
SCHOOL POLICY:	CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT - GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS AND PRESCHOOLS
PUBLISHED:	2004
IDENTIFIER:	CAN200403
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RELATED DOCUMENTS:	<i>Policy and Guidelines for Dealing with Sexual Harassment Reporting Child Abuse – Keeping Children and Young People Safe</i> <i>Children and Young People Act 1999</i>

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy was developed due to the commencement of the Mandatory Reporting provisions on 1 June 1997.
- 1.2 The Guidelines are designed to assist staff in dealing with matters relating to child abuse and neglect.

2 DEFINITION

Child Abuse. Child abuse is a serious and complex problem that may occur in the lives of children and young people. Often it occurs in environments that are isolated and stressful and affects those who are most vulnerable.

Child abuse is the term used to describe different types of maltreatment inflicted on a child or young person. It includes non-accidental physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse, including psychological harm or sexual exploitation of children and young people and requires different and specialised responses.

In its most serious forms, abuse can lead to death or long term harm to the physical or emotional well being of a child or young person.

Mandated persons. Section 159 of the *Children and Young People Act 1999* legally requires the following professional persons to report to the Chief Executive when they have formed a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has suffered or is suffering sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury:

- (a) a doctor
- (b) a registered dentist within the meaning given by the Dentists Act 1931, section 3
- (c) a person who is an enrolled nurse or a registered nurse within the meaning of the Nurses Act 1988, section 3
- (d) a teacher at a school or preschool
- (e) a police officer
- (f) a person employed to counsel children or young people at a school
- (g) a person caring for a child at a child care centre
- (h) a person coordinating or monitoring the provision of home based care on behalf of a family day care scheme licensee
- (i) a public servant who, in the course of his or her employment, provides services related to the health or well being of children, young people or families. This category includes Special Teachers' Assistants and Preschool Assistants.

- (j) the community advocate
- (k) the official visitor
- (l) a prescribed person.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

On 1 June 1997 the ACT government introduced legislation which requires certain professional groups to notify suspected child abuse. The decision to mandate the reporting of child abuse in the ACT is an expression of the government's commitment to the *United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child*. It is also recognition of the vulnerable status of children and young people and the special protection they need in law.

4. GUIDELINES STATEMENT

- 4.1 The guidelines set out procedures for responding to children and young people where there are concerns of abuse and/or neglect.
- 4.2 These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the booklet 'Reporting Child Abuse – Keeping Children and Young People Safe'.
- 4.3 A copy of the guidelines is attached. Extra copies are available from Family Services.