Mandatory Reporting

**Rationale:**
- All children have a right to feel safe and be safe, and to develop to their potential. 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, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

**Aims:**
- To ensure that children’s’ rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.

**Mandate:**
- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect.
- A report should be made when there are:
  - Concerns that have a serious impact on a child’s immediate safety.
  - Concerns that are persistent and entrenched and likely to have a serious impact on the child’s development. This being ‘harm accumulated through a series of continuing acts, omissions or circumstances’.
- A report should be made on the same day as the belief of abuse is formed.
- A staff member is required to make a further report each time they become aware of further grounds for the belief that a child is at risk, or is suffering abuse.
- The person reporting to DHS will not be revealed unless permission is given by that person.
- The person making the report can contact DHS to find the action that has been taken, within the limits of confidentiality.

**Implementation:**

**Communication:**
- All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Assistant Principal.
- The teacher and/or the Principal class officer will contact the preferred reporting organisation for the Gembrook Primary School Region, by telephone, as soon as possible, to make an official notification:
  - CHILD FIRST for Yarra Ranges
    Anglicare, 22 Croydon Rd, Croydon 3153.
    **Ph. 1300 369 146**
  - South East Family Services (Connections)
    Webb St, Narre Warren 3805
    **Ph. 9705 3939**
  - If parents decline intervention by the above two organisations then subsequent reporting direct to DHS may be required:
    - Cardinia Residents: Dandenong DHS  1300 655 795
    - Yarra Ranges Residents: Box Hill DHS  1300 360 391
• All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.
• New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.
• Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually.

Documentation:
• 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 neglect, sexual, physical or emotional abuse has taken place a “Mandatory Reporting Information Sheet” available from the Principal must be completed and filed in the Principal’s office.
• All “Mandatory Reporting Information Sheets” remain filed in the Principal’s office.
• All reports, information sheets, records of subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded
  • All records are to remain strictly confidential.
• 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.

Interview by DHS:
• 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.

Evaluation:
• This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three year review cycle.

Reference: