



Department of
Education

Child Protection in Department of Education Sites procedures for Principals

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These procedures must be read in conjunction with the Child Protection in Department of Education Sites policy.

Table of contents

1. Policy supported	4
2. Scope	4
3. Procedures	4
3.1 Child protection and abuse prevention professional learning	4
3.2 Child abuse prevention education	4
3.3 Inform students about the child protection policy	5
3.4 Mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse	5
3.5 Report concern of child sexual abuse	8
3.6 Report concern of physical, emotional abuse, family violence or neglect	9
3.7 Report an allegations of physical, emotional or sexual abuse committed by staff	11
3.8 Report an allegation of sexual abuse committed by a student during supervised school or residential setting activities	12
3.9 Manage a student charged with a harmful sexual behaviour	13
3.10 Respond when a student is at immediate risk of harm	14
3.11 Students 18 years of age and over subjected to physical or sexual assault	15
3.12 Respond to a student in possession of sexually explicit or child exploitation material	16
3.13 Responding to specific child protection issues	17
3.13.1 Female genital mutilation/cutting	18
3.13.2 Forced marriage	18
3.14 Supporting a student affected by abuse	18
3.15 Communicate to parents	19
3.15.1 When a mandatory report or child protection referral has been made	19
3.15.2 When a concern is held but a mandatory report or child protection concern referral has not yet been made	20
3.15.3 When a student under the age of consent discloses a sexual relationship	21
3.16 The Department of Communities on school grounds	22
3.17 WA Police on school grounds	23
3.18 WA Police arresting a student on a school site	23
3.19 Recordkeeping and documentation	24
3.19.1 Recordkeeping	24
3.19.2 Transfer of child protection documents to a new school	25
3.20 Confidentiality	26
3.21 Protection and support for employees who report child abuse	26
3.22 Documented planning for children in the care of the CEO of the Department of Communities	27
3.23 Information sharing	28
3.23.1 Sharing information for the wellbeing of a child	28
3.23.2 Respond to the Department of Communities request for school psychology information	28
4. Definitions	29
5. Related documents	42
6. Contact information	45

7. History of changes	45
8. Appendices	48
9. More information	48
Procedure review date	48
Procedure last updated	48

These procedures must be read in conjunction with the Child Protection in Department of Education Sites policy.

1. Policy supported

Child Protection in Department of Education Sites policy

2. Scope

These procedures apply to principals in Department of Education Sites.

3. Procedures

3.1 Child protection and abuse prevention professional learning

Principals must:

- confirm that staff complete the online Child Protection and Abuse Prevention professional learning within 6 months of enrolment in the course
- confirm that staff repeat the online Child Protection and Abuse Prevention professional learning every three years from the date of completion
- inform all contract staff of their child protection responsibilities.

Guidance

Enrolment occurs automatically for staff who have an E number.

Any reference to staff includes casual and relief staff.

The Child Protection and Abuse Prevention course is optional for gardeners. Cleaners are not required to do the course. There is a brochure (staff only) in Ikon to assist.

For further information refer to Confirm staff completion of online child protection professional learning (staff only).

3.2 Child abuse prevention education

Principals must implement protective behaviours education that aligns with the Western Australian Curriculum across all phases of schooling.

Guidance

For further information, refer to [Access protective behaviours resources \(staff only\)](#) and [Access child protection and abuse prevention training \(staff only\)](#).

3.3 Inform students about the child protection policy

Principals must inform students:

- that all staff are required to follow the procedures set out in the Department's Child Protection in Department of Education Sites Policy
- how they can make a disclosure or complaint of abuse.

Guidance

Principals may use their discretion in the amount and detail of information provided to students concerning the policy and procedures for staff for identifying and reporting of child abuse.

Students should be made aware of the options available to them for making a disclosure about the behaviour of a member of staff or other adult or child towards them.

3.4 Mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse

When a principal believes on reasonable grounds, that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse, and forms the belief during the course of paid or unpaid work as a principal or when a written mandatory report of child sexual abuse has been received, principals must:

- make a mandatory report, or accept a written mandatory report from a teacher, school psychologist, school counsellor or boarding supervisor, and forward it, as soon as practicable, to the [Mandatory Reporting Service](#) (MRS)
- contact the MRS by phone when there is a concern for the immediate safety of the child prior to making a written or online report (refer to procedures in 3.9)
- provide information to the Department of Communities and/or WA Police as requested
- make an Online Incident Notification and quote the mandatory report receipt number
- seek advice from the MRS prior to communication with parents (refer to procedures 3.14.1)

- provide secure storage for documentation (excluding mandatory reports, copies of which are not kept) in a confidential file, separate from the child's school records (refer to procedures in 3.17.1)
- if a staff member provides information that results in a mandatory report being made, advise the staff member of actions taken
- follow procedures in 3.5 if the belief is formed that a child was the subject of sexual abuse **before 1 January 2009 and** the abuse is **not** ongoing
- apply mandatory reporting requirements in circumstances where:
 - a child is enrolled at another school
 - a child is under 13 years of age
 - another agency has previously submitted a report on the same child and the same alleged incident.

Principals must not:

- write a mandatory report on behalf of a teacher, school psychologist, school counsellor or boarding supervisor
- alter a mandatory report in any way
- keep a copy of a mandatory report made by another mandatory reporter
- name the mandatory reporter in any Department documentation
- identify the mandatory reporter or children involved when making an Online Incident Notification
- interview the child or children involved or investigate the report
- authorise or request staff to interview the child or children involved or investigate the report
- collect photographic evidence
- authorise or request the collection of photographic evidence by staff
- assign the receiving of a mandatory report for forwarding to the MRS to a deputy or other staff member.

Guidance

Please refer to the relevant service in Ikon including [Form a belief that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse \(staff only\)](#) in [Manage child protection at your school \(staff only\)](#).

The definition of sexual abuse in section 4 of these procedures is from the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (s124A):

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
- (b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour
- (c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.

Children under 13 years of age are deemed to be incapable of consenting to sexual activity.

Prior to submission of a report, principals may seek advice from the Department of Communities Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS) staff on 1800 708 704 and/or the Department of Education's Service Response (Child Protection) staff on (08) 9402 6124.

If the belief that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse is **not** formed but a concern is held, refer to procedures in 3.5.

Following submission of a report, principals may contact the MRS to request information on the progress or current status of a report. Under the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Communities and the Department of Education, the Department of Communities are obliged to share relevant information with the principal relating to the wellbeing of a child.

The principal is not required to make their own mandatory report if a report has already been made by a Department staff member or a third party provider who is a mandatory reporter for the belief based on the same reasonable grounds and the MR receipt number has been provided to the principal as proof.

A child can be subject to a number of mandatory reports by different mandatory reporters.

If the principal believes on reasonable grounds that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse and forms the belief, mandatory reporting requirements apply even if the staff member providing the information has not formed the same belief.

School nurses are mandatory reporters and are required to follow reporting procedures in accordance with Department of Health guidelines. They should also inform the principal of the circumstances when they make a notification relating to a school student to the Department of Communities. They are not required to provide the MR receipt number to the principal. For further information, please refer to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Child and Adolescent Community Health (CACH) and WA Country Health Service (WACHS) (staff only).

