



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy & procedure document is to describe the roles and responsibilities of Cairns Catholic Early Learning and Care (CELIC) educators in establishing and maintaining child safe environments. This document sets out the responsibilities for CELIC employees in our services where they have a concern for the protection of a child, capturing processes required by law and the organisation.

All children have the right to be safe in environments free from abuse and harm. Where this is not the case, adults have a responsibility to act. Below explains the key concepts that underpin the processes for ensuring the safety of children, in order to inform the actions educators must take if they form a reasonable suspicion of abuse, harm or a staff members inappropriate behaviour towards a child.

As an Approved Provider, Catholic Early Learning and Care manages a number of Early Learning, Outside School Hour Care and Kindergarten Services. These are licensed under the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns with management delegated to Catholic Early Learning and Care.

2. APPLICATION

This document applies to all educators and volunteers working in Cairns Catholic Early Learning and Care services. This document should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Guidelines

3. PROCEDURE

Under Section 84 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the Approved Provider of an education and care service must ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and Educators at the service who work with children are advised of:

- The existence and application of the current child protection law: and
- Obligations that they may have under that law

This includes processes for:

- Responding to harm, or allegations of harm, to children who are cared for in a CELC service and
- Reporting a reportable suspicion under Section 13E of the Child Protection Act 1999
- Adhering to the reporting requirements about children in education and care services to the regulatory authority as defined by the *Education and Care Services National Law* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*

Catholic Early Learning and Care acknowledges that issues regarding child abuse and the reporting of allegations of child abuse, is highly sensitive, and should be dealt with in a sensitive, consistent, professional and confidential manner.

It is acknowledged that:

- Educators and volunteers have a high level of contact with children in the childcare services and play a major part in the successful operation of these services.
- Educators are seen as role models. They have significant influence on the children they come into contact with and therefore have significant responsibilities.
- All educators will commit to implementing risk management strategies developed by CELC for child protection and intervention.
- CELC will support its educators to confidently carry out their responsibilities by providing appropriate guidelines and training materials.
- It is expected that services will implement age-appropriate programs for children around protective behaviours.
- Support and the opportunity to debrief will be offered to any educators who hears or reports disclosure of abuse.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|----------------------|---|
| Nominated Supervisor | <p>Ensure educators and volunteers have access to relevant information so they are aware of their responsibilities and mandatory reporting obligations.</p> <p>Ensure that emerging educators’ performance concerns are responded to proactively.</p> <p>Ensure that educators follow all record keeping requirements.</p> <p>Conduct and practice is monitored at the site to ensure it meets the obligations outlined in this and other relevant policies.</p> <p>Ensuring effective educator orientation and induction, including In Safe Hands Child Protection Training is ongoing and up to date, including relevant Child Protection information is provided to educators.</p> <p>Respond promptly and appropriately to information regarding child protection concerns.</p> <p>Seek guidance from Child Safety Services online Child Protection Guide (CPG) where appropriate.</p> <p>Assess the threshold of an allegation, disclosure and/or observation and whether it is reportable to Child Safety Services or referral to Child and Family Connect.</p> <p>Recognise the cultural diversity of children and families.</p> <p>Support Educators when a report to a statutory authority is required.</p> |
| Educators | <p>Act in accordance with obligations outlined in this policy.</p> <p>Raise concerns when barriers or threats to the protection of children and young people’s safety and wellbeing are identified, including through the conduct of other adults at the site/services.</p> <p>Ensure knowledge of Child Protection is current.</p> <p>Understand the legislative responsibility to maintain confidentiality.</p> <p>Ensure adequate supervision of children and adherence to the code of conduct.</p> |

| ROLE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|-----------------|--|
| | <p>Be aware of possible indicators of child abuse and respond according to the obligations outlined in this policy.</p> <p>Confer with relevant educators if needed when determining whether a threshold for a written report to a statutory authority is required.</p> |
| CELC Management | <p>Ensure that approved educators' child protection training programs are updated.</p> <p>Ensure that screening and suitability processes are maintained to meet policy or legislated requirements.</p> <p>Identify and address risks regarding compliance with this policy.</p> <p>Maintain Child safety collaboration with non-government and government sectors, relevant regulatory bodies and other relevant organisations (i.e. ACECQA, ECEC, Professional Standards Unit, Blue Card Services).</p> <p>Conduct whole of system reviews if serious critical incidents occur and implement subsequent recommendations, including but not limited to notifications to the Office of Early Childhood Education and Care.</p> |

5. STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

Child Protection Training

- All Educators must hold current Positive Notice Blue Card.
- All employees will complete online child protection training in their onboarding induction
- It is compulsory for all employees at Catholic Early Learning and Care to complete child protection training via the *In Safe Hands* online Child Protection training within 12 months of their employment and every 12 months thereafter.
- CELC leadership is responsible for ensuring safeguarding training includes face to face training at least every two years in addition to the *In Safe Hands* online Child Protection training. The Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office ensures resources are available to comply with this mandate.
- From 1 April, 2025 it is also a requirement that Nominated Supervisors, 2ICs and Responsible Persons are compliant with the Child Protection training requirements under the [Queensland Government protocol](#).

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

Organisations falling within the scope of the Blue Card system are also required to implement [Child and Youth Risk Management Strategies](#) which address eight minimum requirements. The mandatory requirements include:

- A statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm
- A code of conduct for interacting with children
- Written procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing educators and volunteers
- Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- A plan for managing breaches of your risk management strategy, and
- Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events.
- Policies and procedures for managing compliance with the blue card system, and
- Strategies for communication and support.

The purpose of these strategies is to ensure that organisations have appropriate policies and procedures in place which assist in identifying and minimising the risk of harm to children and young people in regulated service environments. Additional information can be found in the CELC Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy.

6. CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING PROCESSES

Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Sexual and/or Physical Child Abuse

The Child Protection Mandatory Reporting obligation under Section 13E of the Child Protection Act 1999 applies to the following educators:

- An Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor
- Educators employed with the following qualifications:
 - An approved early childhood teaching qualification.
 - An approved Diploma Level Education and Care Qualification.
 - An approved Cert III level of Education and Care.

Volunteers and under 18-year-olds are not mandatory reporters however they will be expected to provide their concerns to an appropriate educator for assistance.

Under the legislation, educators are required to report to Child Safety Services a reportable suspicion.

A reportable suspicion is a reasonable suspicion:

- that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical abuse or sexual abuse; and
- there may not be a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

If the allegation of harm or risk of harm relates to the conduct of an educator, other employee or volunteer, then in addition to the reporting processes followed in this document, the Operations Manager and the Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office needs to be provided with a copy of the reporting form.

An educator fulfils this mandatory reporting obligation by:

- Making a written report immediately once a reasonable suspicion has been formed by using the [Record of Concern](#) (ROC) with the assistance of the Nominated Supervisor, of the reportable suspicion (or if the allegation is against the Nominated Supervisor) to the Operations Manager, and upon receiving confirmation from Child Safety Services that the report has been received; or
- Making a report directly to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) via the departments [online reporting form](#).

When the Nominated Supervisor, Operations Manager or Approved Provider assists an educator who has formed a 'reportable suspicion', they **must**, as a matter of urgency, ensure the report has been forwarded to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety).

Where a Nominated Supervisor forms a 'reportable suspicion', they must make a report directly to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety), and forward a copy of their report to the Operations Manager immediately.

Educators are encouraged to make mandatory reports to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) with the assistance of their Nominated Supervisor (as described above). However, if an educator forms a 'reportable suspicion' about a child the educator **must** satisfy themselves, as a matter of urgency, that the report to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) has occurred. This can be achieved by confirming with the Nominated Supervisor that Child Safety have confirmed receipt of the report. Confirmation from Child Safety that a report has been received from CELC can be obtained via email or phone.

If the educator does not reasonably suppose that the Nominated Supervisor has provided the report to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety), the educators member **must, as a matter of urgency**, make the report directly to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

(Child Safety). Educators are encouraged to confer with leadership and/or the Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office for support in making the mandatory report themselves.

Requirement to report a Child Sexual Offence

Section 229BC of the Criminal Code Act 1899 mandates the reporting to the Queensland Police Service of information relating to a child sexual offence. This is a general requirement applying to all adults (18 years or over) when information causes, or ought reasonably to cause, the adult to believe that a child sexual offence is being or has been committed against a child by another adult (for more details see Legislative References). A report does not have to be made under the Criminal Code Act 1899 if a report has already been made under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (reporting sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse) or the Child Protection Act 1999 (reporting significant harm or risk of significant harm as a result of sexual abuse).

Failure to protect from a child sexual offence

In addition to the requirement to report a child sexual offence, under section 229BB of the *Criminal Code Act 1899* it is a criminal offence for an adult to fail to protect a child from a child sexual offence.

A failure to protect offence will be committed if an adult in a CELC service:

- a) knows there is a significant risk that another adult associated with the service will commit a child sexual offence against a child; and
- b) they have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk; and
- c) they wilfully or negligently fail to reduce or remove the risk.

NOTE: If a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse is formed a report to the Queensland Police Service is to be made even if there may be a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm

Compulsory Reporting of Suspected Emotional/Psychological Abuse and Neglect

The Child Protection Act 1999 limits the mandatory reporting of reportable suspicions to those formed in the course of the educator's engagement at the service. However, it is the policy of CELC that all reasonable suspicions that child has suffered, is suffering or is at, unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them from the harm, regardless of when they are formed, are reported to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) in accordance with these processes.

Where an educator reasonably suspects a child has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm, due to emotional/psychological abuse or neglect and may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm, then the educator should also follow the processes as detailed in making a mandatory report.

Advising Parents

When a child protection report to the Queensland Police Service and/or the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) is required, it is important that parents are not contacted before the child protection report is made.

If a child protection report submitted to Queensland Police Service and/or the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) relates to suspected abuse or neglect by a member of the child's family, the Nominated Supervisor will only inform the parent(s) or carer(s) of the child protection concern once confirmed as appropriate with the Queensland Police Service or the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety). This is to ensure that any potential child protection or criminal investigation is not compromised.

In order to assist at the service level in the management of any situation and to ensure the immediate safety of any children involved, the service should request from the Queensland Police Service and/or Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) feedback on the possible timing of their intervention and obtain some guidance about when the site may discuss the matter with the child's parent(s) or carer(s). This is particularly significant in cases of child to child sexual behaviour where it is important for the child's well-being to enable the parent to support the child and take steps to protect them.

After a Report is made

Once a report is made under these processes, consideration must be given to any ongoing or resulting action that is required. This includes:

- Provide a copy of the Record of Concern (ROC) to Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office via email safeguarding@cns.catholic.edu.au
- Follow up by the Nominated Supervisor with Queensland Police Service and/or the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) to confirm both receipt of the report, and any action that these agencies may take;
- Implementing any risk management and pastoral support processes to address the safety and well-being of children, particularly in relation to allegations of sexual abuse between children, and maintain as far as possible, supportive relationships with parents, carers and families;
- Ensure that all parties involved respect the confidentiality and privacy of children and families involved;
- If the child attends a Cairns Catholic Education School, you may need to discuss with your Nominated Supervisor whether the child's school principal should be informed of the allegations in order to provide ongoing support and monitoring; and
- Where relevant, make any preparation for the interview of a child by Queensland Police Service and/or the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) at the service

Responding to allegations against educators, including the Nominated Supervisor and volunteers

All services must have a process to respond to complaints and/or allegations of an educator's inappropriate behaviour towards a child/ren. Therefore, if an educator becomes aware of behaviour of another educator that a child or parent considers to be inappropriate, the first educator must report this behaviour in accordance with the designated process without delay.

If a complaint or allegation against an educator meets the threshold of a statutory report (i.e. allegation of sexual abuse or physical abuse) then the above reporting processes must be followed. Complaints or allegations of inappropriate educator's behaviours towards a child/ren should be managed in accordance with educator's misconduct processes incorporating appropriate risk management strategies. Allegations and complaints, which do not meet the threshold for a report to a statutory authority, but do indicate a breach in the code of conduct, will be handled under the *CELC Managing Misconduct* processes and may include consultation with the Diocesan Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office.

Harm or risk of harm to a child caused by self-harm

Where an educator forms a reasonable suspicion that a child has self-harmed or is at risk of self-harm, the first priority is the immediate safety of the child and determining whether the self-injury or risk of self-injury is significant - for example an injury requiring medical attention. The priority in cases of significant self-harm is therefore meeting the immediate medical and psychological needs of the child, which may require the administration of first aid and/or immediate contact with emergency services or mental health services.

The educator then raises the concern of self-harm with the Nominated Supervisor and contact should be made with the child's parent/care-provider, unless doing so places the child at further risk of harm.

Where the educator forms a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of significant harm, as a result of self-harming behaviour AND may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm, (for example refusing to support the child in accessing medical or psychological care), then

a written report must be made in accordance with the reporting processes detailed in above as a concern of neglect.

Harm or risk of harm to a child caused by another child

Where an educator forms a reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by another child, the first priority is the immediate safety of the child, which will include determining whether the effect on the child is significant, for example, an injury requiring medical attention.

Where there is a significant injury or immediate risk of significant injury to a child, the priority is meeting the medical and safety needs of the child, which may require the administration of first aid, immediate contact with emergency services and contacting the child's parent(s) or care-provider(s).

Behaviour between children is managed in accordance with the CELC written processes for the conduct of children, or relevant behaviour support guidelines. In cases where criminal offences have been alleged, for example the serious assault of a child by another child over the age of 10 years, parents and care-providers should be made aware of the option to pursue action through the Queensland Police Service. CELC services will cooperate with any resulting investigation.

Allegations of bullying behaviours, including online behaviours, are managed in accordance with CELC bullying procedures.

