



Christmas Hills Primary School

PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

March 2019

Christmas Hills Primary School is committed to responding swiftly to allegations of suspected child abuse, in accordance with the child safety requirements set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

The Child Safety Officer for Christmas Hills Primary School is the Principal. All queries, complaints or concerns about child safety should be directed to the Child Safety Officer.

Christmas Hills Primary School is sensitive to the rights of privacy of all stakeholders (students, parents, staff, contractors, School Council and the wider community) in responding to allegations of suspected child abuse. In this and all other matters, the school takes into account the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.

These procedures cover all forms of child abuse as defined in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. Child abuse includes:

- (A) any act committed against a child involving –
 - i. a sexual offence; or
 - ii. An offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and
- (B) the infliction, on a child, of–
 - i. physical violence; or
 - ii. Serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- (C) Serious neglect of a child.

Child Safety Officer – roles and responsibilities

Allegations or disclosures of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, school staff, visitors, or other persons while connected to a school environment, must be reported to the school's Child Safety Officer.

The Child Safety Officer will promptly manage the school's response to the allegation or disclosure of child abuse, and will ensure that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously. The Child Safety Officer will respond appropriately to the child who makes or is affected by the allegation of child abuse, and will monitor overall school compliance with this procedure on an annual basis.

If the Child Safety Officer cannot perform his or her role, the person receiving the report, is delegated to the role of responding to the disclosure or allegation.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

Procedure

Upon being made aware of an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, the school, through the Child Safety Officer, will complete an Incident Report Form and will make, secure and retain records of the allegation of child abuse and the school's response to it.

The school will inform appropriate authorities about the allegation, including but not limited to mandatory reporting. Appropriate authorities may include the Police, DHS Child Protection, DET Emergency Services, DET Student Support Services and the school's regional Senior Education Improvement Leader (SEIL).

The school will protect any child connected to the alleged child abuse until the allegation is resolved. The school will continue to fulfil its primary purpose as a provider of education to any child connected to the alleged child abuse, and will provide additional wellbeing support where necessary.

The school will not:

- prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school;
- state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
- require staff to make a judgement about the truth of an allegation of child abuse; and
- will not prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

At all times, Christmas Hills Primary School will co-operate fully with all external agencies and professionals during any investigations and interventions following an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the school's periodic review cycle.