

MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

RATIONALE

All children have a right to feel safe and know that they will be attended to with due care at all times and offered appropriate supervision. As teachers, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidents involving the abuse and neglect of our students, and are accountable to report abuse and neglect of the children in our care.

AIMS

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

IMPLEMENTATION

1. All teachers are mandated to report signs of abuse and neglect.
2. New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure. All existing staff will be annually briefed / trained on reporting procedures and requirements.
3. All allegations of abuse arising from incidents occurring within the **school environment*** must be reported and investigated as per the outlined procedures.
4. In cases where parents / guardians or any member of the school community are concerned of any type of abuse arising within the school environment in relation to a student, a Complaint Form which is accessible on the College's website or reception must be submitted to the Principal or relevant Head of School.
5. All complaints or concerns of child abuse occurring outside the school environment reported to the school must also be investigated as per the mandatory reporting guidelines.
6. Allegations or disclosures of child abuse

made by the child in relation to a member of the school staff, visitor or any other person connected to the school environment must be pursued as per the mandatory reporting procedures.

7. Staff should not make judgments about the validity or truth of the allegation.
8. Allegations or disclosures of child abuse reported by any member of the school staff, visitor or any other person connected to the school environment must also be pursued as per the mandatory reporting procedures.
9. Staff, students and all personnel connected with the school environment will be informed of the College's mandatory reporting procedures and responsibilities.
10. The Principal has primary responsibility for managing the school response to allegations of child abuse. Hence, all concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the respective Head of School.
11. All staff must report incidents of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, psychological, racial abuse and neglect as per the College's Reporting procedure as outlined below:

Reporting Criteria and Procedures:

- A. Concerns about possible abuse must be reported to the Student Well-being Coordinator immediately using the Incident Report. In the absence of the Student Well-Being Coordinator, the case must be reported to the respective Head of School.
- B. If a significant concern is formed for referral, the Principal (or his delegate i.e. Head of School) must be informed immediately for further investigation.
- C. 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 / Child First / Police.

- D. Where cases of abuse are evident through disclosure, the Principal (or his delegate) and / or Child Protection must be contacted.

With regards to steps A, B & C, it is the responsibility of the Principal to decide when to make the referral to Social Services and Police. Some concerns may need to be monitored over a period of time before a decision of referral is to be made.

12. Types of abuse outlined in the Critical Incident Policy must be reported to the Principal immediately. Parents / guardians and / or external appropriate personnel / relevant authorities deemed to be obliged to deal with the case may be informed.
13. All necessary measures, including separation, isolation and provision of safe space will be provided to any child connected to the allegations of abuse until the allegations are resolved.
14. The Principal will keep a record of all discussions about a student of concern.
15. If a belief has been formed by the Principal that an abuse has taken place, a 'Mandatory Reporting Information Sheet' will be completed and filed in the Principal's office.
16. The Principal will contact the Department of Human Services by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification.
17. Members of the Department of Human Services or associated support that visit the school following a notification may interview staff and children only in the presence of the Principal or the Principal's nominee.
18. All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and must remain strictly confidential.
19. All future incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.

20. Staff compliance in relation to the outlined procedures will be monitored. Failing to follow the set procedures of mandatory reporting will entail the following:

- An interview will be conducted by the Principal with the concerned member to understand the reasons for not complying with the procedures. Where necessary, further targeted training will be recommended.
- In cases where negligence is evident, disciplinary action may be taken.

21. Review process of policies and procedures pertaining to reporting and responding to child abuse will include surveys for all stakeholders to provide their feedback. On a needs basis, the College will provide relevant information in this regard in languages other than English.

22. Where an incident of abuse involves a disabled child or parent, the College will facilitate the necessary support to enable the concerned parties to understand the situation and available processes.

23. All staff are mandated to exercise reasonable measures / adequate responses towards any child whom they believe is seriously at risk of abuse, should the outlined policies and procedures fail to cater for a given situation.

* **The school environment** is defined as: Any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school administration for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a) school grounds;
- b) online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- c) other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).



HOW TO RESPOND IF A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON DISCLOSES OR REPORTS 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

Relevant Contact Details

Contact Personnel	Extension / Contact Number
Student Well-Being Coordinators	<u>Male Campus</u> - Ibrahim Merhi: 212 <u>Female Campus</u> - Aniza Baharin: 243
Heads of School	<u>Primary Female Campus</u> - Rakia Chebib: 252 <u>Secondary Female Campus</u> - Mouna Abdelhay: 262 <u>Boys' Campus</u> - Abdullah Elleissy: 209
Principal	Abdurrahman Gokler: 210
Police	000
Child Protection Services	North Division intake: 1300 664 977

Abdurrahman Gokler

Principal

Date of Review: Term 1, 2019

Next Review: Term 1, 2021

- 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 immediately.
- Do not destroy these original notes. These should be attached to the report form.

Report

- Refer to Reporting Criteria and Procedures outlined above.

Contact details

Please direct all enquiries to
Abdurrahman Gokler – Principal
Tel: 61 03 9355 6800
Email: info@dulum.vic.edu.au

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