

# MANDATORY REPORTING

## BRUNSWICK EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY

### Rationale:

- All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. As teachers, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidences involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact, and to report instances that we believe involve physical abuse, sexual abuse or serious neglect.

### Aims:

- To ensure that children's' rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.
- To ensure that there are clearly understood responsibilities and processes within the school.

### Implementation:

- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect.
- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure. A summary is readily available in the operations manual.
- Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually.
- All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Assistant Principal or welfare coordinator/s.
- The Principal will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.
- If a belief has been formed by a staff member that sexual or physical abuse has taken place a "Mandatory Reporting Information Sheet" available from the Principal must be completed and filed in the Principal's office.
- The teacher and/or the Principal class officer will contact the Department of Human Services by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification on:

**(03) 9471 1644 or after school hours crisis line 131278**

- Members of the Department of Human Services, or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification, will interview staff and children only in the presence of a Principal class member or his/her nominee.
- All "Mandatory Reporting Information Sheets" remain filed in the Principal's office.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

- All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.
- Staff is advised to document details in writing as to the time, place, circumstance and description of the incident/events.
- Hard copies must be kept of computer-generated documentation.
- No judgement/assumptions should be included. Factual information and observations must be dated.
- Patterns of behaviour should be established – use dates, track behaviour. Include attendance, explained and unexplained absences.
- Make sure that notes in diaries, etc are collated into useable documentation for the file.
- All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.
- While only mandated by law to report incidents of physical and sexual abuse, and neglect, teachers are also encouraged to report incidents of emotional abuse or neglect.
- Principal class or welfare coordinators will be responsible for supporting staff who have been involved in mandatory reporting incidents.
- **To keep this information safe and able to be retrieved years later, hand all documentation and information over to the principal who will secure it safely.**

### **Evaluation:**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2003