



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about the health and safety of the St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls staff and students, as well as the appropriate conduct of the School's staff and volunteers. All children have a right to be protected from harm and schools and Staff Members owe a 'duty of care' to all students at the School. Schools have a special responsibility to protect children when they are on school premises and also to intervene when they believe the welfare of a child is at risk outside the School.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the School Community at St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls. This includes students, teachers, grounds staff, boarding house staff, bus drivers, canteen staff, parents volunteering their services, third parties invited to run an excursion or incursion. It covers information about the reporting of child abuse or neglect and mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse.

3. BACKGROUND

St Hilda's is committed to the care, safety and protection of all children attending our school.

This document explains the actions to be taken by staff to protect children in circumstances where abuse is suspected or when allegations of child abuse are made against staff, children or other people in the community. Procedures for reporting sexual abuse are made in accordance with the mandatory reporting legislation.

4. DEFINITIONS

Child Abuse and Neglect - maltreatment of a person under the age of 18 years. It is the result of action or inaction on the part of a person who has responsibility to care for a child resulting in harm or injury to the child. The harm may include delayed physical and/or intellectual development. The maltreatment experienced is normally described in five categories. Each category of maltreatment is described by a range of indicators. Descriptions of these indicators are provided in 7.13 of this Policy.

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Psychological
- Neglect

Physical abuse - occurs when a child has experienced severe and/or persistent ill-treatment. It can include, but is not limited by injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and fractures caused by a range or acts including beating, shaking, illicit administration of alcohol and other drugs, attempted suffocation, excessive discipline or physical punishment.

Emotional abuse - is a sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, confusing, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to have a reduced capacity to experience a range of emotions, to express emotion

appropriately and to modulate their emotional experience. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to be fearful, withdrawn and/or resentful, distressed and despairing.

Sexual abuse - covers a wide range of behaviour or activities that expose or subject a child to sexual activity that is exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level. These behaviours include observation or involvement with inappropriate fondling of a child's body, making a child touch an adult's genitalia, showing pornographic material or sexual acts to a child, and sexual penetration of the child. Harm from sexual abuse may include significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infections and impaired emotional and psychological development.

Psychological abuse - is the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, isolating, neglecting, discrediting, misleading, disregarding, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.

Neglect - is the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. These include adequate supervision, adequate food or shelter, suitable clothing, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial care and emotional security. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic, and can result in detrimental effects on the child or young person's social psychological, educational or physical development and/or physical injury. Neglect should be considered in the context of physical, emotional or psychological abuse.

5. LEGISLATION

- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008
- Criminal Code Act (1913)
- Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006 *
- (changes to s204B of The Criminal Code)
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004
- * The Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006 is the legislation in Western Australia that protects children under the age of 16, or that the offender believes is under the age of 16, from an adult who uses electronic communications with the intent to procure the child to engage in sexual activity; or to expose the child to any indecent matter.

6. POLICY

All staff have an important role in the identification and reporting of child abuse and the provision of support and assistance to children who have been abused. Child protection and the prevention of child abuse is a shared community responsibility. This policy recognises that the best interests of children will be met by collaborating with or engaging the expertise of other government agencies or non-government departments in accordance with existing protocols.

6.1 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES

The School is diligent about thorough screening, training and supervision process through the police clearance activated as part of the Teachers Registration Board requirement and the Working with Children legislation. The recruitment and selection practices are also applied to volunteers and contractors. The Principal and all Managers must confirm that all St Hilda's employees, volunteers, visitors and external providers in child-related work have applied for or hold a valid Working with Children Check.

6.2 TEACHER REGISTRATION & WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

All teaching staff are required, through the Teacher Registration Board (TRB), to have a police clearance. The Working with Children (WWC) legislation requires them to have a WWC Check.

All non-teaching staff are also required to have a WWC Check if their usual duties involve contact with children.

Volunteers who are not parents and have contact with children are also required to have a WWC Check and a National Police Clearance. Volunteers who are parents are exempt from getting a WWC Check, unless on an overnight camp. However, those who undertake a professional role in the School are required to have a National Police Clearance and/or WWC Check.

6.3 CHILD PROTECTION PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

All teaching and non-teaching staff who have contact with children must complete the Child Protection professional learning program. At recruitment stage, the School confirms evidence of Mandatory Reporting Training. The School will provide relevant training if it has not previously been completed. This means that on Induction, staff will be advised about the Child Protection Policy. During the employment period, they will be required to attend refresher courses about updates on Mandatory Reporting for Child Sexual Abuse and the non-mandatory reporting for all other forms of abuse.

6.4 PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Preventive programs are part of the health and wellbeing curriculum, delivered through the Health and Physical Education curriculum in the Senior School and a range of social and emotional learning programs in the Junior School. Protective behaviours are part of the school curriculum, so that students are empowered to recognise and report abuse, understand power in relationships, and develop seeking help and other appropriate protective strategies. It is important that all members of the school community are focused on preventing the opportunities for all forms of abuse.

6.5 CONFIDENTIALITY

School staff who have access to information regarding suspected or disclosed child abuse have a clear obligation to observe appropriate confidentiality in relation to the entire matter and an obligation to ensure that this information is kept secure.

6.6 PROTOCOLS

It should be noted that it is a Policy of the School that:

- ∇ staff members are not alone with individual students in areas where they cannot be seen by other staff members or students;
- ∇ staff members to not use their private vehicles to transport students without the permission of the Principal, and
- ∇ staff members do not invite students to their homes, nor visit them in their homes, without the permission of the Principal.

7. PROCEDURES

7.1 MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

7.1.1 In accordance with the Mandatory Reporting guidelines, sexual abuse must be reported.

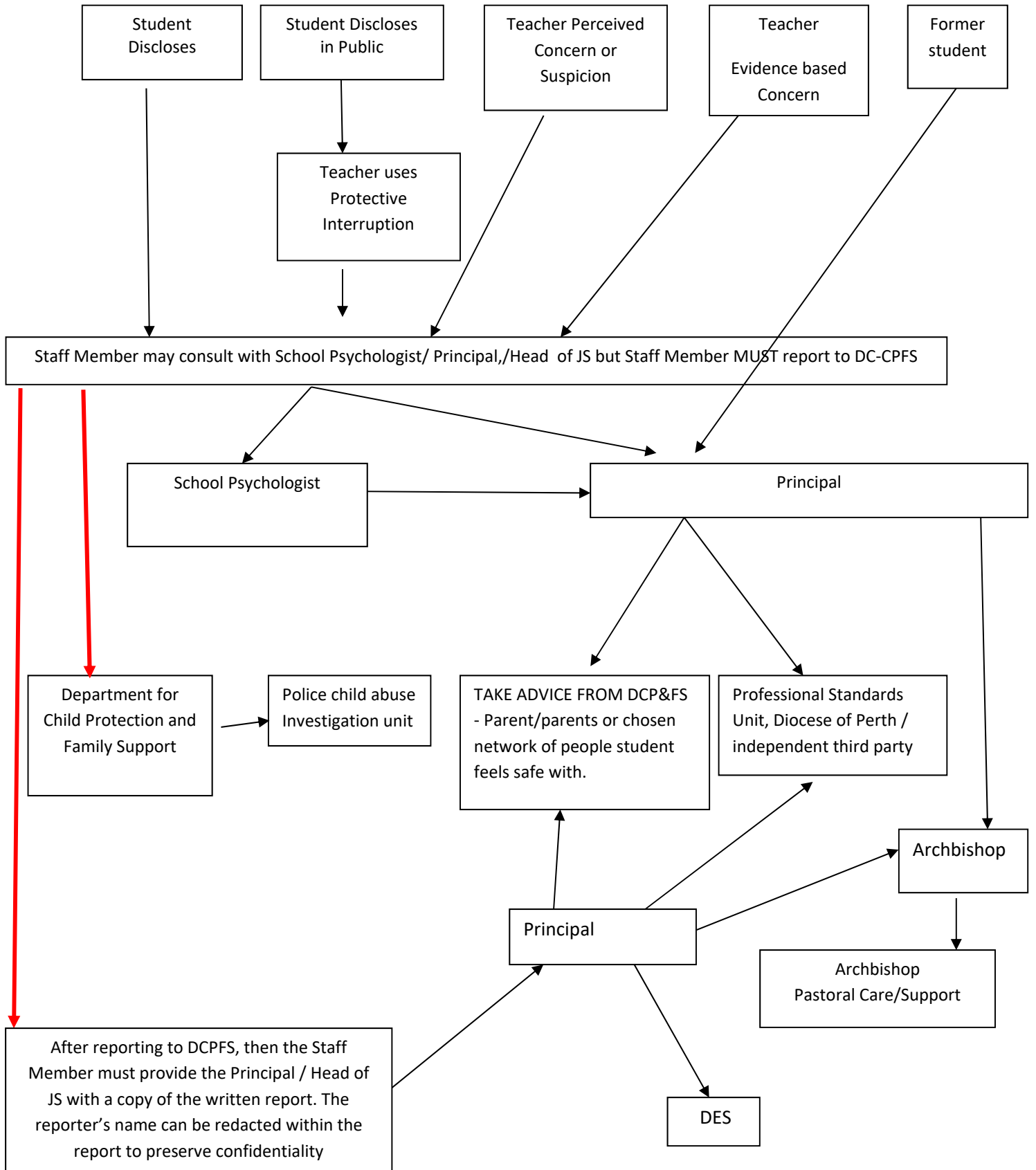
- 7.1.2** Mandatory Reporters must report a belief, based on reasonable grounds in the course of their work, that child sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring.
- 7.1.3** A mandatory reporter is a teacher. Teacher assistants, school chaplains and school psychologists are people who work with children in schools, but they are not mandated reporters. They must still follow school procedures according to the flowchart and IF, THEN tables provided.
- 7.1.4** A mandatory reporter can form the necessary belief, based on reasonable grounds, by noting the presence of indicators, disclosures, injuries, signs, symptoms and behaviours that heighten concerns about child sexual abuse. These indicators are at provided at the end of this policy.
- 7.1.5** Any staff member who is a mandatory reporter will advise the Principal in regard to any report they make to the Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support (DC-CPFS). This must be done as soon as is practicable to do so before or after submitting their mandatory report.
- 7.1.6** Confidentiality – in cases of child sexual abuse, the legislation provides protection for the person reporting. Disclosure of the reporter’s identity or identifying information to parents or any other party can incur a fine of \$24000 and two years imprisonment.
- 7.1.7** In the case of sexual abuse and a Mandatory Report being made the reporter will receive a letter advising them of the District Office it has been referred to, or whether no further action was recommended by the Mandatory Reporting Service.
- 7.1.8** How does a mandatory reporter make a report?

Whether a mandated reporter (teacher) or staff member who falls into the category of teacher assistant, school chaplain, psychologist, boarding staff or any other member of the School, there are strict procedures for all St Hilda’s employees in relation to making a mandatory report about child sexual abuse. These procedures are outlined in the “IF, THEN Table” at point 7.1.7 and the flowchart at point 7.1.8

REPORTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE - **MANDATORY REPORT**

IF	THEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are a mandated reporter (or staff member who is not a teacher) and you have a reasonable suspicion, you <u>may</u> consult with the Principal (or Head of Junior School for JK-6) or School Psychologist, and then, if you form a belief, based on reasonable grounds, that sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must make a verbal or written report to the Mandatory Reporting Service (DC-CPFS), open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as per the procedure outlined at next point.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are a staff member (mandated reporter or teacher assistant, school chaplain, psychologist or any other staff member who is not a teacher) and you are aware through a student's disclosure that sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must make a verbal or written report to the Mandatory Reporting Service (DC-CPFS), open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A verbal report to 1800 708 704 is preferred in the first instance, especially if child is still at risk of being abused. Follow up within 24 hours with the written report to the Department of Communities - Child Protection and Family Support. Email: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au Fax: 1800 610 614 Post: PO Box 8146, Perth BC, WA 6849 The DC-CPFS will forward all reports to the WA Police. The person lodging the report will receive an acknowledgement receipt – keep this document. The mandatory reporter will receive a feedback letter advising if any further action is to be taken. You must then provide a copy of the written report to the Principal/Head of Junior School. The reporter's name can be redacted within the report to preserve confidentiality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are a Principal and receive a verbal report from a staff member about child sexual abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must instruct the staff member to make a verbal or written report to the DC-CPFS. You must notify the various Anglican bodies, as per the Flowchart at 7.1.8 You must lodge a Critical Incident Report with DES

7.1.8 Reporting Flowchart for Child Sexual Abuse



7.2 RECOGNITION & SUSPICION OF PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE, OR NEGLECT

- 7.2.1** A student may disclose information about abuse or neglect, either privately or publicly. A staff member may perceive there is a concern or believe they have evidence of abuse or neglect.
- 7.2.2** The staff member may confidentially consult with the School Psychologist before they make the formal notification to the Principal (or Head of Junior School for JK-6) or School Chair.
- 7.2.3** A staff member who observes or becomes aware through a child's disclosure of physical, emotional or psychological abuse or neglect must report concerns to the Principal (or Head of Junior School for JK-6) or the School Chair. The staff member may also consult with the School Psychologist, before notification to the Principal (or Head of Junior School for JK-6) /School Chair.
- 7.2.4** Confidentiality is paramount and the staff member must not investigate child abuse or neglect matters.

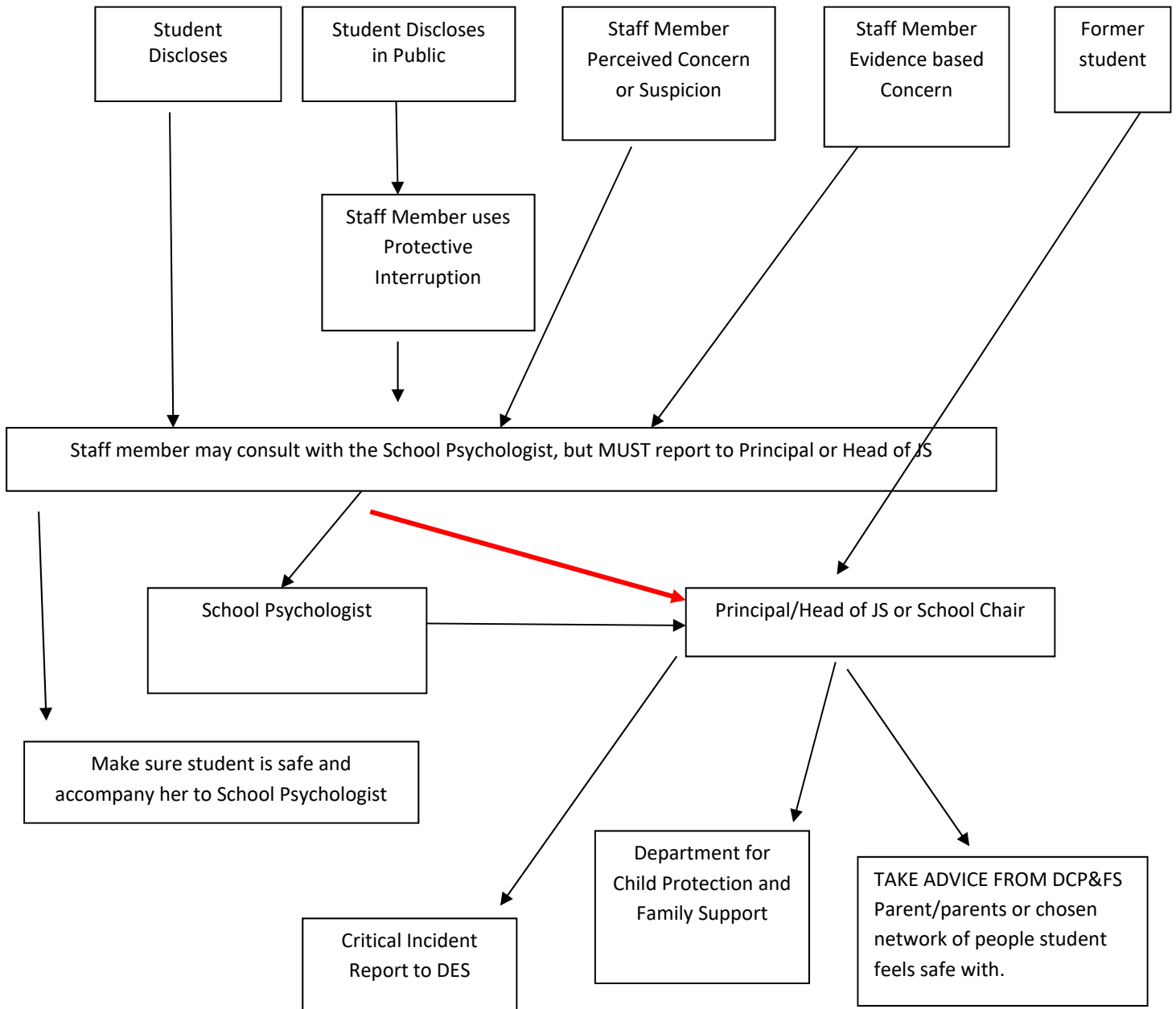
7.3 REPORTING PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE, OR NEGLECT

- 7.3.1** A staff member who observes or becomes aware through a child's disclosure of physical, emotional or psychological abuse or neglect must report concerns to the Principal (or Head of Junior School for JK-6) or the School Chair. The staff member may also consult with the School Psychologist before notification.
- 7.3.2** How does a staff member make a report about abuse or neglect?

**REPORTING PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE, OR NEGLECT
NON-MANDATORY REPORT**

IF	THEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are a staff member and you perceive there is a concern or believe the student is affected by abuse or neglect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may confidentially consult with the School Psychologist, before making formal notification to the Principal (or Head of Junior School for JK-6) or School Chair.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are a staff member and you are aware through a student’s disclosure, or you observe that a student has been affected by physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must report the concerns to the Principal (or Head of Junior School for JK-6) or the School Chair. A sample template is provided in Appendix 1. Do NOT investigate the child abuse/neglect. Keep the matter confidential and make brief notes about the incident including dates, the nature of the indications or disclosure, and action taken. Place in sealed envelope marked “Confidential – Principal”. Junior School Staff may action this report through the Head of Junior School. The record will be placed on the student file in Central Records by the Principal. * Note – if staff email to advise a report on a student is being sent to the Principal, the email should advise “A confidential Child Protection Report for a Year 3 (eg) student has been sent to the Principal by xxx on this date”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are a Principal and receive a report of physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward all reports of such abuse to the Department of Communities on 1800 273 889 (1800 CP DUTY). Note name and position of Duty Officer. Maintain written record of communication and subsequent actions. DC-CPFS will advise further action in relation parents/caregivers and any further action. DC-CPFS decide how to progress the matter and must provide feedback to people making reports. Arrange for ongoing support for the Staff Member, student and anyone else affected through EAP Counselling. The Principal’s delegate will organise the support through the School Psychologists or external EAP Counselling. You must lodge a Critical Incident Report with DES

7.3.3 Reporting Flowchart for Physical, Emotional, Psychological Abuse or Neglect



7.4 STUDENT DISCLOSURE IN PRIVATE

- 7.4.1** If a student discloses a situation of abuse to a Staff Member, their role is to reassure the student and support the student in their decision to disclose. They must assure the student that she has a right to feel safe.
- 7.4.2** The Staff Member is not responsible for investigating his or her suspicions or the child's disclosure and the minimum amount of information is to be collected. Other agencies or individuals have this responsibility.
- 7.4.3** It is not easy for students to disclose abuse or neglect as they may previously have been coerced, bribed or threatened into secrecy. They may need repeated reassurance that they are believed and that it was right to tell.
- 7.4.4** Sometimes students will try to elicit a promise that the Staff Member not tell anyone about the disclosure. Do not make this promise. If this happens it is important to explain that you have concerns about their safety and that you have to take action to ensure that they will be protected from further abuse.

Note: A disclosure can often arouse strong feelings in the person to whom the disclosure is being made. Such reactions may include shock, anger and helplessness. It is important for the staff member to be aware and in control of these feelings and ensure that they are dealt with following the disclosure.

7.5 STUDENT DISCLOSURE IN PUBLIC – PROTECTIVE INTERRUPTION

- 7.5.1** It is possible that a student may start to disclose in class or with a group of other students. If disclosure begins in a public arena it is important to use the strategy of protective interrupting:
- acknowledge that you have heard the student and stop her disclosing any further, be supportive and gently indicate that she may want to talk to you about it in a more private situation
 - quietly arrange to see the student as soon as possible, away from other students
 - do not allow other children or adults to ask questions or make judgments.
- 7.5.2** A teacher's or other staff member's role is to listen actively to what the student is saying but not push for details.

7.6 STAFF MEMBER CONCERN

- 7.6.1 Perceived concern** - If a Staff Member suspects or perceives abuse or neglect may be occurring they should discuss the matter with a School Psychologist or the Principal (or Head of Junior School for JK-6).

In all cases sexual abuse must be reported.

- 7.6.2 Evidence based concern** - If the Staff Member's concern is serious and/or based on evidence they must report immediately to the Principal (or Head of Junior School for JK-6). In all cases sexual abuse must be reported.

7.7 REPORTING FOLLOWING A DISCLOSURE

7.7.1 Once disclosure has been made, the staff member needs to determine the student's immediate need for safety and to consider the emotional state of the student. The staff member needs to:

- Ensure the student is safe in the immediate future
- Refer the student to a School Psychologist as soon as possible
- In some cases it is not appropriate for the student to be left alone after a disclosure. This will depend on the severity and nature of the abuse. If that is the case the staff member should accompany her to the School Psychologist and ensure the girl is left with a staff member in a private area.

7.8 DOCUMENTATION

7.8.1 At the earliest opportunity (within 24 hours) the Staff Member must write brief notes about the incident including dates, the nature of the indications or disclosure, and action taken. These should be placed in a sealed envelope marked "Confidential - Principal" (Junior School Staff can action through the Head of Junior School for JK-6). The Principal will place this report in the student's file on central records. Ensure that any records made before reporting and while waiting for initial concerns or suspicions to be supported, remain confidential.

7.8.2 In the case of sexual abuse a written report must follow within 24 hours. This should be completed on a Mandatory Report form by the reporter and will be forwarded to the Department of Communities - Child Protection and Family Support. The person lodging the report will receive and acknowledgment receipt – it is important to retain this document. The mandatory reporter will receive a feedback letter advising if any further action is to be taken.

7.9 FURTHER ACTION

7.9.1 Once you have reported the situation further action rests with the Principal, who will:

- Contact the local Department of Communities - Child Protection and Family Support (DC-CPFS)
- Contact parent or parents, (if advised by the DC-CPFS)
- Place the report in the student's file on Central Records.

7.9.2 In some cases the situation may be seen as a family issue that may be best dealt with by contact with the family in the initial stages and this will be after the Principal has sought advice from DC-CPFS or the Police, prior to informing the parent/carer of a concern of abuse or neglect.

7.9.3 Where the perpetrator of the abuse is not a parent or family member it is appropriate for the parents to be informed as soon as possible and involved in the support of the student. Generally the Principal (or Head of Junior School) or Psychologist will make this contact.

7.9.4 It is envisaged that the Professional Standards Unit and the Diocese of Perth would only be used for the referral of an incident involving a former student.

7.10 DEBRIEFING

It is imperative for staff's well-being that after a disclosure, she or he seeks an opportunity to talk to somebody as soon as possible. The School Psychologist is the most suitable person, however, if staff prefer to debrief with someone else they must be mindful that the issues of confidentiality are paramount to protect the student.

7.11 MONITORING OF POLICY

This Child Protection Policy is evaluated on annual basis. Staff are advised of revisions and updates to the policy and it is their responsibility to be aware of all changes.

7.12 SCHOOL COMMUNITY AWARENESS

This policy is published on the School Website. School Newsletter reminders are sent to parents to keep them informed of the policy procedures to be implemented in the event that abuse is suspected or has occurred.

7.13 INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The following list of indicators of child abuse and neglect should be used as a guide only and are not exhaustive but contain those indicators which will be of most use to Staff Members.

Indicators need to be considered in the context of their consistency with a child's developmental stage, medical history and social context. Any of these indicators may suggest that a child is being or has been abused or neglected. Some indicators may also suggest other emotional trauma.

With young children their play or drawings often represent the trauma they are experiencing and they do not always have the language to express themselves. They may not be aware that what is happening is not normal.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

- Genital or anal bleeding
- Signs of pain or discomfort in the genital or anal areas
- Pregnancy
- Unexplained difficulty in walking or sitting

Behavioural Indicators

- Disclosure of involvement in sexual activity
- Inappropriate interest or knowledge of sexual matters
- Reports of sexual assault or inappropriate sexual behaviour to a staff member
- Changes in academic performance

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruises and welts, particularly on face, lips, mouth, back, torso or on several different body parts
- Shaped or linear bruising
- Unexplained burns shaped or linear
- Unexplained fractures
- Injuries in various stages of healing

Behavioural Indicators

- Fear of adults, particularly parents
- Startled reflex, cringes when sudden movement by adult
- Behavioural extremes, withdrawn or aggressive
- Afraid to go home
- Reports of injury from child
- Changes in academic performance

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

- Speech disorders
- Failure to thrive
- Lags in physical development

Behavioural Indicators

- Habit behaviours not consistent with developmental stage
- Conduct disorders, destructive, violent
- Behavioural extremes
- Changes in academic performance

NEGLECT

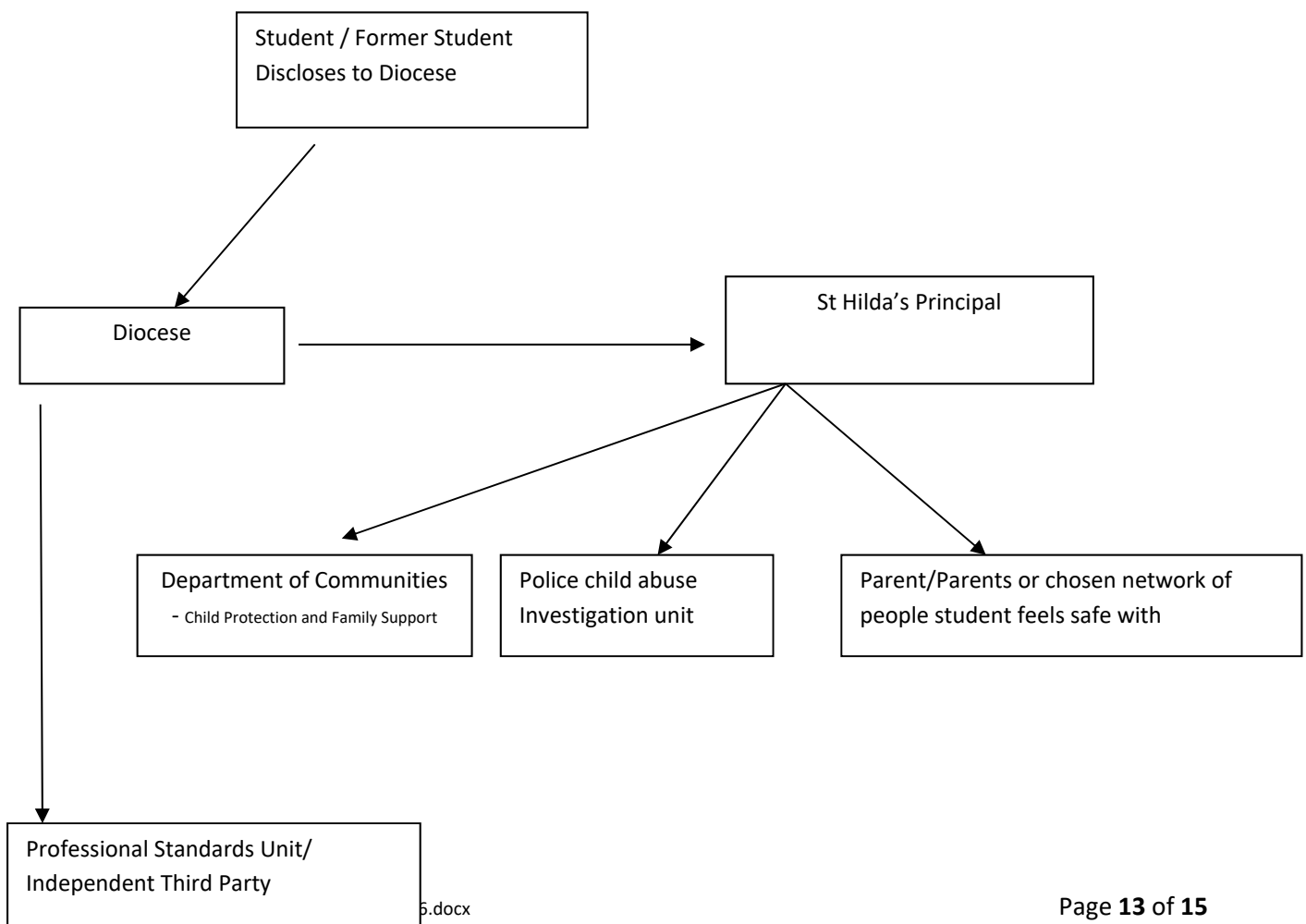
Physical Indicators

- Consistent hunger
- Unattended physical or medical problems
- Inadequate clothing
- Abandonment

Behavioural Indicators

- Constant fatigue
- Developmental delays
- Changes in academic performance

7.14 CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PROCEDURE (DIOCESAN LEVEL DISCLOSURE)



8. BREACH

If employees breach this policy employees may be subject to disciplinary actions. Failure to make a mandatory report can incur a government imposed penalty of up to \$6000 by the Department of Communities - Child Protection & Family Support.

Responsibility: Principal
Review Date: January 2018
Next Review Date: January 2019

Appendix 1

REPORTING PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE, OR NEGLECT NON-MANDATORY REPORT

Date:/...../.....

Staff Member Name:

Student Name:

Year Level:

Details of disclosure: