MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

RATIONALE

Children within the Catholic community, and the community generally, have the right to expect that personal effort - as well as community support - of both a voluntary and statutory nature will be given to protect them from spiritual, physical and psychological harm.

As from 1 June 1997, teachers within the ACT are mandated to report suspected non-accidental physical injury to children and/or child sexual abuse.

All children have the right to be safe and to feel protected. Adults within our school community are responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students at St Bede's and staff are responsible for reporting all suspicions of non-accidental physical injury or sexual abuse to the Principal.

Teachers must model responsible behaviour by communicating suspicions of non-accidental physical injury or sexual abuse to the Principal. All disclosures must be treated sensitively, respecting the dignity of the individual. If a disclosure is made to a staff member, they must be honest with the child informing the child of the responsibility to pass on such information.

Communication with and support from the appropriate agencies enables the school to effectively support children when there is a suspicion or disclosure of abuse.

Information about the situation needs to be handled sensitively and discussed only in a professional setting with appropriate people.

Parents or guardians are not to be informed of suspicions or disclosures of abuse, as stated in Keeping Children Safe A Shared Responsibility, until appropriate authorisation has been given.

GOALS

At St Bede's we aim to:
- ensure the safety and well-being of all students;
- respect the dignity of individuals within our community;
- ensure that all staff are aware of and understand the responsibilities of mandatory reporting;
- follow the stated procedures in our school policy based upon government mandates.
POLICY

DEFINITIONS

Physical abuse:
• refers to non-accidental injury to a child;
• includes any injury caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings;
• may result in a range of injuries from soft tissue injuries to dislocation and fractures; or
• may also include poisoning, attempted suffocation or strangulation and death.

Sexual abuse:
• refers to any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult or an older or bigger person;
• occurs when the child is used as a sexual object for the gratification of the older person’s needs; or
• occurs when the child is unable to give consent due to the unequal power in the relationship.

REASONABLE GROUNDS
You have reasonable grounds to report child abuse or neglect when:
• a child tells you;
• someone else tells you; or
• your own observation of the child’s physical condition or behaviour leads you to believe that the child has been abused.

It is important to note that:

Teachers are not mandated to recognise or establish abuse, but are mandated to report suspicion and the grounds for those concerns.

The staff at St Bede’s Red Hill has agreed on the following protocols and processes for the reporting of suspected child abuse.

Notification is made to teacher
Or teacher suspicions raised
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Consult with Principal→ Record details

→ Consult with the Assistant Director of the CEO
→ Consult with the Coordinator of Student and Family Counselling in Centacare
→ Phone consultation with the Family Services intake worker
POLICY

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If appropriate Principal notifies Department of Family Services

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Inform the reporting person - inform Director of CEO

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Parents or guardians are not informed

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If, after the above consultations it is decided it not appropriate to report the matter, the Principal informs reporting person that a notification was not made

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Advises reporting person that she/he may notify the Department of Family Services directly

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Inform Principal of notification

Further information can be found at the CEO website at