



Good Shepherd
Lutheran School
A N G A S T O N

Child Protection Policy

The School's response to students who may be unsafe

(This policy last updated 2007)

Rationale

Good Shepherd Lutheran School has a responsibility to do its best to provide a safe environment for all students.

This responsibility includes the recognition and response to children who appear to be, and/or report to a staff member or volunteer that they are uncomfortable or afraid of an adult's behaviour towards them.

- Children have the right to be emotionally and physically safe at all times wherever they may be.
- Child abuse can occur anywhere and can be perpetrated by any one including older children and adults close to the family or in positions of trust.

Under the Child Protection Act 1993, the State of South Australia has mandated Families SA to investigate and intervene in family life when there is a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child is at risk of abuse or is being abused.

A teacher, staff member or volunteer in any educational institution is a Mandated Notifier required by law to report to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78) their suspicions that a student may be unsafe or being abused.

The School Policy therefore is that:

Staff undertake the Mandated Notifiers' training course to be aware of their legal responsibilities, the processes of reporting, liaison with Families SA organisation and preparedness to respond to a child who is or may be being abused.

- Staff follow the school's written procedure in notifying Families SA. (Refer Appendix 1)
- The person who notifies Families SA (the Mandated Notifier) is the person who is concerned or to whom the child has disclosed.
- The Mandated Notifier should ring Families SA to discuss any concerns they may have about a student and whether a formal notification needs to be made about the student's current situation.
- The Mandated Notifier will inform the Principal immediately following consultation with Families SA. (Informing the Principal does not pass on the responsibility to the Principal).
- Staff document any signs or behaviours of students they are concerned about, and any conversations held with a child who discloses that they are unsafe.
- When Families SA becomes involved with the student and their family, the Mandated Notifier chosen by the student remains a support for the student at school where possible.

- The Principal and/or her delegate will provide support to the Mandated Notifier who notifies Families SA.
- Confidentiality must be maintained within the school.

In South Australia, a child is defined as a person under 18 years of age.

APPENDIX 1 MANDATED NOTIFICATION

Anyone who works with or cares for children in a paid or voluntary capacity by providing children with health, welfare, education, child care or residential services, is legally obliged to notify Families SA if, in the course of their paid or voluntary work, they suspect that a child has been or is being abused or neglected. Although mandated notifiers have a legal responsibility to notify, everyone has a moral responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Under Section 11(1) & (2) of the Children's Protection Act 1993, the following persons are obliged by law to notify Families SA if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected and suspicion is formed in the course of the person's work (whether paid or voluntary) or in carrying out official duties:

- *A medical practitioner*
- *A registered or enrolled nurse*
- *A dentist*
- *A psychologist*
- *A member of the police force*
- *A probation officer*
- *A social worker*
- *A teacher in any education institution (including a kindergarten)*
- *An approved family day care provider*
- *Any other person who is an employee of, or volunteer in a government*

department, agency or a local government or non-government agency or instrumentality that provides health, welfare, education, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children, and is engaged in the actual delivery of those services to children; or holds a management position in the relevant organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or has direct supervision of, the provision of these services to children.

The above people are referred to as Mandated Notifiers.

Failure to notify is an offence under the Children's Protection Act 1993 and carries a maximum penalty of a \$2,000 fine.

Staff who are concerned about a student's care or safety, should refer to Interagency guidelines in Child Protection – 1997 which clearly outlines the procedures to follow.

Staff at Good Shepherd are required to complete a Mandated Notifier Training Program. This qualification needs to be renewed every four years.