Unless a principal has proof that a report has been submitted regarding child sexual abuse, mandatory reporting requirements apply. For further explanation, please refer to the Children and Community Services Act s124B(3):

(3) In a prosecution for an offence under subsection (1) it is a defence for the person charged to prove that he or she honestly and reasonably believed that

(a) all of the reasonable grounds for his or her belief were the subject of a report made by another person

(b) the CEO had caused, or was causing, inquiries to be made under section 31 about the child's wellbeing

(c) the CEO had taken, or was taking, action under section 32 in respect of the child's wellbeing.

School chaplains are classified as school counsellors and are mandatory reporters. They follow reporting procedures for school counsellors. According to current JDFs, Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers fall within the definition of school counsellor.

Mandatory reporting requirements apply when working in the role of a teacher, psychologist or school counsellor, whether at their own school or another school, in either a paid or unpaid capacity. Mandatory reporting does not apply to a registered teacher who is working in a role not categorised as a mandatory reporting role.

If the belief is formed that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse when not working in their role as a teacher, psychologist or school counsellor, either paid or voluntary, there is no legal requirement to report. However, the Department of Education strongly recommends a report be made to the Department of Communities

The legal penalties in accordance with the [Children and Community Services Act](#) for a mandatory reporter who fails to report the belief that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse can be a fine of up to \$6,000. A person can be prosecuted within three years after failing to make a report. Failure to report the belief that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse may also be considered a breach of the Department's [Staff Conduct and Discipline policy](#). Failure to follow up a verbal report of child sexual abuse with a written report could result in a fine of \$3,000.

Prior to 1 January 2009 there was no legal requirement for teachers to report child abuse in Western Australia.

Prior to 1 May 2024 there was no legal requirement for psychologists or school counsellors to report child abuse in Western Australia.

If principals have any concerns regarding the student and suicidal ideation, they should seek advice and consultation to increase the safety of the student, and refer to the [School Response and Planning Guidelines for Students with Suicidal Behaviour and Non-Suicidal Self Injury \(staff only\)](#)

When there is concern for the safety of a mandatory reporter, the principal advises the WA Police and/or Department of Communities and contacts the relevant Regional Education Office for further advice. For further information refer to [Support a staff member who has reported child abuse \(staff only\)](#) and [Access support after reporting child abuse \(staff only\)](#).

3.5 Report concern of child sexual abuse

If the belief that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse is **not** formed, but a child protection concern of child sexual abuse is held, principals must:

- report all new child protection concerns which relate to child sexual abuse to the Department of Communities by using the [Child Protection Concern Referral Form \(staff only\)](#)

- report child protection concerns where there is a concern for the immediate safety of the child to WA Police on 13 14 44 prior to making a report to the Department of Communities (refer to procedures in 3.9)
- conduct all consultations in a confidential manner and document concerns in a confidential file separate from the child's school records (refer to procedures in 3.17.1)
- where appropriate, if information is received from a staff member, advise them to continue to document concerns and update information as necessary
- advise the staff member of further actions taken
- make an Online Incident Notification once a report to the Department of Communities is made and, where a report has been made to WA Police, quote the Incident Report number
- follow the procedures in 3.14.1 for communication with parents.

Principals must not:

- interview the child or children involved or investigate the report
- authorise or request the collection of photographic evidence by staff.

Guidance

See Guidance under 3.6.

If principals have any concerns regarding the student and suicidal ideation, they should seek advice and consultation to increase the safety of the student, and refer to the [School Response and Planning Guidelines for Students with Suicidal Behaviour and Non-Suicidal Self Injury \(staff only\)](#).

3.6 Report concern of physical, emotional abuse, family violence or neglect

Principals must:

- report all new child protection concerns which relate to physical abuse, emotional abuse, family violence or neglect of a child to the Department of Communities by using the [Child Protection Concern Referral Form \(staff only\)](#)
- report child protection concerns where there is a concern for the immediate safety of the child to WA Police on 13 14 44 prior to making a report to the Department of Communities (refer to procedures in 3.9)
- conduct all consultations in a confidential manner and document concerns in a

confidential file separate from the child's school records (refer to procedures in 3.17.1)

- where appropriate, if information is received from a staff member, advise them to continue to document concerns and update information as necessary
- advise the staff member of further actions taken
- make an Online Incident Notification once a report to the Department of Communities is made and, where a report has been made to WA Police, quote the Incident Report number
- follow the procedures in 3.14.1 for communication with parents.

Principals must not:

- interview the child or children involved or investigate the report
- authorise or request the collection of photographic evidence by staff.

Guidance

When considering if a submission of a child concern report is warranted, please refer to the definition of 'Child Protection Concern' in the Definitions section of these procedures.

Principals:

- may seek advice from the Department of Communities staff and/or Department of Education Service Response (Child Protection) staff on [08 9402 6124](tel:0894026124)
- refer to procedure 3.9 where a student is at immediate risk of harm or there is a significant concern for the wellbeing of the child
- may request acknowledgement that the child protection concern referral has been received.

*Perth metropolitan area: Mandatory Reporting Service 1800 708 704, Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889 (1800 CP DUTY) or Crisis Care after hours on 1800 199 008.

If a principal holds a child protection concern involving a child or children enrolled at another school or college, principals may report their concern to the Department of Communities as a private citizen.

Being exposed to family violence is considered to be emotional abuse and may also be physical abuse.

In cases of family violence, WA Police may interview the students, teachers, boarding supervisors, parents and any other parties involved (refer to procedures 3.16).

Principals can request from or provide information to the school nurse relating to a child protection report in accordance with the memorandum of understanding(MOU) with the Child and Adolescent Community Health (CACH) and WA Country Health Service (WACHS) (staff only).

If principals have any concerns regarding the student and suicidal ideation, they should seek advice and consultation to increase the safety of the student, and refer to the [School Response and Planning Guidelines for Students with Suicidal Behaviour and Non-Suicidal Self Injury \(staff only\)](#).

3.7 Report an allegations of physical, emotional or sexual abuse committed by staff

Principals must:

- report all allegations made by students, employees or non-employees regarding staff misconduct in accordance with the [Staff Conduct and Discipline policy](#)
- seek instructions in relation to management of allegations from Standards and Integrity Directorate (SID)
- submit a mandatory report (refer to procedures 3.4), if the belief is formed that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse
- if the belief is not formed but a concern of child sexual abuse is held, submit a child protection concern referral (refer to procedures 3.5)
- if a child protection concern is held related to physical abuse or emotional abuse, submit a child concern referral (refer to procedures 3.6)
- obtain permission from SID prior to informing the parent/carer (refer to procedures 3.14)
- make an Online Incident Notification and, where a mandatory report has been submitted, quote the receipt number.

Principals must not:

- interview the child
- investigate the allegation
- inform the alleged offender that an allegation has been made.

Where the student is 18 years of age and over, the principal must also follow procedures in 3.10.

Guidance

An allegation may concern behaviour of a staff member towards a student who is enrolled at the reporter's school, another school or residential setting.

The allegation may concern the behaviour of a staff member towards a child during or outside of school or

college hours.

When considering if a submission of a child protection concern referral is warranted, please refer to the definition of 'Child Protection Concern' in the Definitions section of these procedures.

The content of electronic communication between a staff member and student may also constitute reasonable grounds to form the belief that a child is or has been subject to sexual abuse.

Any concerns regarding an inappropriate relationship between a staff member and a student should be reported to the Department's Standards and Integrity Directorate (SID). For further information refer to [Report staff misconduct \(staff only\)](#).

Sexual harassment is dealt with in the [Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment policy](#). In some cases sexual harassment of students may also be child sexual abuse. Refer to the definition of child sexual abuse in Section 4 of these procedures.

Certain behaviour towards students, while not illegal, may not be within appropriate professional boundaries and should be considered as unsafe practice. Refer to the [Code of Conduct](#) and [Standards \(staff only\)](#).

If principals have any concerns regarding the student and suicidal ideation, they should seek advice and consultation to increase the safety of the student, and refer to the [School Response and Planning Guidelines for Students with Suicidal Behaviour and Non-Suicidal Self Injury \(staff only\)](#).

3.8 Report an allegation of sexual abuse committed by a student during supervised school or residential setting activities

Principals must:

- arrange for the safety and supervision of the alleged victim and the student alleged to have committed the abuse
- follow the mandatory reporting procedures in 3.4
- seek advice from the MRS before informing the alleged victim's parent
- seek advice from the MRS before informing the parents of the student alleged to have committed the abuse
- if medical attention is required, take reasonable steps to contact the parent prior to contacting emergency services
- support the students involved and affected by the incident as required
- make an Online Incident Notification, quoting the receipt number of the mandatory report
- arrange support for staff affected by the incident.

Principals must not:

- interview the students involved
- disclose the identity of the person alleged to have committed the abuse to the alleged victim's parent
- disclose the identity of the alleged victim to the parents of the student alleged to have committed the abuse
- disclose the identity of the staff member who made a mandatory report of child sexual abuse to the parents of the students involved.

Guidance

Sexual abuse of a child by another child is any sexual behaviour that involves the use of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence or when one child has less power than the other or when there is significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the children involved.

Examples are: unwanted touching, unwanted kissing, exposure to sexual acts, exposure to pornographic materials and sexual penetration of the genitals or mouth.

Sexual behaviour outside of the normal developmental range may be an indicator of child sexual abuse. Sexual behaviour that is within the normal range may or may not be an indicator of child sexual abuse. For more information refer to [Respond to sexual behaviour in students \(staff only\)](#).

If a report is submitted to the mandatory reporting service (MRS), the MRS will automatically notify WA Police who will assess the need for criminal charges.

Permission to inform parents can be requested or obtained by calling, as relevant: the MRS on 1800 708 704; the Department of Communities Central Intake Team in the Perth metropolitan area on 1800 273 889 or WA Police on 13 14 44.

Making a report to WA Police does not preclude the principal from considering taking action in accordance with the [Student Behaviour policy and procedures](#).

If principals have any concerns regarding the student and suicidal ideation, they should seek advice and consultation to increase the safety of the student, and refer to the [School Response and Planning Guidelines for Students with Suicidal Behaviour and Non-Suicidal Self Injury \(staff only\)](#).

3.9 Manage a student charged with a harmful sexual behaviour

Principals must:

- upon receipt of notification from the Director of Education, made in accordance with the Multi-agency protocol for education options for young people charged with harmful sexual behaviours, develop a Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) for the student

charged or convicted

- detail the specific support and risk management strategies for the student charged or convicted in the RAMP
- manage the school related bail conditions for the student charged or convicted.

Guidance

The Multi-agency protocol for education options for young people charged with harmful sexual behaviours allows for the Western Australian Police Force to notify the Director General, Department of Education, of school aged young people who have been charged with or convicted of harmful sexual behaviours (students charged or convicted) if criteria in section 28B of the Children and Community Services Act are met and the offence is included in Schedule 1 or 2 of the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*.

3.10 Respond when a student is at immediate risk of harm

Principals must:

- call the WA Police on 13 14 44 and note the Incident Report number; and
- call the Department of Communities Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889 (1800 CP DUTY) or Crisis Care after hours on 1800 199 008; or
- call the Department of Communities District Office responsible if the child is in the care of the CEO of the Department of Communities; or
- call the Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS) on 1800 708 704 if the belief is formed on reasonable grounds that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse
- submit a Child Protection Concern Referral Form (staff only) or a written mandatory report, as appropriate
- conduct all consultations in a confidential manner and document concerns in a confidential file separate from the child's school records (refer to procedures in 3.17.1)
- where appropriate, if information is received from a staff member, advise them to continue to document concerns and update information as necessary
- advise the staff member of further actions taken
- lodge an Online Incident Notification and quote the Incident Report number provided by WA Police or the mandatory report receipt number, as appropriate
- follow the procedures in 3.14.1 for communication with parents.

Guidance

If the Department of Communities identifies an immediate risk of harm to the child, the WA Police and the Department of Communities Child Safety Team may be involved.

If schools do not receive a response at all from the WA Police, do not receive a response within a reasonable timeframe or are concerned about the response received then they can request to speak with the Officer In Charge.

If schools do not receive a response from the Department of Communities or remain concerned about the response received, they can request to speak with the Department of Communities Team Leader followed by the Assistant District Director or District Director to discuss the need for immediate assistance.

If the student is in care, contact the Department of Communities Case Manager or Team Leader. The Form 587 provided by the Department of Communities will include the contact details.

Contacts:

Perth metropolitan area: Department of Communities Central Intake Team on [1800 273 889](tel:1800273889) (1800 CP DUTY).

Country areas: [Department of Communities District Office](#)

After hours contact Crisis Care 9223 1111 (1800 199 008 Country Free Call)

Mandatory Reporting Service (1800 708 704 available 24 hours)

If principals have any concerns regarding the student and suicidal ideation, they should seek advice and consultation to increase the safety of the student, and refer to the [School Response and Planning Guidelines for Students with Suicidal Behaviour and Non-Suicidal Self Injury \(staff only\)](#).

3.11 Students 18 years of age and over subjected to physical or sexual assault

Principals must:

- advise and assist students to make a report to WA Police
- inform the parent or carer when the student
 - has an intellectual disability
 - is incapable of understanding that they have been subjected to sexual exploitation.

Guidance

Students over 18 years of age are adults and concerns for their safety are reported to the WA Police by the student themselves. The principal's duty of care responsibilities require assistance be provided to the student in making a WA Police report.

Students over 18 years who have an intellectual disability are viewed under the [Criminal Code](#) as being an 'incapable person' ([Section 330](#)). The principal may make a report to WA Police themselves when the student is incapable of doing so.

Any concerns regarding an inappropriate relationship between a staff member and a student should be referred to the Standards and Integrity Directorate. For further information refer to [Report staff misconduct \(staff only\)](#).

If principals have any concerns regarding the student and suicidal ideation, they should seek advice and consultation to increase the safety of the student, and refer to the [School Response and Planning Guidelines for Students with Suicidal Behaviour and Non-Suicidal Self Injury \(staff only\)](#).

3.12 Respond to a student in possession of sexually explicit or child exploitation material

When sexually explicit or child exploitation material has been located on a student's mobile phone or other electronic device, or if sexually explicit or child exploitation material has been or is alleged to have been distributed to others, principals must:

- secure the electronic device (if circumstances permit)
- report all concerns about issues involving sexually explicit or child exploitation material allegations to WA Police
- store devices securely until WA Police advise of the course of action
- request confirmation that the report has been received through the provision of a WA Police Incident Report number
- seek advice from the WA Police prior to informing parents/caregivers
- if the belief is formed that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse, make a mandatory report as outlined in procedures 3.4
- make an Online Incident Notification and quote the Incident Report number provided by WA Police, as well as the mandatory report receipt number if a mandatory report has been made
- follow the procedures in 3.13 on supporting the children involved
- follow the procedures in 3.14 on informing the parents.

Principals must not:

- investigate the allegation

- search through a student's electronic device for evidence
- download, transmit or distribute the images or text
- authorise or request the collection of photographic evidence by staff
- delete images or text
- inform the alleged offender that an allegation has been made.

Guidance

Please refer to the definitions of 'Child Exploitation Material' and 'Child Protection Concern' in Section 4 of these procedures.

Members of the teaching staff have the authority to confiscate student's property on school premises under reg 71 of the School Education Regulations 2000. The process for the confiscation of mobile phones should be stated in the school's policy for the management of mobile phones and other electronic devices on school grounds.

A staff member may view an image to determine if it is reportable and should consider and document whether the:

- image is sexually explicit
- identity of the person is known
- image appears to be of a person under 18 years of age.

Once the device is secured, it is recommended that it is switched to flight mode (where possible).

If known, document the distributor and recipient/s of the images.

The WA Police will identify whether or not a child has been exploited and may interview the students, teachers, boarding supervisors, parents and any other parties involved (refer to procedure 3.16).

Possession and/or distribution of child exploitation material is a criminal matter and likely but not always a child protection issue. Principals should use their professional judgement or seek advice.

If principals have any concerns regarding the student and suicidal ideation, they should seek advice and consultation to increase the safety of the student, and refer to the School Response and Planning Guidelines for Students with Suicidal Behaviour and Non-Suicidal Self Injury (staff only).

Further information and resources can be found on the website of the Office of the eSafety Commissioner and in Ikon (staff only).

For information related to Western Australia's Intimate Image laws (Chapter XXVA of the Criminal Code) which came into effect on 15 April 2019, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions.

3.13 Responding to specific child protection issues

3.13.1 Female genital mutilation/cutting

When a concern is formed that a student may be subjected to Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), or arrangements are being made to carry out the procedure, principals must follow the requirements in procedure 3.6 **and** make a report to WA Police on 13 14 44.

Principals must not inform the parent of the concern or report.

Guidance

The Department of Communities has advised that employees of state government agencies report the practice or risk of FGM/C as a form of physical abuse. FGM/C is also reported to WA Police as the practice is a criminal offence in Western Australia, as is taking the child from the state with the intention of having the child subjected to FGM/C.

For further information refer to Section 306 of the [Criminal Code](#) and [Report female genital mutilation/cutting of a student \(staff only\)](#).

3.13.2 Forced marriage

If a concern is formed that a student under 18 years of age is being or has been forced or coerced into a marriage or is in an existing marriage, principals must:

- follow procedures 3.4 where the belief is formed on reasonable grounds that a child is or has been the subject of sexual; or
- follow procedures 3.5 where there is a concern of sexual abuse.

Principals must not inform the parent of the concern or report.

Guidance

For further information refer to sections 270.7A and 270.7B of the [Commonwealth Criminal Code Act \(1995\)](#) and to [Report forced marriage of a student \(staff only\)](#).

Principals may consult with WA Police (Child Abuse Squad 9428 1500) or the Department of Communities on [1800 273 889](#).

3.14 Supporting a student affected by abuse

Principals must:

- support students affected by abuse, including students who are alleged to have committed

the abuse

- in cases where the parties remain on school grounds, where practicable, remove the alleged offender/s from contact with the alleged victim.

Guidance

In cases where criminal conduct has been reported, the support of Education Regional Office staff, the lead school psychologist, and student services staff should be accessed by the principal.

In circumstances where the student alleged to have committed the abuse attends the same school, a risk management and support plan should be developed in collaboration with the student and their family.

As appropriate, the student should be provided with the option of who their support person is and involved in decisions that directly affect them and provided with relevant information. The principal may request a staff member to undertake the support role but it remains the responsibility of the principal. Refer to [Support a student affected by abuse or neglect \(staff only\)](#).

The student and their family may be provided with the option to 'opt out' of support and intervention.

School based strategies and or interventions should not disadvantage the student harmed, for example, the student should not be moved out of their class, unless at the request of the student or family.

If principals have any concerns regarding the student and suicidal ideation, they should seek advice and consultation to increase the safety of the student, and refer to the [School Response and Planning Guidelines for Students with Suicidal Behaviour and Non-Suicidal Self Injury \(staff only\)](#).

3.15 Communicate to parents

3.15.1 When a mandatory report or child protection referral has been made

Principals must inform parents of a mandatory report or child protection concern referral when:

- permission has been given by the Department of Communities or WA Police
- it is considered to be in the best interests of the child and consultation has been conducted with appropriate staff and this is documented.

Principals must not inform parents of a mandatory report or child protection concern referral:

- without prior permission from the Department of Communities or WA Police
- when it is considered to be not in the best interests of the child and consultation has been conducted with appropriate staff and that this is documented.

When informing the parents, principals must:

- conduct the meeting in private and document the discussion
- tell the parents why the meeting is taking place
- inform parents that the meeting is confidential
- advise of reports that have been made to other agencies and explain the action to be taken by the Department if an allegation has been made against a staff member
- inform the parents of the support available to them and their child.

Principals must not:

- disclose the identity or personal information relating to the person alleged to have committed the abuse
- disclose the identity of the person who made the mandatory report or child abuse report
- offer personal opinions
- question the family about matters that are unrelated to the situation.

Guidance

Obtaining permission from The Department of Communities or WA Police before informing parents is required because the parent/carer may be responsible for the abuse and advising them that the school has made a mandatory report or child protection concern referral may compromise an investigation.

Permission to inform parents can be requested or obtained by calling, as relevant: the MRS on 1800 708 704; the Department of Communities Central Intake on 1800 273 889; or WA Police on 9428 1500 (Child Abuse Squad).

Where a face-to-face meeting with parents is impractical e.g. if parents live considerable distance from the school, a principal may inform parents by phone.

3.15.2 When a concern is held but a mandatory report or child protection concern referral has not yet been made

Principals must not inform parents:

- that physical or behavioural indicators have been observed in their child which have led to a concern of child abuse
- of a concern of family violence

- of an intention to make a report concerning their child to the Department of Communities, the Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS), WA Police and/or SID.

Guidance

A parent may be the person alleged responsible the abuse. To inform the parent of a concern of child abuse may alert them and pose a further risk to the child.

Principals should use their professional judgement when deciding to discuss observations with parents. It is permissible to seek clarification from parents in order to determine if a child protection report is required. Document questions and responses verbatim. The WA Police and the Department of Communities may use this information in their investigations.

3.15.3 When a student under the age of consent discloses a sexual relationship

Principals must:

- inform parents of the disclosure unless:
 - it is not in the best interests of the child
 - a report of child sexual abuse or other form of abuse is made and
- follow procedures 3.4, 3.5 or 3.9, if applicable.

Principals must not inform the parents where the disclosure is viewed as possible child abuse without seeking prior permission from the Department of Communities, or WA Police.

Guidance

These procedures only apply when a disclosure has been made by the student themselves.

In Western Australia, the legal age for males and females to consent to sexual activity is 16 years of age.

Students under 13 years of age are deemed under the Criminal Code as incapable of consenting to a sexual relationship and this should be reported to WA Police and obtain a police record number, if a mandatory report of child sexual abuse is not submitted.

Sexual behaviour involving students aged 13 to under 16 years of age may not necessarily constitute sexual abuse. If the belief is formed that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse, a mandatory report must be submitted as per procedure 3.4. Consideration should be given to the age of the child, developmental level, any disability or the influence of drugs or alcohol.

When a person engages in sexual behaviour with someone below the age of consent, this is a criminal offence under the Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 and should be reported to WA Police. If the belief is formed that the child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse, a mandatory report must be submitted as per procedure 3.3.1.

If the student is a child in the care of the CEO of the Department of Communities), the matter should also be referred to the Department of Communities.

School psychologists may be consulted on determining the best interests of the child and the availability of appropriate support options, including implementation of protective behaviours education. Refer to [Access protective behaviours resources \(staff only\)](#).

3.16 The Department of Communities on school grounds

When the Department of Communities is on school grounds to interview a student, principals must sight the authorised officer identity card of the Department of Communities worker to interview the child before access to the child is given.

Principals must not inform the parents that the Department of Communities have interviewed the student as this is the responsibility of the Department of Communities.

When the Department of Communities removes a student from the school, principals must:

- confirm with the Department of Communities whether or not they have parental permission to remove the student
- if the Department of Communities does not have parental permission to remove the student, confirm that the Department of Communities is exercising their authority under section 33 of the [Children and Community Services Act](#)
- document this information.

Guidance

The Department of Communities have the statutory authority to access a child for purposes of investigation without parental consent. Refer to Section 33 of the [Children and Community Services Act](#).

The Department of Communities officer is required to notify the principal of the intention to access a child and the reasons for it before access is given.

As soon as practicable after accessing the child, the Department of Communities officer is required to inform at least one of the parents that the child has been seen and the reasons for it unless:

- they believe that the parent may be charged
- the investigation may be compromised
- the child's safety may be put at risk
- the child has requested that the parents are not informed and the Department of Communities Officer believes on reasonable grounds that this is in the best interests of the child.

In some cases the Department of Communities determines if a school staff member is present during the interview to support the child.

The Department of Communities officers may remove a child from the school for an interview if they have the permission of the parent.

If parental permission is not given and the child is at immediate and substantial risk of harm the child will be taken into provisional protection and care under s37 of the [Children and Community Services Act](#) by the Department of Communities or the WA Police. Principals should check that these conditions have been met before allowing the removal of a child from school. Verbal communication is adequate as long as it is documented.

Refer to Sections 32, 35 and 37 of the [Children and Community Services Act](#) (see [Memorandum of Understanding between CPFS and the Department \(staff only\)](#)).

3.17 WA Police on school grounds

When WA Police request permission to interview a student on school grounds, principals must:

- sight the WA Police officer's identification
- establish the purpose of the interview
- confirm that parental consent has been obtained.

When parental consent has not been obtained, the principal or deputy principal can grant or refuse permission to WA Police to interview or remove a student from the school grounds. The principal or deputy principal must document the details of the request and the reasons for their decision.

Guidance

WA Police rely on the cooperation of the principal to grant access to a student for the purposes of carrying out a child interview on the school site.

When making a decision concerning WA Police requests to interview a student or remove them from the school grounds, principals should take into account the best interests of the child and the child safe principles that apply to this policy.

WA Police can remove a child without parental permission if they have a warrant or if the child is under arrest. All other situations require the child to be accompanied by the Department of Communities.

3.18 WA Police arresting a student on a school site

Principals must:

- liaise with WA Police to determine whether the arrest of the student on the school site is justified
- in line with section 242 of the *School Education Act 1999*, share any relevant information with the WA Police including the identity of the student, attendance data and parent information
- arrange a time with WA Police to come on the school site
- ensure the arrest is conducted discreetly
- phone the Manager, Incident Support Unit at 9264 5393.

Principals must not refuse the arrest of a student on school site if it has been established there is an immediate risk of harm to anyone.

Guidance

The Department has a Memorandum of Understanding – Arrests of Students on Department of Education Premises with the WA Police, which specifies the process for WA Police officers to attend a public school site for the planned arrest of a student.

The officer in charge of the local police station will establish a channel of communication with the school principal prior to this occurring.

WA Police will do a risk assessment which considers risk of harm to others, immediacy of resolving an incident, whether evidence may be lost or destroyed or other exceptional circumstances which require immediate police action.

WA Police ensure contact is made with the principal of the public school to inform them of the circumstances necessitating the arrest of the student at the school.

WA Police make appropriate arrangements with the principal for attending the school, to ensure the arrest is done in a discreet manner to reduce the impact on the student, the student's family and the public school.

3.19 Recordkeeping and documentation

3.19.1 Recordkeeping

Principals must store, in perpetuity, all confidential child protection information securely and separately from the student's school records. Confidential information includes:

- child protection referrals to the Department of Communities
- written and electronic records of all communication with the Department of

Communities, WA Police, the Department's Standards and Integrity Directorate (SID) or other authorities and subsequent actions

- Mandatory Report receipt numbers
- [Online Incident Notification \(staff only\)](#) numbers
- Risk Assessment and Management Plans (RAMPs).

Principals must not:

- keep or store copies of mandatory reports
- record or disclose information that may identify the mandatory reporter other than to the Department of Communities or WA Police involved in the investigation.

Guidance

It is strongly advised that a copy of the mandatory report is not stored by the mandatory reporter. It is not necessary to keep a mandatory report. The receipt number issued by the MRS is proof that a report has been made. The report can be accessed or additional information added by the reporter at a later date by quoting the receipt number or the name of the child to the MRS.

For further information, please contact the [Records Management \(staff only\)](#) area and refer to the [Records Management policy](#) and [Manage confidential child protection records \(staff only\)](#) (staff only).

Documentation kept by staff, excluding mandatory reports, may be required by the Department of Communities, WA Police and SID in their investigations. For further information refer to the [Respond to a legal order to produce documents to a court or WA Police \(staff only\)](#).

Refer to Appendix C for more information on completing documentation.

3.19.2 Transfer of child protection documents to a new school

Principals must:

- forward copies of child protection documents directly to the principal of the new school clearly marked 'CONFIDENTIAL'
- delete information that may lead to the identification of the mandatory reporter
- retain original documentation in a secure file separate to the student's records.

Principals must not:

- forward a students' Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) to the principal of the students' new school.

Guidance

Original child protection records must remain at the school.

Copies of child protection documents are provided to the student's next school to assist with education planning and the provision of support. Refer to [Manage confidential child protection records \(staff only\)](#).

3.20 Confidentiality

Principals must protect the identity of the staff member who reports a child protection concern or the mandatory reporter if a mandatory report of child sexual abuse has been made.

When a student discloses abuse or family violence, principals must not promise confidentiality.

Guidance

The [Children and Community Services Act](#) overrides other policies, codes of conduct professional confidentiality requirements and legislation that governs the exchange of information between agencies when it is in the best interests of the child.

All staff are protected from civil, criminal and disciplinary liability by providing information in good faith to the Department of Communities, WA Police or the Department's Standards and Integrity Directorate (SID).

