Responding to abuse and neglect
Education and care training
Induction for volunteers
Housekeeping / Emergency procedures

Emergency procedures

Bathroom/s

Break time

Switch off or silent mobile phones

Actively participate
Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect the traditional custodians whose ancestral lands we are meeting upon today.

We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to country.

We also pay respect to the cultural authority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people visiting or attending from other areas of Australia present here.
Introduction
Consider your own and others’ wellbeing

This training covers sensitive and challenging issues

Talk about individuals anonymously (children or adults)

Not a forum for personal issues – wait for an opportunity to discuss your concerns outside of the session

Recognise the value of hearing all points of view – and agreeing to disagree

If you feel frustration or anger, manage these emotions positively by waiting for an opportunity to discuss your concerns outside of the session
Aims

To introduce you to

• some of the circumstances that may make children and young people vulnerable to harm

• what you are expected to do if you have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of children and young people

• your legal responsibilities as a mandated notifier

• the process of making a mandatory report of child abuse and neglect

• the boundaries of appropriate ways of relating with children and young people
The following slides will help you to understand a little about the issues that can affect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
What should you expect to see in children and young people’s behaviour

Generally children and young people should be

- happy
- healthy
- socialising normally
- doing what is expected of them developmentally
- attending preschool or school regularly

The absence of any of the above is reason for concern or further action
Children and young people’s vulnerability to harm is increased if their parents face

- drug and alcohol abuse
- mental health problems
- gambling addiction
- physical or intellectual disability
- social isolation
- being a victim of abuse, neglect or family violence
- extreme poverty
- severe trauma
- being a teenage parent
Children and young people’s vulnerability to harm may also be increased through

• age
  (the younger the more vulnerable)

• disability
  (particularly intellectual disability)

• emotional deprivation
  (already abused or neglected children)

• isolation and disadvantage
  (children in care, refugees, new arrivals, non English speaking, remote community, international exchange students)
Being a mandated notifier

Sometimes your concerns about children and young people’s situations will mean you will form a suspicion on reasonable grounds that abuse or chronic neglect is occurring.

The legislation

The Children’s Protection Act 1993 outlines your responsibilities.
Definitions of abuse and neglect

Look at the definitions of abuse and neglect.

Do you have any questions about any of these definitions?
Indicators of abuse, neglect and family violence

pages 5 and 6

• The key message about indicators is to recognise patterns and clusters of behaviours

• The best way to recognise clusters is to always consult with the nominated site leader and others working with the child/young person
Suspicion on reasonable grounds to report child abuse and neglect

- a child/young person tells you that they have been abused
- a child/young person tells you they know someone who has been abused (the child may be referring to themselves)
- someone tells you of the abuse who is in a position to provide reliable information (perhaps a relative, friend, neighbour or sibling of the child/young person)
- your own observation of the behaviour of a particular child/young person and/or injuries, or your knowledge of the child generally leads you to suspect that abuse is occurring
- your own observations about the behaviour of the child/young person’s adult caregiver/s gives you cause to suspect that a child is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected
How should you respond to your concerns about children and young people?

**You are not expected to act alone**

You are volunteering within a professional community whose job it is to support you in your role. This includes giving you guidance on how to respond to your concerns.

Always seek guidance from the **nominated site leader.**
Concerns

1. You may have observed one or more of the indicators discussed earlier or you may have heard something from the child/young person or their parent/caregiver that causes you concern

2. You suspect on reasonable grounds that you need to make a mandatory report about abuse or neglect

Volunteer’s action = Talk with your nominated site leader

- They will listen to your concerns and advise you about what to do next
- Your role as a volunteer means you are supported by professionals at the site in meeting your responsibilities as a mandated notifier
Why you are advised not to act alone

Making a notification about abuse or neglect is a serious action that may have repercussions for

- the child/young person
- their parents/caregivers
- the staff at the site (who must continue to support and work with the child/young person, their parents /caregivers as well as liaise with other agencies)
- you, as you continue to support the child/young person
Working as part of a team means

- the mandatory notification will be the most accurate and detailed description of the child/young person’s situation possible and therefore will be more likely to result in appropriate intervention

- everyone can receive the emotional support or guidance they need, most importantly the child/young person

- the site can protect its community if it anticipates some kind of backlash from parents/caregivers

- the site can ensure that proper records are kept and shared with the right people about a child/young person’s situation so that their needs continue to be met sensitively
How should you respond if a child or young person approaches you and begins to talk to you directly about abuse or neglect?

pages 7 to 9
Responding to children and young people

Leading questions
• can usually be answered by a ‘yes’ or ‘no’
• they tend to offer information  *(put words in people’s mouths)*

Open questions
• *invite* information and allow the individual to say what they wish to say
• keep the conversation open and are rarely able to be answered with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’
What if a child/young person asks me not to do anything or talk with anyone

Depending on the situation disclosed and the age of the child/young person consider saying

*You trusted me to tell me about your situation. I want you to trust me now to find the best help I can for you. I’d be letting you down and breaking the law if I kept this a secret*
How to finish a discussion like this with a child/young person

If the child/young person has directly disclosed abuse consider saying

Thank you for talking with me, I’m really pleased you’ve told me about what’s happened. I’m going to get someone to help us decide what to do next.

If the child/young person hasn’t disclosed anything directly consider saying

Thank you for talking with me. If you ever feel worried or unhappy or afraid it’s important to talk with me again and if I’m not here you should talk to...[suggest a staff member you think the child/young person knows].
What if I think I can’t handle the conversation

It is best if you can manage your emotions for the sake of the child/young person. Try to stay calm and consider saying

Thank you for starting to tell me this - I think it’s going to really help us if I get someone to join us so we can hear what you want to say and between us we may know the best way to help. Would you like to suggest a staff member?
Can anyone stop you from making a mandatory report

No!

As a mandated notifier, no one can compromise or interfere with your responsibility to report suspected abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Report Line

It is highly recommended that you work together with the nominated site leader
Do

- respect the enormity of what is being shared with you
- listen with care, show care and only ask open questions
- be patient, don’t rush them or yourself
- write down what you’ve been told
- speak with the nominated site leader to help decide the next actions
- look after yourself

Don’t

- stop the child/young person from talking, act scared or shocked
- doubt the child (question the validity of their story)
- threaten to harm or punish the perpetrator
- promise that you will keep it a secret
- promise that everything will be fine, they will be safe, happy, better
- ask leading questions or interview others (investigate matters further)
- leave the child/young person alone or let them leave the site if you are worried about their immediate safety
Making a report to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL)

*Child Abuse Report Line  13 14 78*

• After you and the nominated site leader have discussed your concerns the principal/director will be informed that a mandatory report is going to be made

• The nominated site leader will refer to checklists that help ensure you have all the information required to make a notification

• Once all the relevant information is gathered and noted the call will be made to the Child Abuse Report Line
# Mandatory Notification Record

Please click check boxes to answer "YES"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Child / Young Person Including Also Known As</th>
<th>Type Text Here</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOB: Type Text Here Year Level (if applicable)</td>
<td>Type Text Here Name of Site Type Text Here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal:</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torres Strait Island:</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student with Disability:</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under the Guardianship of the Minister:</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Notifier:</td>
<td>Type Text Here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names of others contributing to Notification:</td>
<td>Type Text Here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Notification:</td>
<td>Type Date Here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Related</th>
<th>Non-Family Related</th>
<th>Type of Notification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abuse ☐ YES</td>
<td>Adult ☐ YES</td>
<td>E-notification ☐ YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Employee/ Volunteer contractor at the site) YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect ☐ YES</td>
<td>Minor ☐ YES</td>
<td>Phone Call to Child abuse report line ☐ YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Child/young person at the site) YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional information if relevant (for example advice received in conversation with CARL)
Type Text Here. Document will expand to accommodate the size of comment.

Principal / Director’s / Manager’s name and signature: Type Text Here

HS This is a template. Print and store securely (locked file). Do not save an electronic copy. Do not store in student’s school file.

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How is your identity protected

The Child Abuse Report Line will not tell the parents/caregivers who made a notification
What happens if you don’t notify
New defence provisions for mandated notifiers
In summary

Your responsibility as a volunteer is to share your concerns as soon as possible about children and young people with the nominated site leader so that

- action can be taken at the site to support the child and family
- you can be supported in making a mandatory notification to the Child Abuse Report Line if abuse or neglect is suspected
This document describes the appropriate use of protective and caring touch when working with children and young people.

It also describes the relationship boundaries expected of staff and volunteers in government and non-government education and care environments and their responsibilities to report inappropriate adult behaviour.
Professional boundaries

Look at pages 11-13 in your Volunteer’s Handbook and read the information on maintaining professional boundaries.
Scenario

- Children report that the teacher has given some of them presents. These range from lollies, to packets of textas and iTunes vouchers
- One of the children often cuddles the teacher and sits on their lap
- The teacher uses their mobile phone to film some of the children
- The teacher has organised with the parents of one of the students to provide extra tutoring at home and the site leader is not aware of this
Every adult working in an education and care environment is expected to report any inappropriate conduct or behaviour involving adults and children/young people immediately. This must happen no matter what position or authority the person has at the site — teacher, principal, grounds person, canteen worker, school support officer, volunteer, visitor, pastoral care worker, student on a placement — anyone.
One of the ways safety is maintained in education and care sites is by requiring that all staff and volunteers undertake a DCSI Child-related employment screening (relevant history screening).

If you are unaware of this requirement or the process involved you should speak with the site staff ASAP.
The Independent Education Inquiry

The SA Royal Commission 2012-2013 conducted by Bruce M Debelle AO QC

Recommendations

• Information sharing
• Prevention
• Good practice
The most important message is....

prevent it happening in the first place
Core messages

• If children or young people share concerning personal information with you, do your best to respond in a supportive way. Showing you care and taking action is the most important thing. (You are not expected to be an expert at asking open questions)

• All concerns about children, young people or adults at the site should be discussed with the nominated site leader immediately

• Confidentiality is critical. Respect the sensitivity of the observations or personal information you have
Counselling support for adults

Adults Surviving Child Abuse
1300 657 380
www.asca.org.au

Lifeline
13 11 14
www.lifeline.org.au

Relationships Australia
1300 364 277
www.relationships.org.au

Support for children and young people

Kids Helpline
1800 55 1800
www.kidshelp.com.au

Youth Beyondblue
1300 22 46 36
www.youthbeyondblue.com
Any final questions?

Enjoy your volunteering with children and young people and the contribution you make to their safety, wellbeing and learning. It is hugely appreciated.