminded of the protection of the identity of the reporter as discussed above. However, throughout the process, the wellbeing of the child must be of paramount concern.

All parents will be informed of the mandatory requirements for teachers to report. This will be done through a letter to parents.

Where to go for information and assistance

The Department for Child Protection and Family Services is the agency responsible for administering the Children and Community Services Act, which is the legislation dealing with the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse. The Mandatory Reporting Service has been established by the Department to receive and investigate reports of sexual abuse.

The Department has established a website www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au, which provides information around Mandatory Reporting and is the portal for making an online written report, but includes a downloadable copy.

The Mandatory Reporting Service can also be contacted through the following ways:

Telephone: 1800 708 704

Email: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Fax: 1800 610 614

Post: PO Box 8146

Perth BC, WA 6849

Grooming Behaviour (See also Staff Code of Conduct)

Grooming in a child protection context refers to deliberate actions undertaken to engage in sexual activity with a child. It differs from sexual abuse in that it is primarily a preparatory activity occurring before abuse occurs, but is continued during and after the abuse to ensure the safety of the groomer.

Grooming is a subtle, gradual, and escalating process of building trust with a child and those around the child, both children and adults, with the express purpose of the sexual gratification of the perpetrator and generally involves engaging in sexual activity with the child. It is deliberate and purposeful and occurs both before and after the abuse. Abusers may groom children and supporting adults for weeks, months, or even years before any sexual abuse actually takes place. The grooming may occur in person or via cyber media.

In the early stage, a committed offender will employ grooming behaviour and because it is so subtle and gradual the child may not be aware of the actual abuse when it occurs and that it is wrong or harmful. The grooming occurs not only with the child but also with those supporting networks around the child which might act as a deterrent or protective element. The perpetrator will invest significant energy and patience to minimise the risk of detection and exposure.

The groomer will employ manipulation, guilt, shame, bribery, coercion or exploit low self-esteem to psychologically manipulate the child and as a result the child becomes increasingly dependent on the groomer and increasingly alienated from protective elements including possible sources to disclose to. Plausible deniability is part of the strategy that the groomer employs to ensure that staff don't take seriously the possible disclosures of a child. This is a deliberate strategy employed to maintain the secrecy of the abuse, so that the abuse is concealed and to ensure the silence of the child.

The groomer will exploit vulnerabilities of the protective elements around the child, including parents and family circumstances, organizational and systemic weaknesses.

Groomers are very adept at identifying anomalies, boundary ambiguities, and the lack of systemic awareness; at deflecting attention from their own actions and intentions.

Grooming behaviour with children may include, but is not limited to:

- selecting, befriending a child and gaining his or her trust, exploiting the child's vulnerabilities;
- testing a child's boundaries through telling inappropriate jokes, roughhousing, backrubs, tickling, or sexual games;

- moving from non-sexual touching to “accidental” sexual touching. This typically happens during play so the child may not even identify it as purposeful, inappropriate touching. It is often done slowly so the child is gradually desensitized to the touch;
- manipulating the child to not tell anyone about what is happening. The abuser may use a child’s fear, embarrassment, or guilt about what has happened. Sometimes, the abuser uses bribery, threats, or coercion;
- causing the child to feel responsible for the abuse. Children may not notice or may become confused as the contact becomes increasingly intimate and sexual.

Grooming behaviour with adolescents may include additional strategies, such as:

- identifying with the adolescent. The abuser may appear to be the only one who understands him/her;
- displaying common interests in sports, music, movies, video games, television shows, etc;
- recognizing and filling the adolescent’s need for affection and attention;
- giving gifts or special privileges to the adolescent;
- allowing or encouraging the adolescent to break rules (e.g., smoking, drinking, using drugs, viewing pornography);
- communicating with the adolescent outside of the person’s role (e.g., teacher, or coach). This could include, for example, texting or emailing the teen without the parents’ knowledge.

In addition to grooming the child, the groomer will use deflection strategies to remain unchallenged. Some of these strategies may include where the perpetrator:

- promotes self and creates a reputation as caring, child-loving, competent, available, trustworthy, truthful;
- raises doubts about the motives, mental health, reliability of the child or anyone else who might approach support services with allegations;
- fosters dependency as someone the family can rely on; and
- positively represents child to others so as to be perceived as someone who would never harm the child.

Preventing or interrupting the Grooming process

Organisations unfortunately provide a vast array of opportunities for groomers to enact the grooming process. Some abusers have a particular preference for children within particular age bands and some studies have shown that groomers will take child focussed employment primarily to get access to a particular cohort of children.

At Al-Hidayah Islamic School, all staff members are accountable to the Staff Code of Conduct. All strategies to combat grooming behaviour will be thoroughly investigated.

Within an organisational context, holding all staff members accountable to the school code of conduct and challenging boundary crossings and violations is one of the most accessible strategies to combat grooming behaviour.

Employees, other professionals and volunteers, and others, must have very clear understandings of the expectations around interactions with students and processes for reporting concerning behaviours. Where an employee is investigated for behaviours considered to be grooming, school authorities are obligated to report this to both the Director General of DES and the TRBWA.(Standard 9).

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.

These quotes come from the NetAlert website,

"...paedophiles can socialise together, trawl for inappropriate content (such as child pornography) and easily make collections of this and distribute to others.

They can pretend to be people other than themselves and they find a sense of security by operating from the confines of their own homes.

Grooming children online with the intention to meet them in real life is an activity many undertake.

They often set up bogus email accounts and handles (a nickname for a person who uses the Internet) which protect their identity online.

*Children need to think carefully about a handle they choose. Handles such as *Angel-Babe*, *Sweet-Sixteen* and *SexyKid* appear harmless on the outset, however can attract the wrong attention. Paedophiles are often attracted to people with these types of names.*

Paedophiles can also erase the history of what they have done online from their personal computers, making it a lengthy and difficult task for authorities to charge them with an offence.

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."

Department of Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS)

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

For other forms of abuse, the Principal should report all disclosures or strong concerns to the CPFS of abuse or neglect arising from the actions or inactions of parents/caregivers and maintain a written record of this communication and subsequent actions. The CPFS will then decide how to proceed. The decision to progress the matter further is the responsibility of the CPFS.

The CPFS is required to provide feedback to people making reports on child abuse. The Principal should seek undertakings from the CPFS that they will be kept informed within the bounds of confidentiality.

The Principal's initial contact with the CPFS will be through the Duty Officer at the Local District Office closest to where the child lives (all offices are listed in the White Pages). All calls from school concerning students are taken very seriously and 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 and position.

Note: The Mandatory Reporting Service and the Duty Officer at the local CPFS office can also be used initially in a consultative role if either the Principal or the teacher is unsure of what action to take.

Staff should be aware that the powers of the CPFS under the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* includes:

Apprehension of children in need of care and protection (without warrant)

Interviewing the child: CPFS has the authority to interview the child at school before contact is made with the parent/caregiver. Before doing so, the principal of the school must be notified. The child should have the option of having support at the interview from a staff member of their choosing.

Removal of children from the school: CPFS officers may remove a child from the school if they have the permission of the parent/caregiver or if they have apprehended the child. The Principal should satisfy themselves that all conditions have been met before this occurs and document all conversations.

Medical examination: CPFS may require that a medical examination occur as soon as possible so that bruising, marking and other symptoms can be recorded for future reference. This would normally take place at either PMH or the Community Child Health Services Centres. This examination can only take place if permission has been obtained from the parent/caregiver or the child has been apprehended (when parent/carer permission is not obtained).

Parents/Caregivers

To avoid interfering with any investigative process initiated by CPFS or the Police, the Principal and teacher must seek advice from CPFS or Police prior to informing the parent/carer of a concern of abuse or neglect.

PROCEDURES AND NOTIFICATION STEPS

Step 1A: *Physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect:*

The teacher's observations or the child's disclosure should be discussed, in the first instance, with the Principal, or the School Chair, if it is not appropriate to discuss it with the Principal.

It is not the role of the teacher to investigate child abuse or neglect matters. They must report concerns to the Principal.

The teacher and Principal may wish to consult with a member of the Non-Government Schools Psychology Service, the school nurse or an Inclusive Education Consultant.

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

Step 1B: Sexual abuse – mandatory reporting

In cases of suspected sexual abuse, the teacher is the mandated reporter and is required to make a report to the Department for Child Protection through the Mandatory Reporting Service.

If the teacher concerned wishes, they may include the Principal and other relevant staff in discussions with the teacher in relation to a specific child prior to the teacher forming a belief based on reasonable grounds. If either of those parties are mandated reporters and then personally form a belief, they are then legally obliged to make a report to the MRS.

It is the teacher's responsibility to make the report directly to the Mandatory Reporting Service when the teacher forms a reasonable belief that sexual abuse has occurred, or is occurring. The Principal and other relevant staff are there to provide support. The teacher **may** advise the Principal of the report, but there should be no obligation on the teacher to do so.

The school must not inform parents until they have sought advice from CPFS or WA Police, so as not to hinder / impede a possible investigation.

Step 2

If, following a report, a family approaches the school to receive support for their child, it is recommended that any interview be conducted with a minimum of 2 school members present (eg. The Principal and one other) to provide support.

Note: It is important to remember that the focus of the meeting should be the welfare of the child.

In cases of child sexual abuse, the legislation provides protection for the person reporting. Disclosure of the reporter's identity or identifying information to parents or any other party can incur a fine of \$24,000 and two years imprisonment.

Very important! To avoid interfering with any investigative process initiated by CPFS or the Police, the Principal or teacher must seek advice from CPFS or Police prior to informing the parent/carer of a concern of abuse or neglect.

Step 3

The Principal should arrange ongoing support for the teacher, the student and anyone else affected. The need for ongoing support is often necessary as the teacher will continue in their role with the student and the CPFS's role may continue for an extended period of time.

RESPONSE TO DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

If a student makes a disclosure of abuse or neglect staff should be aware of the immediate needs of the student and know what to do in these circumstances.

Children will rarely use adult language or specific terms when disclosing abuse, the language used will be at the developmental level of the child, so staff may not initially pick up the nuances of the disclosure.

Most disclosures are accidental, that is the child did not intend to disclose, and it is likely that the disclosure will only be partial. Staff should not attempt to elicit a full disclosure, or ask direct questions. The child should be encouraged to speak freely, i.e. a free narrative, but staff should not try to direct the child down a particular path of thought.

The following elements should guide a response to Disclosure of Abuse or Neglect.

- Use 'protective interrupting' if students begin to disclose in class or in a public area to protect them from sharing the information with too many other people;
- Acknowledge that you have heard them and stop them from disclosing any further;
- Be supportive and gently indicate that they might tell you about it in a more private situation; and
- Quietly arrange to see them as soon as possible, in a situation away from other students.
- 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;
- Put your own feelings aside and listen as if the information is not sensational;
- 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:
- Listen to students in a private location within the school;
- 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;
- 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;
- Allow students the option of support during any agency interview and reassure them of the availability of continuing support;
- 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;
- Document the disclosure and subsequent discussion and actions;
- 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 the safety and support.

Staff must be careful that they:

- Don't push for details or conduct an investigation. Other agencies have this responsibility;
- Don't express judgement of the student, perpetrator or family;
- Don't get angry, upset or show shock;
- Don't ask questions that may make the child feel guilty or inadequate;
- Don't ask leading questions, for instance 'Did Daddy hit you?'
- Don't put words in students' mouths or interrogate as this could jeopardise the interviewing process of DCP and Police;
- Don't promise not to tell when there are clear limits on confidentiality;
- Never make false promises;
- Don't give a lecture about right and wrong;
- Don't say 'forget it', 'you'll get over it' or other such minimalising statements;
- Don't give excessive pity;
- Respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and do not share the information with anyone other than the Principal and either the Department for Child Protection or the Police. This includes not engaging in general staffroom discussion about the disclosure.

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

The school will support children who are victims of abuse and neglect through an appropriate management plan developed in consultation with the Department of Child Protection.

All strong concerns for the welfare of children believed maltreated by parents/caregivers need to be discussed with the Department for Child Protection and Family Support or the Police Child Abuse Squad **before** advising parents/caregivers. These agencies will then decide on the provision of advice to parents/caregivers and any further action. Police and CPFS are available to provide advice on child abuse concerns.

Teachers' obligation with respect to the storage and retention of notes and reports

Because the reporting obligations under the Act are obligations placed upon the teacher personally, it is recommended that the teacher:

- (a) keeps a copy of the report and any notes the teacher provides to the Department in compliance with their obligations under the Act;
- (b) keeps a record of receipt by the Department of the report (this is usually in the form of receipt number) as evidence that the report was made to the Department;
- (c) keeps a copy of the report and any notes the teacher provides to the school; and
- (d) should retain copies of any notes, the report and the receipt of the report by the Department, when the teacher leaves the school.

Staff Recruitment and Selection Process

The school's commitment to protection of students will be made clear at all stages of the recruitment and selection process.

- a. This will include a statement on all advertised positions. For example: "This organisation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Job offers are conditional upon satisfying a Criminal History Record Check."
- b. The school will develop appropriate selection criteria for the position to reduce the risk of appointing someone who poses a child safety risk. It will also ensure that applicants have the specific knowledge and skills required for the position.
- c. The school will ensure that each position has a specific job description with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all employees, contractors and volunteers (eg. ensure that parents clear about their responsibilities when assisting in the classroom? Are volunteers left alone with students?)

d. Interviews

Face-to-face interviews, including behavioural-based questions and questions about motives for wanting to work with children.

- The interview panel will have the right mix of experience and skills to carry out the interview, ensuring that all panel members are clear on what the position requires.
- The panel will use an open-ended style of behavioural-based questioning to give insight into the applicant's values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability. Some useful questions may include:

'Tell us about why you want to work with children?'

'Describe a time when you had to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging?'

'Tell us about a time when you had to comfort a distressed child?'

The panel will be encouraged to take notice of their own thoughts and feelings when interacting with the applicant and ask for more information if the applicant does not provide sufficient information in his or her responses.

The panel will be encouraged to note any warning signs such as:

- Unexplained lengthy gaps in employment history
- The applicant says they do not value or 'need' supervision
- The applicant is evasive or inconsistent in his or her answers

e. Pre-employment screening

Teachers are required, through the Teachers Registration Board (TRB), 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. These staff are required to have a police clearance.

Volunteers who are not parents who have contact with children are also required to have a WWC Check.

Volunteers who are parents are exempt from getting a WWC Check, unless on an overnight camp. Similarly parent volunteers who undertake a professional role (either paid or unpaid) at the school are also to be in possession of a current WWC Card.

f. Referee checks

The school will always talk to at least two referees to gain insight into the applicant's character and skills. Where possible, referees that can provide insights into the applicant's experience working with children will be contacted.

g. Probation

Probation periods will be used to help the school assess a new staff member's performance and suitability for the job before confirming their permanent employment.

The probation period can offer an opportunity to set goals with new staff members and identify training, supervision and other support needs.

Before and After School Incidents - Suggested Strategies

Schools and communities are generally safe environments. From time to time, situations arise where it is important for students, parents and staff to be more vigilant. The following suggestions are intended to support the work that the school is already doing, and should be used as reminders of protective behaviours should the need arise.

Schools can help by:

- informing all school staff of the incident details;
- asking teachers to reinforce the stranger danger message to their students;
- alerting parents of children in our school to child protection alerts by email and/or school newsletter;
- ensuring appropriate risk management strategies are implemented for our school site;
- informing parents in writing when supervision is to commence before school and cease after school, including the designated areas that are supervised;
- providing appropriate teacher supervision before and after school, and have designated pickup points for students;
- informing staff, parents and students that police are to be contacted on 131 444 to report incidents; and
- advising AISWA of the incident so that other schools in the area can also be informed.

Students can help by:

- travelling with a friend and avoiding unsafe shortcuts;
- not talking to strangers, going anywhere with them, or taking anything from them;

- being aware of the safe places they have available to them on their walk to school eg. a friend's house, a neighbour if known and accepted by the family;
- not lingering on the way to or from school;
- telling teachers or parents when they see someone hanging around the school or acting suspiciously;
- telling teachers or parents if they are approached by someone they don't know on the way to or from school;
- taking a photo of the vehicle or person with their mobile phone, if possible; and
- walking away if approached, reciting to themselves as many details as they can remember e.g. car colour, type, number plate, description of person.

Parents can help by:

- ensuring that young children don't travel to and from school unaccompanied;
- making sure children are not on school premises unsupervised;
- using school designated areas if dropping children off or collecting them from school; and
- reporting suspicious vehicles and persons to Police on 131 444 or CRIMESTOPPERS on 1800 333 000.

Staff can help by:

- reporting all sightings of suspicious people or vehicles to the Principal so that they can then be reported to the local police;
- ensuring playground, after school supervision and bus duty rosters are adhered to;

General safety tips provided by the WA Police are:

- be aware of your surroundings at all times and who or what is nearby;
- program 000 and 131 444 police phone numbers into your mobile phone;
- walk with a friend or group wherever possible; and
- walk in well-lit areas that are clear of overgrown trees and bushes

FURTHER INFORMATION

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. Their website contains some excellent material for professionals, parents and friends. Of particular interest is the information on 'identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – a guide for professionals'. To access The Department for Child Protection website click on this link:

<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx>.

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

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 make a report or to raise concerns.

Details regarding mandatory reporting can be obtained through

www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au

To contact DCP for assistance with a specific case that does not involve sexual abuse, the school will need to speak to the Duty Officer at the local office, available during office hours. All offices are listed in the White Pages or on the website.

After hours

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

If the matter is urgent and the safety of a child is at risk, call 000. If you are a victim of child abuse or paedophilia, or if you have information about someone else being abused, you should contact police on 131 444. 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 , or you can ring 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 that for both parents, teachers and students may find informative.

www.acma.gov.au

www.constablecare.org.au

www.cybersmartkids.com.au

www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com

www.netalert.net.au

Child Protection Policy

Acknowledgement

By signing this Acknowledgement, you are agreeing to abide by this Child Protection Policy to the best of your ability and acknowledge that you understand that breaches of this Child Protection Policy will be taken seriously and could result in termination of your employment.

Please sign and date your Acknowledgement and return to the Administrative Officer within five (5) working days. Thank you.

I _____ have read, understood and agree to comply with the terms of this Child Protection Policy.

Employee Signature

Dated

Principal Signature

Dated