Where an educator forms a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of significant harm, as a result of child to child behaviours AND may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm, (for example an inability to provide supervision for the child), then a written report must be made in accordance with the reporting processes detailed above.

Responding to child sexual behaviour

Sexual behaviours of various kinds may be evident in children, particularly in the early years. Some forms of sexual behaviour may be considered developmentally appropriate for the child's age and stage of development. Other behaviours may indicate that the child could have been exposed to inappropriate material or experiences (for example, reports of very young children knowing about and experimenting with oral sex). Please refer to the [Child Protection Guidelines](#) for further resources to assist in identifying age inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Suspicion that a child has been sexually abused may also be formed in some circumstances where a child exhibits concerning sexual behaviour. In these circumstances, a report to the Queensland Police Service is required. Where there may not be a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm a report should also be made to Child Safety Services.

Harm or risk of harm to a child caused by a person not associated with the service or family

There may be some circumstances where an educator becomes aware of a concern that a child has been harmed, or is at risk of harm, by a person not associated with the service or family. As with the broader responses to harm, consideration must first be given to whether the harm or risk of harm is significant and whether there is a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm.

In circumstances where there is a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm, then the parents must be notified of the concerns as soon as possible. Where there is not a parent able and willing to protect the child and there is a reasonable suspicion of significant harm or risk of harm, then the reporting process detailed above must be followed.

Where the risk is immediate, for example the abduction of a child walking to school, then the Queensland Police Service must be contacted immediately.

Responding to concerns that do not meet the threshold for reporting

An employee may identify concerns regarding a child that ultimately do not form a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse, likely sexual abuse or significant harm; however, indicate that without support or intervention a child and/or their family are at risk of entering the child protection system.

These concerns should be raised with the Nominated Supervisor, who may refer the child/and or their family to the appropriate service. This may include referrals to community-based options such as Family and Child Connect. If the child attends a Cairns Catholic Education School, you may need to discuss with your Nominated Supervisor whether the child's school principal should be informed of the allegations in order to provide ongoing support and monitoring. The Child Protection Guidelines provide detail around the options that are available to support children and families.

7. INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The Child Protection Act 1999 allows the sharing of relevant information between prescribed entities and service providers who deliver services to children and families. The purpose of these provisions is to remove barriers to information sharing and help services promote children's wellbeing, address their safety needs and better coordinate services to families.

Who are prescribed entities and service providers?

The following individuals are prescribed entities under the Act:

- Child Safety staff;
- authorised staff in:
 - Community Services and Disability Services in the Department of Community Services, Child Safety and Disability Services;
 - the Departments of Corrective Services, Education and Training and Housing;
- Queensland Health, the Hospital and Health Services and the chief executive officer of the Mater Hospital Brisbane;
- police officers; and
- Principals of non-state schools.

The Act defines a service provider as a prescribed entity, a person providing a service to children and families, a licensee or an independent entity for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child.

According to these definitions in the Act, CELC is not a prescribed entity but would be considered a service provider (s.159D). The Principal of a non-state school is a prescribed entity (ss.159D and 159M).

What is relevant information

- Examples of relevant information that may be shared by the Responsible Person, when permitted by legislation or with the parent or pregnant woman's consent, include information about:
 - the child's name, date of birth, aliases, family and contact details;
 - patterns of attendance at the CELC or attendance at another school or CELC;
 - the child's behaviour and functioning including relationships with staff, volunteers and peers;
 - the child's social and emotional development;
 - the parent's involvement with the child, the CELC or CELC staff;
 - physical, emotional and behavioural indicators of abuse or neglect and any disclosures by the child;
 - any previous concerns about the family's functioning or the child's safety, including suspected harm; and
 - actions implemented by the CELC to monitor or support the child.
- Any information shared by the Responsible Person must always be factual, based on observations or information
- provided to CELC staff, volunteers or visitors and relevant to the investigation, assessment or provision of services.

Sharing information with prescribed entities

The Child Protection Act 1999 allows CELC, as a service provider, to share relevant information with prescribed entities and for those entities to share relevant information with CELC to help CELC or the prescribed entity:

- decide if information about suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or unborn child should be given to Child Safety;
- decide if information about an unborn child should be given to Child Safety;
- help Child Safety offer support to a pregnant woman;
- assess or respond to the health, educational or care needs of a child in need of protection;
- make plans or decisions about, or provide services to, a child in need of protection or their family; or

- offer help and support to a child or family to stop the child becoming a child in need of protection.

Staff should ensure that all requests for information are made in writing including the name of the professional and the legislative authority for making the request. A verbal request can be made initially and then followed with a written request as soon as practicable (i.e. via email)

Conferrals with colleagues and related information sharing

Engaging in appropriate consultation processes is an important element of responding to concerns around the safety and well-being of children, in order that any decision-making process is fully informed.

Educators may confer with colleagues, for example the Nominated Supervisor, in order to establish whether the information to hand may constitute a reasonable suspicion of abuse, harm or staff inappropriate behaviour. This process is encouraged as a means of ensuring the best possible response to a child concern.

Confidentiality is an important element of conferral processes, where information sharing should be limited to appropriate persons and to the extent necessary to respond to the safety and well-being of a child and to give effect to the processes outlined in this document.

Again, the purpose of the conferral process is to assist an educator in determining whether there is a reasonable suspicion of abuse, harm or staff inappropriate behaviour. A Nominated Supervisor, for example, may have additional information about a child or their family, not known by the educator that:

- Provides greater context to the concerns identified by the educator
- Changes the seriousness of the concerns, particularly as to whether harm to a child is “significant”
- Provides greater clarity around whether there is a parent able and willing to protect the child.

In addition to conferring with colleagues, a number of practical tools and resources exist to support educators in their decision making, including the [Queensland Child Protection Guide](#) – an online decision support guide that has been developed to assist professionals to appropriately report or refer families to Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) or other service providers in a timely manner. Please note the Queensland Child Protection Guide only advise whether or not a report to Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs is required.

You may also consult with the **Diocesan Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office**, contact details listed below.

You may wish to discuss with your nominated supervisor whether there is a need to share information with the child’s school if applicable. Section 159MA of the Child Protection Act 1999 allows for entities to share information with each other to decide if they should inform Child Safety about suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or an unborn child.

Confidentiality of notifier details

The Child Protection Act 1999 provides confidentiality for all individuals who report suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or unborn child to Child Safety. The identity of the person who made the child protection report will not be disclosed to any other person unless the person who made the report has given their consent or disclosing the reporter’s information to particular individuals is permitted or required by law.

Protection from liability

The Child Protection Act 1999 also provides protection for any person who, when acting honestly and reasonably: provides information to Child Safety in accordance with mandatory reporting obligations; reports suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or risk of harm to an unborn child; or confers or consults with a colleague. In such cases, the person will:

- be protected from liability in any civil, criminal, administrative or defamation proceedings;
- not have breached any code of ethics or standards of professional conduct;
- not have contravened any other Act, oath or rule of law; and
- will not be liable to disciplinary action.

8. RECORD MANAGEMENT

Why child protection records are important

The notes, records and reports made about child protection concerns are important documents containing significant information about a child and family. Educators and volunteers may be interviewed as part of an investigation or be required to attend court if they have relevant information about a child protection matter. Notes made by staff and volunteers in relation to child protection concerns, including any actions or decisions in response to these concerns, could help staff and volunteers recall critical information during an interview or court proceeding and may be subpoenaed as part of a child protection court proceeding.

Managing child protection records

When recording information about child protection concerns and resulting actions or decisions, staff and volunteers are encouraged to keep in mind the following Do's and Don'ts.

Do

- be objective and only record factual information;
- make notes as soon as possible – the information will be fresh in your mind;
- write down exactly what you saw or heard, noting the date and time;
- include notes on any changes to the child's behaviour including how the child's behaviour has changed and when
- the changes were noticed by staff;
- wherever possible, record verbatim statements made by the child, parent or other person in quotation (“ ”) marks;
- record the full name of the person recording the information and any other people mentioned in the report; and always sign and date the record.

Don't

- express personal opinions about what has been seen or heard;
- record judgements about the parent, child or any other person who may be involved;
- interpret or provide explanations for what was seen or heard; and
- use emotive or suggestive language.

When there is additional information to support a report, such as a child's letter or drawing, a scanned copy of the document can be included in the email containing the report or a note included on the form that the service has further information to support the report which can be provided at interview or via email.

Using reporting and referral forms

Storing Child Protection Records

Request to access or have copies of child protection records

Before acting on any request or subpoena in relation to child protection records consultation should occur the Diocesan Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office.

9. INFORMATION TO THE REGULATORY AUTHORITY

Under the National Law and Regulations, CELC must [notify the regulatory authority](#) of any:

- serious incident (see definitions)
- complaint (see definitions)
- circumstances at the service which pose a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children
- any incident or allegation that physical or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred or is occurring while the child or children are being educated and cared for by the service.

10. GUIDELINES

Preface

These guidelines have been developed to provide information to support the implementation of the Child Protection Processes. These guidelines may be subject to change in line with child protection practice developments and may be subject to customisation to reflect the resources and systems in place.

In general terms the process for responding to and reporting child protection concerns is as follows:

Identify

Identify child protection concerns through recognising the signs of abuse and harm, and through disclosures or receipt of information;

Confer

Seek guidance and support – if necessary, confer with the nominated supervisor, Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office or appropriate colleagues, or use resources such as the [Queensland Child Protection Guide](#) to establish whether a 'reasonable suspicion' has been formed;

Report

Where a reasonable suspicion of abuse, harm or inappropriate behaviour is formed – report the concerns according to the specific processes outlined in this document;

Support

Remain focused on the support needs of the child and liaise with the Nominated Supervisor around any planning or actions that are require

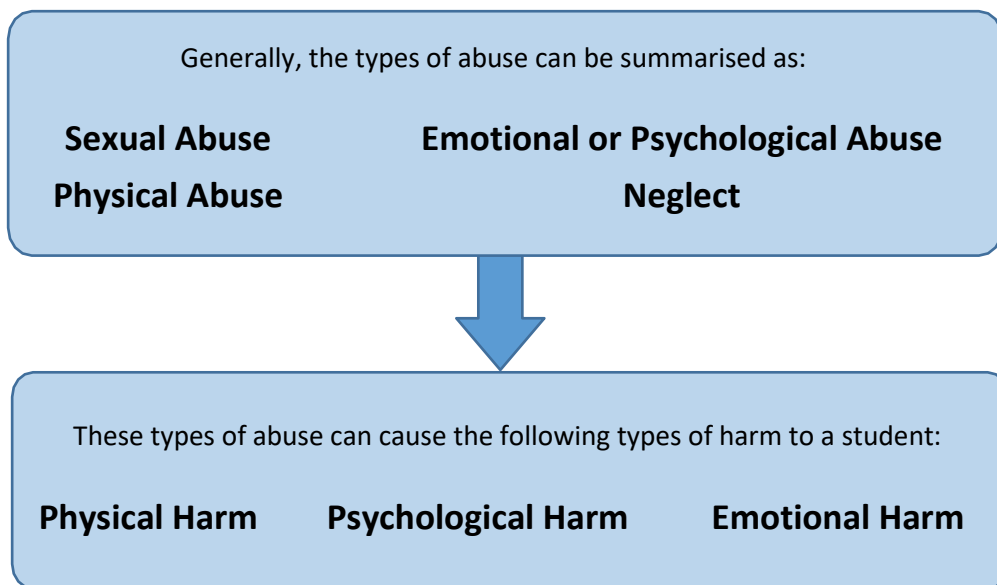
An educator who reports a matter is not responsible for investigation to a stage where final conclusions can be made. Educators are not to undertake investigations beyond satisfying themselves that they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been harmed or may be harmed. Once a report has been made, the educator is not required to take further action, beyond the requirement to continue to exercise a proper duty of care and report according to legislative and organisational obligations.

At no time should an educator “interview” a child to satisfy that they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child has been harmed. Reasonable suspicion of harm is achieved through child disclosures, observations and non-leading clarification.

Understanding abuse and harm

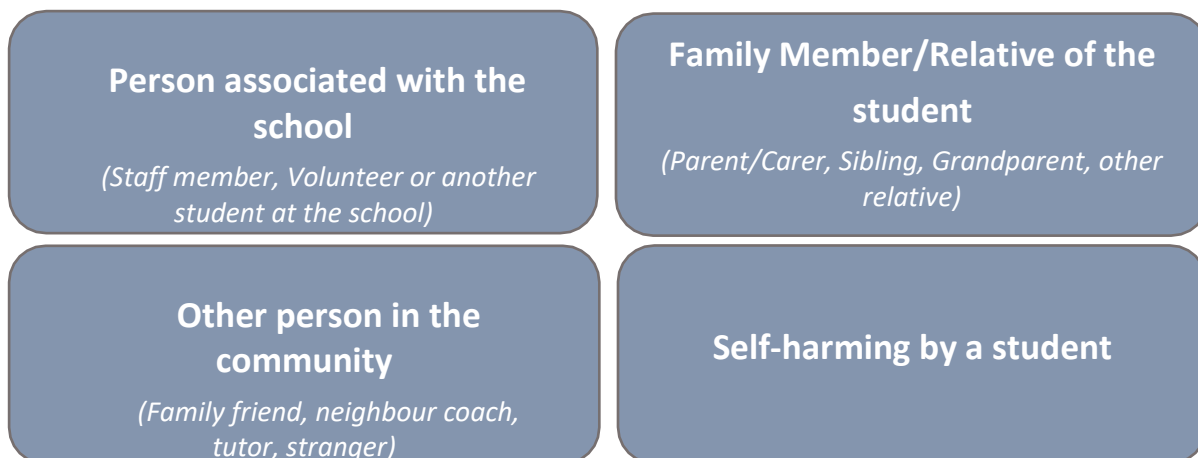
All children have the right to be safe in environments free from abuse and harm. Where this is not the case, adults have a responsibility to act. This part explains the key concepts that underpin the processes for ensuring the safety of child’s, in order to inform the actions staff members must take if they form a reasonable suspicion of abuse, harm or staff inappropriate behaviour towards a child.

As a first step, it is important that staff members have an understanding of what is meant by the terms 'abuse' and 'harm'.



Sources of abuse and harm

Childs can be abused, or experience harm from a number of sources. These include:



Types of Abuse

Sexual Abuse and Likely Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse of a child occurs where a person engages in sexual behaviour with a child, and:

- the other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person; and/or
- the child has less power than the other person; and/or
- there is a significant disparity between the child and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.

Characteristics of a power imbalance include: significant differences in age, developmental ability, authority, influence or some kind of control over the child.

Likely sexual abuse is where it is more probable than not that a child will be sexually abused in the future. One situation where a reasonable suspicion of likely sexual abuse could be formed is where '[grooming](#)' behaviours towards a child are identified.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Sexual Activity between staff members and children.
The involvement of any staff member or volunteer within a service in sexual activity with, or sexual exploitation of, a child is always regarded as sexual abuse.**

What does sexual abuse involve?

Sexual abuse involves an imbalance of power between a child and the other person. The imbalance of power allows force, trickery, emotional bribery, blackmail or emotional pressures to be used against the child to involve him/her in sexual activity or to sexually exploit him/her. Secrecy, the misuse of power and distortion of adult-child relationships may also be involved.

Sexual abuse involving physical contact with a child could include:

- touching, kissing, holding or fondling a child's body in a sexual manner;
- touching, kissing or fondling a child's genital area;
- engaging in or attempting to engage in vaginal or anal intercourse with a child;
- penetrating or attempting to penetrate a child's vagina or anus with a finger or other object;
- engaging or attempting to engage in oral sex with a child; or
- engaging or attempting to engage in masturbation with a child.

It does not matter whether the child is clothed or unclothed whilst sexual abuse involving physical contact takes place. Engagement of a child in sexual acts by duress or through inducements of any kind is considered sexual abuse. Sexual abuse/likely sexual abuse of a child may not necessarily involve physical contact. It could, for example, involve behaviour that occurs in the child's direct presence or that occurs indirectly including through electronic communications. Examples include:

- exposing a sexual body part to a child;
- requesting a child to expose a sexual body part;
- making obscene or sexually explicit remarks to a child;
- sending obscene or sexually explicit material to a child;
- blatant or persistent intrusion into a child's physical privacy;
- voyeurism - covertly observing intimate behaviour that is normally private;
- exposing a child to pornographic films, photographs, magazines or other material;
- having a child pose or perform in a sexually explicit manner;
- exposing a child to a sexual act;
- forcing a child to witness a sexual act; or
- communicating with a child in a sexually intrusive way.

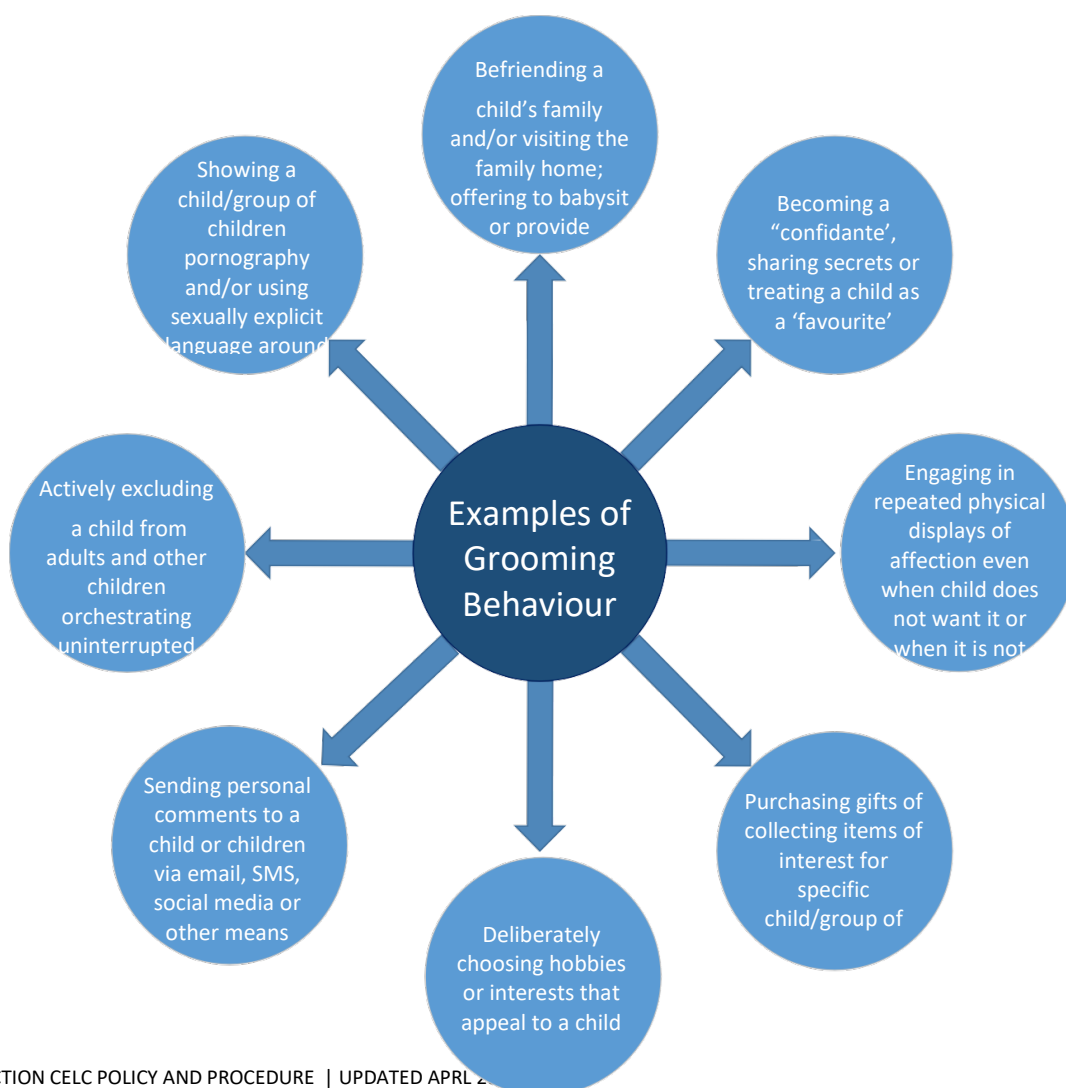
What is Grooming?

Sexual offending against a child is rarely a random act by a stranger. It is commonly based on a relationship with the child that has been formed over time. The abuse is commonly well thought out and planned in advance. Offenders may often take time to 'groom' their victim, often over a lengthy period. They will also often 'groom' the child's parents, care-providers or others who might otherwise protect them from the abuse. This occurs so that the child and his/her parents or care-providers will trust the offender and not suspect any intended wrongdoing.

The establishment of a relationship of trust which is then misused is often very confusing and damaging to the child, who may not even immediately recognise what is happening to them as abuse. Grooming behaviour is unlikely to be recognised when observed as a one-off event, but a pattern of grooming of the intended victim and/or the intended victim's parents or care-providers is likely to be recognised. Grooming will tend to develop in intensity over time. It will also tend to include elements of secrecy and concealment. It is important to be aware of the types of behaviours that can be used in the process of grooming a child or young person, while remembering that some of the behaviours might equally reflect normal interactions based on genuine motives of care and concern. This is the reason that, for staff members, the observance of clear professional boundaries and transparency in the declaration of potential conflicts of interest is a vital part of the protection of children and of the professional integrity of staff members themselves.

Recognition of the grooming process that is used as a preparation for the sexual abuse of a child is an indicator of likely sexual abuse.

Some examples of 'grooming' behaviour could include:



Activity between peers

Sexual activity between children

It is important to note that activity between peers may also be considered abusive, especially if the relationship is coercive or the behaviour forceful, degrading or threatening. Sexual activity between young people under 16 years of age is not automatically considered to be sexual abuse, even though it is unlawful in Queensland. The dynamics and characteristics of the sexual activity is a key consideration. For example, if a young person under the age of 16 years engages in sexual activity with a peer and there is no imbalance of power, coercion or manipulation involved, this may not be considered sexual abuse. On the other hand, if there is a power imbalance, coercion or manipulation in the sexual activity between a young person 16 years and older and another person, this may be considered sexual abuse.

Children sexual behaviour

Suspicion that a child has been sexually abused may also be formed in some cases where a child exhibits concerning sexual behaviour. [Resources](#) such as those published by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs can assist in identifying age-inappropriate sexual behaviour.

<https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/support-victims-abuse/child-abuse/child-sexual-abuse/sexual-behaviour-in-children>

Physical Abuse

What does physical abuse involve?



Physical Abuse refers to non-accidental use of physical force against a child by another person that results in significant harm to the child

Examples of physical abuse include but are not limited to hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, biting, poisoning and female genital mutilation. The definition of physically abusive behaviour extends to the fabrication, exaggeration and inducing of illness symptoms in a child.

A person does not have to intend to physically harm a child to have physically abused them (for example, physical punishment that results in bruising or fractures would generally be considered physical abuse). Physical abuse does not always leave visible marks or injuries. Physical abuse can result in significant physical harm (for example, fractures, burns or bruises) and/or emotional/psychological harm (for example, hyper vigilance, depression or persistent state of fear and anxiety) to a child.

When considering if a child is at unacceptable risk of suffering harm caused by physical abuse by a person, a range of factors are considered. Examples include:

- the person's propensity towards violence,
- the degree of control a person has over their own behaviour or the behaviour of others,
- the physical force used and
- the ability and willingness of another adult to act protectively to prevent the physical abuse.

Examples of situations which give rise to an unacceptable risk of physical abuse include, though are not limited to:

- domestic violence involving the throwing of objects; or
- situations in which a baby is shaken but not obviously injured.

Emotional/Psychological Abuse



Emotional or psychological abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child which causes severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development

What does emotional or psychological abuse involve?

Examples of emotional abuse include but are not limited to constant criticism, public humiliation, belittling, constant yelling, withholding praise and affection, excessive teasing, scapegoating, rejection, hostility, exposure of a child to domestic and family violence and conveying that a child is worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as the child meets the needs of another person.

Emotional or psychological abuse may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of reasonable exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. Emotional abuse can result in significant harm to a child, for example, it can result in significant emotional / psychological harm such as depression, attachment disorders, chronic feeling of fear/anxiety or self-harm.

A child is considered to be at unacceptable risk of suffering harm caused by emotional abuse in a number of situations for example the frequent, chronic and entrenched verbal criticisms and hostility directed at the child by another person.

Neglect



Neglect is the persistent failure for a child's basic physical and emotional necessities of life such that the child's health and development are affected

What does neglect involve?

Neglect is the persistent failure to provide for a child's basic physical and emotional necessities of life such that the child's health and development are affected. Basic needs include food, housing, adequate clothing; personal hygiene and hygienic living conditions; health care, including the timely provision of medical treatment and dental care; and adequate supervision and protection needed for the child's optimal growth and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Neglect can result in a significant impact on a child's physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing. It can result in significant physical harm such as serious injury or death. For example, failure to supervise a child may result in a child ingesting poison or getting seriously injured or getting burnt. Neglect can also result in serious emotional/psychological harm such as attachment disorders, failure to thrive in infants and significant developmental delays.

A child is considered to be at unacceptable risk of neglect in situations such as severe or chronic substance misuse, significant mental illness, lack of parenting skills and addiction to gambling by the child's primary parent or care-provider inhibiting their capacity to provide sufficient care.

More information around understanding child abuse and harm can be found on the [Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs](#) website.

Significant Harm

Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. Harm refers to the detrimental effect or impact of abuse/neglect on a child. For statutory intervention to occur, there must be information to suggest:

- that the child has suffered, is suffering or is at any unacceptable risk of suffering **significant** harm; and
- there may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm.

Harm can be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances. This series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances is often referred to as "cumulative harm".

What is "unacceptable risk" of harm?

A child is considered to be at unacceptable risk of suffering harm if there are grounds to suspect that unless someone intervenes to prevent it, the actions of a person will result in, or is likely to result, in a detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, emotional and/or psychological well-being.

Relationship between abuse and harm

In essence, abuse is the action towards a child, and harm is the impact of that action on the child. Children can experience multiple types of abuse, which in turn can cause multiple types of harm.

| | Physical abuse | Emotional abuse | Sexual abuse | Neglect |
|----------------|--|---|---|--|
| Types of Abuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting Punching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejection • Persistent hostility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual exploitation • Penetration • Exposure to Pornography | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate supervision • Poor hygiene/nutrition |

| | Physical (refers to body) | Emotional (ability to express emotions) | Psychological (mind & cognitive processes) |
|---------------|--|--|--|
| Types of Harm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruising • Fractures • Internal injuries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Hypervigilance • Non-accidental self-injury (also referred to as self-harm) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and developmental delays • Impaired self-image |

Recognising Abuse and Harm

Recognising the signs of Abuse and Harm

There are many signs that might lead staff members to have concerns about a child. It is important to keep an open mind when encountering these signs, as their presence does not necessarily mean that the child is experiencing harm caused by abuse and/or neglect. However, they may identify concerns for a child and indicate that further consideration and monitoring is the appropriate response.

It is important to remember:

- the signs are generally more significant if they are severe, form a pattern, and/or show frequency
- the younger the child involved, the greater the risk
- all factors need to be considered including the child's circumstances and family context.

Identifying the signs of Abuse and Harm

Observations of child behaviour

In general terms, something may be wrong if you observe child behaviour such as:

- nervousness/withdrawal;
- passivity/excessive compliance;
- evidence of deterioration in peer relationships and/or generally poor peer relationships;
- trouble concentrating at school/unexpected drop in school academic performance;
- frequent absences from school without substantiated or acceptable explanations;
- being extremely aggressive, stealing or running away;
- evidence of extreme or continually aroused emotional states;
- out of character behaviour;
- behaviour that is not age appropriate or typical of peer behaviour;
- in younger children: separation anxiety, changed eating patterns;
- in older children: drug/alcohol use, sexual promiscuity, self-harm or reckless and risk-taking behaviour.
- In relation to possible harm or risk of harm to a child that may be a result of sexual, physical or emotional abuse and/or neglect you may observe the following:

Physical

- bruises or lacerations, especially on face, head and neck;
- burns/scalds;
- multiple injuries or bruises, especially over time;
- fractures, dislocations, twisting injuries;
- explanations offered by the child not consistent with the injury or the injury is unable to be explained by the child;
- A child hiding injuries
- repeated injuries with a recurring or similar explanation.

Neglect

- delay in achieving developmental milestones;
- medical or therapeutic needs not attended to;
- poor personal hygiene leading to social isolation;
- scavenging for/stealing food; lack of adequate school lunches;
- extreme seeking of adult affection;
- flat and superficial way of relating.

Domestic violence

- difficulties in eating and sleeping;
- hyper vigilance;
- regression to age-inappropriate behaviours;
- developmental delays;
- child is over-protective of a parent;
- excessively controlling or aggressive/violent behaviour;
- abuse of siblings/parent.

Emotional/psychological

- inability to value self and others;
- lack of trust in people;
- statements from the child e.g. “I’m bad; I was born bad”;
- extreme attention-seeking behaviours.

Sexual

- direct or indirect disclosures of abuse;
- concerning sexual behaviour and/or age-inappropriate sexual knowledge;
- use of threats, coercion or bribery to force other children into sexual acts;
- sexual themes/fears expressed in artwork, written work or play;
- repeated urinary tract infections, especially in younger girls;
- physical trauma to buttocks, breasts, genitals, lower abdomen, thighs;
- unexplained accumulation of money/gifts;
- presence of sexually-transmitted infections, especially in younger children

More information around recognising the signs of abuse can be found on the [Department responsible for Child Safety Services Website](#).

Forming a reasonable suspicion

A reasonable suspicion of abuse or harm is a suspicion that would be formed by a reasonable person based on a reasonable view of the evidence available to them. In other words, a reasonable suspicion is an objectively justifiable suspicion that is based on specific facts or circumstances. When a reasonable suspicion is formed, a staff member must act in accordance with the processes outlined in this document.

Generally, the ways in which a staff member may form a reasonable suspicion are as follows:



- A child makes a direct disclosure about another person's behaviour (see Section 5.1)
- A parent or any person reports information of concern about a child and/or another person's behaviour (this information may come from another child, relative, friend, acquaintance of the child, or sometimes could be anonymous)



- Direct observation of abusive or inappropriate behaviour towards a child
- Relevant observations (appearance, behaviours, and situations) are witnessed, or other relevant firsthand knowledge is gained.

Additionally, section 13C of the *Child Protection Act 1999* offers some guidance around forming a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm:

- Whether there are detrimental effects on a child's body or psychological/emotional state, or are likely to become so the future
- The nature and severity of the detrimental effects and the likelihood that they will continue
- The age of the child

A staff member may **confer** with a colleague as part of the decision-making process as to whether they have formed a reasonable suspicion

It should be noted that at times information may come to a staff member’s attention indirectly (e.g. perhaps third hand). In these cases, the following should be considered:

- it is not the role of the staff member or of the school to investigate, confirm or substantiate the validity of the information;
- in some cases, it may be appropriate to seek additional information to clarify the situation, to the extent necessary to determine any action that may be required under these processes;
- if the information received gives rise to a staff member forming a reasonable suspicion of harm to a child resulting from abuse or neglect, from any source, the staff member must follow the relevant reporting processes described in this document
- if the information received by the staff member suggests inappropriate behaviour by a staff member towards a child, then the staff member must follow the relevant reporting processes described in this document



NOTE: Staff members must not photograph child’s injuries or audio/ video record the discussion with the child – this is the role of Police.

Details about how the information came to the staff member’s attention should be included in any report made under these processes.

Responding to a disclosure

Educators are often the first people a child may tell when they are feeling unsafe, therefore it is important for staff members to be aware of how children/young people disclose and how to respond in the most appropriate manner. If a child tells a staff member about being abused or harmed:



- **Move to a suitable environment**, free of distractions. **Be calm and patient** - allow for the child to be heard.
- **Let the child use their own words** - avoid asking leading questions.
- **Avoid “quizzing” the child about details of the abuse.**
- **Don’t be afraid of saying the ‘wrong’ thing.** Listening supportively is more important than what you say.



- Reassure the child that **it is Okay to tell you** what’s been happening.
- **Address any concerns about the child’s safety.**
- Reassure the child s/he is **not at fault and is not the cause of any distress** you may feel.



- Respect that the child **may only reveal some details.**
- **Acknowledge the child’s bravery and strength.**
- **Avoid making promises you can’t keep** - manage the child or young person’s expectations.
- **Explain** to the child that in order for them to be safe **you will need to report their experience to someone else**

Adapted from an AIFS infographic: [Responding to children and young people’s disclosure of abuse](#)

Remember - it is not a CELC staff member’s role to investigate a suspicion of an unacceptable risk of abuse/ harm from any source, rather to report a reasonable suspicion of abuse or harm in accordance with the child protection processes. It is the role of officers of Queensland Police Service and qualified officers of the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs to investigate and collect evidence in the required circumstances, such as conducting interviews with a child.

Only ask enough questions to help you decide whether you have honest and reasonable grounds to form a suspicion of harm/abuse or an unacceptable risk of harm/abuse. Be aware that any questioning beyond this could cause distress and confusion and could interfere with the integrity of any subsequent investigation undertaken by relevant authorities.

As soon as possible after the disclosure, make detailed relevant notes about any signs, disclosures, injuries, and behaviours that caused you to be concerned for the child’s safety or wellbeing.

Any response must be focussed on the best interests of the child. As such, the immediate support needs of a child are the priority and staff members must act promptly to raise the concerns with the Nominated Supervisor.

Considering whether there is a parent able and willing to protect a child

Where there is no parent able and willing to protect a child from significant harm, then the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs intervenes to ensure the safety of the child. This is therefore an important consideration when determining if a matter should be reported Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.

A parent must be able AND willing to protect the child from significant harm.



In some cases, a **parent may be willing to protect their child from significant harm, but they may not be able to do so**, for example, the parent may be suffering from a severe mental health condition, physical illness or injury; or where existing court orders precludes the parent from taking protective action.



A parent may be able but not willing to protect their child, for example, where the parent continues in a relationship with a person who is sexually abusing their child and does not cease contact with the abusive person.



In some circumstances, **a parent may be both unable AND unwilling** to protect their child from significant harm. An example of this is a parent who has significant substance misuse issues and continues a relationship with someone who sexually abuses or is violent to their child.

In some cases, parents will seek to minimise or reduce the significance of harm suffered by a child (or that the child is at risk of suffering) and this may indicate the parent may not be able and willing to protect the child from harm. For example, this includes a parent minimising serious self-harming behaviours exhibited by their child or failing to recognise the serious and/or long-term impacts of a child’s medical needs or significant developmental delays.

Forming a reasonable suspicion around whether a parent may be able and willing is based on a number of factors, including:

- the observations and knowledge the Nominated Supervisor and staff members may have of the family circumstances;
- disclosures made by a child;
- information provided by another person.

A staff member is not expected to conduct an investigation to ascertain if a parent is able and willing to act protectively, rather must act on the information available to them. Staff members may confer with colleagues to assist in their decision making.

NOTE: If a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse is formed a report to the Queensland Police Service is to be made even if there is a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm.

11. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| TERM | MEANING |
|---|---|
| Child Protection Guide (CPG) | <p>The CPG is intended to complement rather than replace an individual professional's critical thinking and does not prohibit a professional from any course of action he/she believes is appropriate. The CPG is a resource to help Supervisors decide about where and to whom to report or refer a child and his/her family to ensure they receive the supports and services they need in a timely manner.</p> <p>Remind this guide does not provide advice on when matters should be reported to Queensland Police</p> |
| Complaint Notification | <p>Notification to the regulatory authority of a complaint that alleges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by a service |
| Family and Child Connect (FaCC) | <p>Provides information and advice to people seeking assistance for children and families where there are concerns about their wellbeing. The service is designed to support vulnerable families by assessing their needs and referring them the most appropriate support services. CELC educators must seek the family's consent prior to referring them to FaCC</p> |
| Harm | <p>Harm is defined under the Child Protection Act 1999 as 'any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing'.</p> <p>Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect, or sexual abuse or exploitation. Harm can be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance, or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances</p> |
| Inappropriate Staff Behaviour towards a child/ren | <p>Inappropriate behaviour is behaviour that breaches the staff code of conduct and is viewed as a professional boundary violation involving a child/ren.</p> |
| Reportable Suspicion | <p>A reportable suspicion is defined at s13E(2) of the Child Protection Act 1999 as a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them from harm.</p> |
| Reasonable Suspicion | <p>A reasonable suspicion is a suspicion that would be formed by a reasonable person based on a reasonable view of the evidence available to them. In other words, a reasonable suspicion is an objectively justifiable suspicion that is based on specific facts or circumstances.</p> |
| Serious Incident | <p>A serious incident is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death of a child while attending a service, or following an incident while attending a service. • Any incident involving serious injury, trauma or illness of a child while being educated and cared for at an education and care service which a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner, or for which the child attended or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital. <p>This might include (but is not limited to), for example, whooping cough, a broken limb, sexual assault, witnessing violence or an anaphylactic reaction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident at the service premises where the attendance of emergency services was sought, or should have been sought. |

| TERM | MEANING |
|--------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child: – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for ○ appears to have been taken or removed from the service premises in a way that breaches the National Regulations, or ○ is mistakenly locked in or locked out of any part of the service premises. |
| Medical Attention | Medical attention includes a visit to a registered medical practitioner or attendance at a hospital. |
| Emergency Services | Emergency services may include ambulance, fire brigade, police and state emergency services. |

12. BREACHES OF THE POLICY

Disciplinary action will be taken by the Catholic Early and Care against any educators found to have breached this policy.

Action will be appropriate to the breach and may include: an official warning and note on the individual's personnel file; a formal apology; counselling; demotion; transfer; or suspension or dismissal for very serious matters

13. ENQUIRIES

Catholic Early Learning and Care Executive Director admin@cclc.catholic.org.au

Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office

Telephone: 40509765

safeguarding@cns.catholic.edu.au

Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

Regional Intake Service Far North Queensland

FNQRISIntake@communities.qld.gov.au

Telephone: 1300684062

Queensland Police

Child Protection Investigation Unit

cairns.cpiu@police.qld.gov.au 40308278

14. SEE ALSO

- Education and Care Services National Regulations (version December 2021)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011
- Family and Child Commission Act 2014
- Risk Management Code of Practice 2000
- Child Protection Act 1999 –reform amendment Act 2014
- Evidence Act 1977 [current 2016]
- Guide to Educating and Care Service National Law 2010
- Guide to the National Quality Framework
Commission for Children and Young People Act 2008
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards 2019 (pending Edition 2 approval)

- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000
- Review of Child Protection Law Recommendations from QLD Law Reform 2015
- Queensland Government Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs
- Family and Child Connect www.familychildconnect.org.au

15. APPENDICES

CELC Self Harm Response Form
CELC Statutory Authority Report
CELC Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy
Regulatory Authority Notifications
CELC Record of Concern Reporting Form (ROC)

16. APPROVAL



Alison Forster
Director
Catholic Early Learning and Care

Date: 08/04/2025

An educator identifies a concern regarding a Child

The educator may confer with a colleague, or use resources such as the Child Protection Guide, in order to determine whether the concern forms a reasonable suspicion that the student has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm and may not have a parent able and willing to protect the student from harm

A reasonable suspicion is formed by the educator

The educator completes a report with the assistance of the Nominated Supervisor or Operations Manager (if the report relates to the behaviour of the supervisor). A report may be submitted via the Child Safety Online reporting program

The Nominated Supervisor or Operations Manager confirms with Child Safety Services that the report has been received and informs the first educator

A reasonable suspicion is NOT formed by the educator

The educator refers the concerns to the Nominated Supervisor

The Nominated Supervisor considers any support and/or referral as appropriate in the circumstances

Educators are encouraged to make mandatory reports to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) with the assistance of their Nominated Supervisor (as described above). However, if a educator forms a 'reportable suspicion' about a child the educator must satisfy themselves, as a matter of urgency, that the report to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) has occurred. This can be achieved by confirming with the Nominated Supervisor or Operations Manager that Child Safety have received the report.

If an educator forms a reportable suspicion and is not able to progress a report through the process detailed in the flowchart above, they are able to meet their mandatory reporting obligation through the reporting directly to Child Safety Services via the online reporting form.

A copy of the report needs to be forward to the Diocesan Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office

IMPORTANT NOTE

If a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse is formed a report to the Queensland Police Service is to be made even if there may be a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm