

STELLA MARIS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

POLICY: CHILD PROTECTION

PURPOSE

- To ensure the safety and dignity of the child is paramount
- To provide staff with guidelines so that they can identify signs of abuse or neglect
- To provide procedures for dealing with cases of abuse or neglect

DEFINITION

Sexual abuse occurs when someone uses his/her power or authority over the child, or takes advantage of the child's trust and respect, to involve the child in sexual activity

Physical abuse is non accidental injury by somebody and also includes abusive administration of drugs or alcohol to a child

Emotional abuse is when self esteem is attacked by somebody to coerce the victim into doing what the abuser wants them to do

Neglect is a denial of adequate needs/rights of nurture, food and shelter, so that the victim fails to thrive. It must be seen as a form of child abuse

Psychological Abuse is when the prolonged actions of individuals impacts negatively on the well being of another child.

PROCEDURES

1. Members of our school community will be expected to be receptive and sensitive to children, so that children feel listened to and believed
2. Staff will be provided with information about the identification of child abuse
3. The Principal/or representative will liaise with appropriate outside support agencies as required
4. All information/discussions will be confidential to the staff and other parties involved

Staff will be aware of reporting procedures:

- i. Staff suspecting that a child is being abused, report their concerns to the Principal
- ii. Without questioning the child, factual written records are to be kept of all relevant details along with dates and times, recorded by the adult to whom the disclosure is made.
- iii. Wherever possible, staff will have a witness present when listening to allegations
- iv. The Principal reports to an agency with statutory powers to act (Child Youth and Family, Police,)
- v. Support is made available to the allegedly abused child, the home and class teacher using the most appropriate personnel (e.g staff, SES, Public Health Nurse)
- vi. Where a incident is reported to the school, by someone other than a student or staff member, that person is to be directed to contact the police or Child Youth and Family.

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- vii. Parents/caregivers are fully informed by the Principal of alleged abuse except when it is believed that the child could be put at risk, in consultation with the most appropriate agency.
- viii. Further information will be communicated by the responsible agency to Parents/Caregivers.
- ix. Any alleged abuse of a child by a staff member will be actioned by approaching the Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Trustees directly. The staff member will be informed and if it is felt appropriate, released from class. If necessary action will be taken in line with the Teachers Collective Employment contract and guidelines issued in the Schools Trustees Handbook
- x. Ongoing Professional Development training will be offered to staff.

POLICY REVIEW DATE

This Policy will be reviewed according to the Board's Effectiveness Review Programme