Staff may consult with each other provided this is carried out in a confidential manner.

The identity of the person making the mandatory report is protected. However, in prescribed circumstances the identity of the reporter may be disclosed. The penalty for disclosing a mandatory reporter's identity outside of these circumstances can be up to two years' imprisonment and/or \$24,000 fine ([Children and Community Services Act](#)).

For assistance regarding appropriate responses to students disclosing abuse, please refer to [Respond to a student disclosure of abuse \(staff only\)](#).

For further information refer to Appendix D.

3.21 Protection and support for employees who report child abuse

Where there are concerns for the safety of a staff member, principals must:

- advise the Department of Communities and/or the WA Police
- contact the Regional Education Office for further advice if required
- provide information on counselling support through the [Employee Assistance Program](#)

(staff only) if requested.

Guidance

The [Children and Community Services Act](#) protects the identity of the reporter and protects against any breach of conduct or professional standards.

For further information, refer to Appendix B and [Support a staff member who has reported child abuse \(staff only\)](#).

3.22 Documented planning for children in the care of the CEO of the Department of Communities

Principals must:

- verify that a documented plan is developed within 30 working days of receiving Form 587 from the Department of Communities, stating that a child is in care
- provide a copy of the completed documented plan to the Department of Communities child protection worker and other key stakeholders
- record on Integris the date when the documented plan was forwarded to the Department of Communities and the date it is due for review
- review the documented plan at the commencement of each school year once advised by the Department of Communities via Form 587 that the child is still in care
- review the documented plan at least twice yearly
- review details for a child in care monthly in Integris as required in [Reporting Requirements of Schools \(staff only\)](#).

Guidance

For further information on the requirement to develop a documented plan refer to Section 30 of the [Children and Community Services Act](#), the [Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Communities and the Department of Education 2021 \(staff only\)](#) (staff only), and the [Support education planning for children in care \(staff only\)](#).

Teachers and school administrators can use [ABLEWA](#) to support the teaching and learning of students with disability and additional learning needs.

The Reporting to Parents Special Education Needs (RTP SEN) framework supports teachers and school administrators in creating documented plans for students with special education needs.

3.23 Information sharing

3.23.1 Sharing information for the wellbeing of a child

Principals must:

- share relevant information for the wellbeing of the child, where it is in the best interests of the child, with teachers, school psychologists, school counsellors, boarding supervisors and other staff as relevant
- provide information to and may request information from prescribed public authorities or authorised entities subject to the information being relevant to the wellbeing of a child.

Guidance

Section 28B of the [Children and Community Services Act](#) enables principals, lead school psychologists and other delegated staff to disclose information relevant for the wellbeing of a child, or a class or group of children or request this information from non-government service providers and non-government and Catholic schools. This includes relevant information:

- in cases where the Department of Communities is not involved;
- where there is a concern for the safety of a child who is subject to family violence; or
- in school settings when school health service staff consider a student to be at significant risk, relevant information for the wellbeing of a child may be exchanged between the school nurse and the school principal for the child's safety or welfare.

For more information on information sharing between prescribed public authorities or authorised entities, refer to [Share confidential child protection information \(staff only\)](#) and [Manage confidential child protection records \(staff only\)](#).

3.23.2 Respond to the Department of Communities request for school psychology information

Principals must:

- inform the lead school psychologist that all requests for school psychology information are to be directed to the principal
- liaise with the lead school psychologist to determine what information is relevant to the request
- verify that original documents are not provided.

Guidance

School psychology information may be provided in compliance with a request from a prescribed authority (section 28B of the [Children and Community Services Act](#)).

The school principal, in consultation with the lead school psychologist, may provide information in response to a request from a Department of Communities officer. In these circumstances, section 28B of the [Children and Community Services Act](#) provides that the school principal, lead school psychologist and school psychologist have statutory protection from:

- civil or criminal liability
- breach of duties of confidentiality or secrecy
- breach of applicable professional ethics, standards or codes of conduct.

For further information refer to Appendix D, [Respond to a request for student psychology information \(staff only\)](#), [Share confidential child protection information \(staff only\)](#) and [Manage confidential child protection records \(staff only\)](#).

4. Definitions

Allied professionals

Allied professionals are those staff employed under s235(1)(a),(c) (d) of the School *Education Act 1999*.

Allied professionals who are not categorised as school counsellors are non-mandatory reporters. When reporting any type of child abuse, including sexual abuse, these allied professionals are required to follow the procedures for allied professionals.

Allied professionals who fall within the category of school counsellor (see definition) are mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse and are required to follow the procedures for school counsellors.

Belief on reasonable grounds

'Belief on reasonable grounds' means that a reasonable person, doing the same work, would have formed the same belief on those grounds. Grounds for forming the belief are matters of which you have become aware, and any opinions in relation to those matters.

A mandatory reporter does not have to be able to prove that harm has occurred. Professional judgement and objective observation help to identify warning signs or possible indicators of child sexual abuse and contribute to a reporter forming the belief on reasonable grounds. Knowledge of child development and consultation with colleagues or other professionals can also contribute to reasonable grounds.

Reasonable grounds may include:

- your own observations of a child's behaviour
- your own observations of the behaviour of an adult interacting with the child
- when a child tells you they, or another child, has been harmed
- when you hear about it from someone who is in a position to provide reliable information, perhaps a relative or friend, neighbour or sibling of a child who is at risk.

Mandatory reporters must specify the grounds on which they formed the belief that a child has been, or is being, sexually abused.

(Mandatory Reporting Guide: Western Australia)

If you are a mandatory reporter and you have not formed the belief that a child has been or is being sexually abused but are sufficiently concerned, it is recommended that you consult with staff with expertise in this area, such as the Department's child protection consultants.

Form a belief that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse (staff only), Recognise signs of child abuse (staff only) and Manage child protection at your school (staff only).

Boarding facility

Means a place used to provide residential accommodation for children while they attend a school as defined in the School Education Act. (Children and Community Services Act Section 124A).

Boarding supervisor

Means a person who holds an office or position in a boarding facility; the duties of which include the supervision of children living at the facility. (Children and Community Services Act Section 124A)

Department of Education residential settings commonly use the terms boarding supervisor and residential supervisor to describe a boarding supervisor.

Child

A person who has not reached the age of 18 years of age and, in the absence of positive evidence as to age, means a person who is apparently under 18 years of age (Children and Community Services Act Section 124A).

Child abuse

Occurs when a child has been subjected to physical, sexual or emotional abuse and/or neglect which has resulted or is likely to result in significant harm to the child's wellbeing. It may involve ongoing, repeated or persistent abuse, or arise from a single incident.

Child exploitation material

Child exploitation material is (a) child pornography; or (b) material that, in a way likely to offend a reasonable person, describes, depicts or represents a person, or part of a person, who is, or appears to be, a child (i) in an offensive or demeaning context; or (ii) being subjected to abuse, cruelty or torture (whether or not in a sexual context).

Child pornography is material that, in a way likely to offend a reasonable person, describes, depicts or represents a person, or part of a person, who is, or appears to be a child (a) engaging in sexual activity; or (b) in a sexual context.

Material includes (a) any object, picture, film, written or printed matter, data or other thing; and (b) any thing from which text, pictures, sound or data can be produced or reproduced, with or without the aid of anything else.

(Child Pornography and Exploitation Material and Classification Legislation Amendment Act 2010 s216).

Sexting (sex + texting) is the sending and receiving of sexually explicit or sexually suggestive texts or images via phone or internet. *(Australian Institute of Family Studies 2018).*

Child protection concern

A concern about the wellbeing of a child based on the observation of indicators or information that may lead to a concern for:

- the care of the child
- the physical, emotional, psychological and educational development of the child
- the physical, emotional and psychological health of the child
- the safety of the child

(s3 *Children and Community Services Act*).

Child safe organisation

The Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) define a child safe organisation as one that consciously and systematically:

- creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm occurring to children and young people
- creates conditions that increase the likelihood of any harm being discovered
- responds appropriately to any disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

Refer to Manage child protection at your school (staff only).

Confidentiality

The protection of personal, private and sensitive information. Professional codes of conduct and the Department's Staff Conduct and Discipline policy reinforce the importance of protecting an individual's privacy.

Documented plan

A documented plan records the actions in place to address the specific learning support needs of an individual student.

Duty of care

A duty imposed by law to take care to minimise the foreseeable risk of harm to another.

Emotional abuse

Occurs when an adult harms a child's development by repeatedly treating and speaking to a child in ways that damage the child's ability to feel and express their feelings. Emotional abuse includes psychological abuse and being exposed to family violence.

Some examples are: constantly putting a child down; humiliating or shaming a child; not showing care, support or guidance; continually ignoring or rejecting the child; exposing a child to family violence; threatening abuse or bullying a child; threats to harm loved ones, property or pets.

Family violence

Family violence is a reference to:

- (a) violence, or a threat of violence, by a person towards a family member of the person
- (b) any other behaviour by the person that coerces or controls the family member or causes the member to be fearful.

A child is **exposed to** family violence or personal violence if the child sees or hears the violence or otherwise experiences the effects of the violence.

Examples of behaviour that may constitute family violence include (but are not limited to) the following

- (a) an assault against the family member
- (b) a sexual assault or other sexually abusive behaviour against the family member
- (c) stalking or cyber-stalking the family member
- (d) repeated derogatory remarks against the family member
- (e) damaging or destroying property of the family member
- (f) causing death or injury to an animal that is the property of the family member
- (g) unreasonably denying the family member the financial autonomy that the member would otherwise have had
- (h) unreasonably withholding financial support needed to meet the reasonable living expenses of the family member, or a child of the member, at a time when the member is entirely or predominantly dependent on the person for financial support
- (i) preventing the family member from making or keeping connections with the member's family, friends or culture
- (j) kidnapping, or depriving the liberty of, the family member, or any other person with whom the member has a family relationship
- (k) distributing or publishing, or threatening to distribute or publish, intimate personal images of the family member

(l) causing any family member who is a child to be exposed to behaviour referred to in this section.

(Restraining Orders Act 1997 s5A & Restraining Orders and Related Legislation Amendment (Family Violence) Act 2016)

Female genital mutilation/cutting

All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-therapeutic reasons.

Harm

Harm, in relation to a child, means any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's wellbeing, whether caused by:

- (a) a single act, omission or circumstance
- (b) a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances;

Children and Community Services Act.

Mandatory reporter

The legislation covering mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse in Western Australia is the Children and Community Services Act.

Under section 124B of the Children and Community Services Act 2004, a specified person whose duty to report child sexual abuse (a Mandatory Reporter) is a person who is working in their role either paid or in a voluntary capacity as a Department of Communities assessor or a department officer, midwife, nurse, police officer, boarding supervisor, doctor, minister of religion, out of home care worker, teacher, psychologist or school counsellor.

For the purposes of the legislation, 'teacher' is defined as any person registered under the Teacher Registration Act 2012 with the Teacher Registration Board of WA or with Provisional Registration, or Limited Registration and is working as a teacher.

For the purposes of the legislation, 'boarding supervisor' is defined as 'a person who holds an office or position at a boarding facility the duties of which include the supervision of children living at the (boarding) facility'.

For the purposes of the legislation, 'psychologist' is defined as a person who is registered under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA) Act 2010* in the psychology profession (other than as a student).

For the purposes of the legislation, school counsellor' is defined as an adult who is employed or engaged in a school (as defined in the School Education Act section 4) to provide counselling or pastoral care to children who attend the school. It does not include adults employed or engaged as a student or volunteer.

Staff who are registered under the Teacher Registration Act with the Teacher Registration Board of WA, and who are not a mandatory reporter of child sexual abuse are required under this policy to report child sexual abuse to the principal.

Mandatory reporting legislation

Section 124B of the Children and Community Services Act

Duty of certain people to report sexual abuse of children

(1) A person who:

(a) is a person specified in the Table (a **specified person**); and

Table

assessor	boarding supervisor
departmental officer	doctor
midwife	minister of religion
nurse	out-of-home care worker
police officer	teacher
school counsellor	psychologist
Early childhood worker (commencement day 1 November 2024)	Youth Justice Worker (commencement day 1 May 2025)

(b) believes on reasonable grounds that a child:

(i) has been the subject of sexual abuse that occurred on or after commencement day; or

(ii) is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse;

and

(c) forms the belief:

(i) in the course of the person's work (whether paid or unpaid) as a specified person; and

(ii) on or after commencement day.

must report the belief as soon as practicable after forming the belief.

Penalty for this subsection: a fine of \$6,000.

Commencement day is the date on which the person becomes a mandatory reporter under the legislation. The duty to report sexual abuse applies if the reporter forms the belief on or after commencement day. Commencement day varies for different reporter groups.

In a school context, the duty to report sexual abuse applies to a teacher, boarding supervisor, psychologist or school counsellor working in their role either in a paid or voluntary capacity.

If the belief that a child is or has been the subject of sexual abuse is formed when not working in their role, then there is no legal duty to report. However, a report to the Department of Communities can be made voluntarily.

Neglect

Neglect includes failure by a child's parents to provide, arrange, or allow the provision of:

- (a) adequate care for the child
- (b) effective medical, therapeutic or remedial treatment for the child.

Children and Community Services Act.

Omission of care (from the [Department of Communities Neglect policy 2021](#)).

When a child does not receive adequate food or shelter, medical treatment, supervision, care or nurturance to the extent that their development is harmed, or they are injured.

Cumulative harm (from the [Department of Communities Neglect policy 2021](#)).

Refers to the effects of multiple adverse or harmful circumstances and events in a child's life. The unremitting daily impact of these experiences on the child can be profound and exponential, and diminish a child's sense of safety, stability and wellbeing.

It is possible to have cumulative abuse (multiple events over time) that results in harm that is cumulative in nature (the impact of the events has been cumulative).

Non-mandatory reporter

In a school context, all staff who are not working in the role of a teacher, school psychologist, school counsellor or boarding supervisor are non-mandatory reporters.

When reporting child sexual abuse, non-mandatory reporters are required to follow the procedures for allied professionals.

Parent

In relation to a child, is a person who at law has responsibility for the long-term care, welfare and development of the child; or the day-to-day care, welfare and development of the child.

Physical abuse

Occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a child's caregiver. It may also be the result of putting a child at risk of being injured. Some examples are: hitting, shaking, punching; burning and scalding; excessive physical punishment or discipline; attempted suffocation; or shaking a baby.

Prevention

Strategies that promote self-management, emotional awareness and interpersonal problem-solving skills that reduce risk factors and promote protective factors to ensure the wellbeing of children and young people.

Protective behaviours

A personal safety program designed to equip children with the knowledge and skills to act in ways that reduce the likelihood of abuse occurring and help them to report abuse and to seek help if abuse occurs.

Psychologist

A psychologist is a person who is registered under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Act 2024 (Western Australia)* in the psychology profession.

Psychologists are mandatory reporters. When reporting any type of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, school psychologists are required to follow the procedures for school psychologists.

Residential college

A place used to provide residential accommodation for children while they attend a school as defined in the *School Education Act* section 4.

Also referred to as a boarding facility and does not include private arrangements.

Residential college manager

The residential college manager has the same mandatory reporting responsibilities as a boarding supervisor and is responsible for the line-management of other boarding supervisors and operations in a residential setting. Department of Education residential settings commonly use the terms residential college manager, college manager or head of residence to describe a residential college manager.

Residential setting

A place used to provide residential accommodation and related services for students while they attend, and participate in an educational programme of, a school as defined in the School Education Act section 4, 213A and 213B. Also referred to as a student residential college or boarding facility and does not include private arrangements.

Residential setting activity

An activity that is organised or managed by a boarding supervisor as part of his or her duties.

School activity

An activity that is organised or managed by a teacher as part of his or her duties.

School counsellor

A school counsellor is defined as an adult who is employed or engaged in a school (as defined in the School Education Act section 4) to provide counselling or pastoral care to children who attend the school. It does not include adults employed or engaged as a student or volunteer (Children and Community Services Act).

In the Department of Education, school counsellors are allied professionals and third-party providers with either of the terms 'pastoral care' or 'counselling' listed in their job title, JDF or relevant service agreement. This includes chaplains, wellbeing officers, Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers and some third-party providers.

School counsellors are mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse. When reporting any type of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, school counsellors are required to follow the procedures for school counsellors.

Sexual abuse

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
- (b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour
- (c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour

(s124A Children and Community Services Act)

Some examples are: letting a child watch or read pornography; allowing a child to watch sexual acts; touching a child's genitals; oral sex with a child; sexual assault (including sexual touching or vaginal or anal penetration that is non-consensual); and using the internet to find a child for sexual exploitation.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)* occurs when a person makes an unwelcome sexual advance or request for sexual favours, or engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, towards another person and that person is disadvantaged, or has reasonable grounds for believing he or she will be disadvantaged, by taking objection. Sexual harassment is unlawful in the areas of employment, education, and accommodation.

Staff

All employees of the Director General of the Department of Education.

Student residential college

A place used to provide residential accommodation and related services for students while they attend, and participate in an educational programme of, a school as defined in the School Education Act section 4, 213A and 213B. More commonly known as residential setting.

5. Related documents**Relevant legislation or authority**

Australian Psychological Society Code of Ethics 2007

Child Pornography and Exploitation Material and Classification Legislation Amendment Act 2010

Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)

Corruption and Crime Commission Act 2003 (WA)

Criminal Code (Acts Amendment: Sexual Offences' Act 1992) (WA)

Criminal Code Act 1995 (Commonwealth)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Disability Discrimination Amendment (Education Standards) Bill 2004 (Cth)

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)

Freedom of Information Act 1992

Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Application Act 2024 (Western Australia)

Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003 (WA)

Restraining Orders Act 1997 (WA)

Restraining Orders and Related Legislation Amendment (Family Violence) Act 2016)

School Education Act 1999 (WA)

School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

State Records Act 2000 (WA)

Teacher Registration Act 2012 (WA)

Working With Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)

Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Regulations 2005 (WA)

Related Department policies

[Complaints and Notifications policy](#)

[Duty of Care for Students for Public Schools policy](#)

[Enrolment in Public Schools policy](#)

[Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment policy and procedures](#)

[Incident Management on Department of Education Sites policy](#)

[Records Management policy](#)

[Staff Conduct and Discipline policy](#)

[Student Attendance in Public Schools policy](#)

[Student Behaviour in Public Schools policy](#)

[Visitors and Dignitaries at Public Schools and Residential Facilities policy](#)

Other documents

[Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Communities and the Department of Education 2021 \(staff only\)](#)

[Memorandum of Understanding between Department of Education and Child and Adolescent Community Health and WA Country Health Service for the delivery of school health services \(staff only\)](#)

[Support documented planning and case management for individual students \(staff only\)](#)

6. Contact information

Policy manager:

Director, Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Policy contact officer:

Principal Consultant, Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Telephone: (08) 9402 6448

7. History of changes

Effective date	25 July 2017
Last update date Procedure version no.	3.0
Notes	This new procedure supports the Child Protection Policy. Endorsed out-of-session by the Director General at Corporate Executive and ratified on 30 June 2017.
Effective date	25 July 2017
Last update date	25 July 2017
Procedure version no.	3.1
Notes	Minor corrective changes as requested by Corporate Executive out-of-session and ratified on 30 June 2017.
Effective date	25 July 2017
Last update date	3 October 2018
Procedure version no.	3.2

Notes	Minor changes to title D18/0435848, reference to Public Schools D18/0151652 and updated legislation links D18/0207680.
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Effective date	13 August 2019
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Last update date Procedure version no.	3.3
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Notes	Major changes approved by the Director General on 26 July 2019. D19/0349313
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Effective date	13 August 2019
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Last update date	14 February 2022
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Procedure version no.	3.4
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Notes	Minor change to update links for CPFS Child Protection Concern Referral Form D22/0091413
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Effective date	13 August 2019
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Last update date	8 July 2022
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Procedure version no.	3.5
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Notes	Minor updates to terminology, definitions and links as per D22/0519053.
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Effective date	13 August 2019
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Last update date	22 September 2023
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Procedure version no.	3.6
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Notes	Minor change to update link to MOU D23/1550610
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Effective date	13 August 2019
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Last update date	5 October 2023
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Procedure version no.	3.7
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Notes	Minor change to update reporting process in s3.5, 3.6, 3.9 to Dept Communities D23/1586024 and contact details D23/1582068
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Effective date	1 May 2024
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Last update date Procedure version no.	3.8
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Notes	Major changes to reflect Children and Community Services Amendment Act 2021 approved by Director General on 11 April 2024
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Effective date	8 September 2026
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Last update date Procedure version no.	4.0
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Notes	Major review approved by the Director General on 3 August 2026 (D26/0116687). Updated definition and language of documented plan.
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Effective date	8 September 2026
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Last update date	21 September 2026
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Procedure version no.	4.1
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Notes	Minor review approved by the Director, Student Engagement and Wellbeing, on 21 September 2026 (D26/0753467). Updated legislative reference.
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8. Appendices

Appendix A: [Child protection and abuse prevention education professional learning](#) (PDF file - 122kB)

Appendix B: [Protection and support for employees who report child abuse](#) (PDF file - 130.7kB)

Appendix C: [Completing documentation](#) (PDF file - 166.7kB)

Appendix D: [Confidentiality and legal protection](#) (PDF file - 121.7kB)

9. More information

Supporting content

Policy

[Child Protection in Department of Education Sites policy](#)

Procedure review date

8 September 2029

Procedure last updated

21 September 2026
