

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFETY POLICY

RATIONALE

At Darul Ulum College of Victoria, we believe that all students have the right to feel safe within their environment and the people with whom they interact. The school will support students' development in ways which will foster security, confidence and independence. The school upholds the rights of students as stated in the Ministerial Order No. 870 and College policies.

AIMS

1. To identify for staff the procedures for dealing with cases of suspected or disclosed abuse.
2. To help students acquire skills and attitudes to resist abuse in their own lives and to prepare them for responsible parenting in their adult lives.
3. To encourage an environment where all students in the school feel safe, secure, valued and respected.
4. To listen to students as they articulate their difficulties and feelings.
5. To ensure that parents are acquainted with school obligations in regards to child protection legislations.
6. To ensure the integrity of the student's family is protected.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. All staff will be provided with information concerning signs and symptoms of possible neglect, emotional, physical, sexual abuse and self-harm.
2. It is imperative that all staff members take the highest level of responsibility to report any suspected cases of abuse.
3. Staff will be provided with clear guidelines and a clear system where they can communicate concerns, monitor and record incidents.

4. All suspected and disclosed cases are to be reported without delay to the Student Well-being Coordinator for a preliminary investigation. It is never suitable for staff to carry out any investigation on their own.
5. If the case is established and deemed genuine, it should be referred to the Principal to be followed up.
6. A Report Book will be maintained by the Student Well-being Coordinator in order to record any suspected or reported abuse.
7. The report form should contain details of any incidents which staff may feel is relevant in regards to child protection.
8. The Report Book and any Case Conference papers are strictly confidential.
9. Students involved in an abuse disclosure will be supported both during the disclosure and afterwards.
10. Relevant staff will be asked to oversee the behaviour/performance of these students and to communicate this information to the Student Well-being Coordinator.
11. Any concerns that involve allegations against a member of staff should be referred immediately to the Principal who will investigate the situation.

HOW TO RESPOND IF A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON DISCLOSES ABUSE

In the event of a disclosure of child abuse, the staff member should observe the 5 'R' Principles below:

Receive

- Stay calm.
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Be discreet.

Reassure

- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable. For example, do not make promises you may not be able to keep, such as saying: 'Everything will be alright now.'
- Do not promise confidentiality; you have a duty to refer. Explain that you will need some help to deal with what you have been told.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt if the child refers to it.

Respond

- Respond only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter. Do not interrogate for full details or make the child repeat information unnecessarily.
- Do not ask leading questions. For example, 'What did s/he do next?', or 'Did s/he touch you?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence and the child's claims in any future investigation.
- Do ask open questions like, 'Anything else to tell me?', 'Yes?', 'And?'
- Do not criticize the perpetrator.
- Do explain what you have to do next and with whom you have to talk to.

Record

- Jot down some notes immediately on any paper which comes to hand. Information given by student must be recorded as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy these original notes. These should be attached to the report form.

Report

- Concerns about possible abuse must be reported to the Student Well-being Coordinator immediately.
- If a significant concern is formed for referral, the Student Well-being Coordinator must be contacted immediately. The Coordinator will refer the case to the Principal for further

action as per the Mandatory Reporting Policy.

- If a belief that a child is at significant risk of harm has been formed, the Principal must be informed immediately to be reported to Child Protection.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to decide when to make the referral to Social Services. Some concerns may need to be monitored over a period of time before a decision of referral is to be made.

TYPES OF ABUSE

Physical Abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the willful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment or rejection of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of the other person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in



sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect The persistent or severe neglect of a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or guardian failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment and lack of stimulation or lack of supervision.

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November 2016

Contact details

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