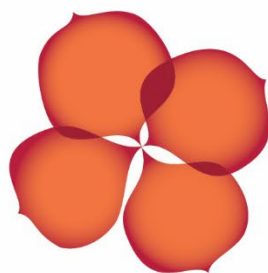


POLICY

Mandatory Reporting



NT
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Document Title: Mandatory Reporting Policy
Policy Category: SW - Safety and wellbeing
Policy Monitor: Senior Director EducationDocument3
Contact: policy@ntchristianschools.com.au
Approved by: Board
Approval date: 20 September 2024
Review date: August 2025
Access Level: Public

Policy
Feedback



AMENDMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Changes Made
1.0	2010	Policy drafted by D Twartz
1.1	04/2011	updates unrecorded
1.2	04/2012	updates unrecorded
1.3	08/2013	updates unrecorded
2.0	06/2020	Updates unrecorded
3.0	09/2024	Added reporting domestic violence to comply with NT legislation. Collated definitions to improve understanding. Edit content language to improve accessibility, removed duplicated content, update Government Dept names, move some content into support documents, new policy template and preamble added in relation to Antidiscrimination Act amendments 2023.

1 Preamble

NT Christian Schools is an organisation that exists to advance the Christian religion through the provision of high-quality education and training services and religious instruction. A holistic and relational approach to learning for each individual student, underpinned by a biblical world view provides an education for the whole person, for the whole of life.

We believe that the Christian faith is a life-transforming faith that will be authentically evidenced in a believer's actions. The bible exhorts us to pursue godliness and to model biblical standards of behaviour. Everything we do, our practices, our conduct, our use and stewardship of resources is an act of worship to God and a witness to those around us.

All members of the NT Christian Schools community are to be committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment for students, staff and the whole community in a manner that is consistent with the Christian ethos and beliefs of NT Christian Schools.

Employees and those a policy applies to are fully supported by NT Christian Schools in ensuring compliance with these documents.

2 Purpose

One aspect of actioning our commitment to the care and protection of all people within our community, in particular children, and meeting legislative requirements¹ is requiring all staff of NT Christian Schools and adults engaged with the organization to be aware of the content of this policy to help 'ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children and people attending education and care services'² governed by NT Christian Schools.

If a child is in immediate danger call 000 Police or the Child Protection Hotline 1800 700 250. If an adult is in immediate danger call 000 Police

It is acknowledged that the subject area and matter of this policy is for some, a difficult or sensitive topic. If this is the case for you, please seek support from your Line Manager, trusted peers or campus leadership to create a safe space for you to read through this policy.

- For staff, your Line Manager or the Human Resources Manager can provide information regarding access to counselling services for additional support.

3 Policy applies to

This applies to every person over the age of 18 years within NT Christian Schools community.

The policy is available to all students, parents, carers, students, staff, volunteers and contractors via the NT Christian Schools website and on request in hard copy form from campus offices or the NT Christian Schools Business Services Office as required.

The policy is available to all staff via the NT Christian Schools Canvas *Policy and Advisory Library*.

¹ Care and Protection of Children Act (2007) NT, section 2.1

² Care and Protection of Children Act (2007) NT, section 3.2a

4 Policy

4.1 Guiding Principles

Jesus' teaching emphasises the importance of valuing and protecting children. *"See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."* Matthew 18:10. God calls us to protect and defend the vulnerable. *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."* Proverbs 31:8-9

The care and protection of all people within NT Christian Schools is central to every aspect of our operation. We believe that our schools, programs, entities and learning communities must be places where; in witnessing Christ, we strongly demonstrate a commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all members of the community. This arises from the understanding that all people are made in God's image and are entitled to be treated with respect and care³.

4.2 Mandatory Reporting – Child Abuse or Neglect

All adults in the Northern Territory are required to make a report to Territory Families, Housing and Community (TFHC) by calling the **Child Abuse Hotline (1800 700 250)** or submitting a report online <https://careservices.nt.gov.au/web/portal/pages/concern#assess> if you reasonably believe that a child or young person may have been, or is at risk of being harmed or exploited, such as:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Neglect
- Exposure to physical violence including domestic or family violence
- (if unsure, please see section 6 Definitions)

It is a criminal offence to not make a report as soon as possible after forming a belief that a child or young person may have been or is at risk of being harmed or exploited. Do not wait until the end of the day.

The reporter does not need to have all the facts about a situation to make a report. There is no requirement for the reporter to prove abuse or exploitation.

Any person is lawfully entitled to make a report if they are concerned for a child's welfare, even if you are not required to do so by law, (if you are under 18), this is known as a non-mandated report.

Anyone who makes a mandatory or non-mandated report in good faith or shares information

³ Child Protection Policy

with another Information Sharing Authority⁴ about a child or group of children for the safety and wellbeing of the child(ren) or young person(s) is not civilly or criminally liable, or in breach of any professional code of conduct for giving information⁵.

Therefore, are not able to be sued or subjected to any legal liability. They also cannot be disciplined for unprofessional conduct by their employer.

The identity of the reporter/notifier is protected by legislation to remain confidential (unless they are required to give their name under a Court order).

Protections only apply when sharing information meets statutory requirements of providing immediate care or protection to someone in need. This does not permit anyone sharing or discussing information outside of a mandatory reporting or professional need to do so.

4.3 Mandatory Reporting – Domestic or Family Violence

All adults in the Northern Territory are required to make a report to Northern Territory **Police** by calling **131 444** for non-emergencies and **000 if there is immediate danger** if they believe on reasonable grounds either:

- a person has caused harm or is likely to cause harm to someone else with whom they have a domestic relationship with;
- the life or safety of another person is under serious or imminent threat because domestic violence has been, is being or is about to be committed⁶;

A report must be made as soon as possible after forming a belief or suspicion of or gaining any knowledge of domestic violence or its potential to occur.

4.4 Making a Report

The adult who receives the disclosure or comes to believe a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm; or a person is at risk of domestic violence, must make the report.

Becoming aware of someone suffering abuse or violence and making a mandatory report can be very confronting. You may seek support from your Principal, Assistant Principal or Program Director to make the report. They cannot report for you but can provide moral support and a safe space to debrief afterwards.

The person making the report may be asked to provide the following information to the best of their ability:

- Reporter's details (your name and contact information)
- Child's or victim's details
- Parent of the child details

⁴ Care and Protection of Children Act (2007) NT, section 293C

⁵ Care and Protection of Children Act (2007) NT, sections 27, 293

⁶ Domestic and Family Violence Act (2007) NT, section 124

- Extended family or support network details
- What has happened to the child or victim
- When it occurred
- Where the incident happened
- Who was there
- Who is potentially responsible for the harm?
- Type of harm – neglect, emotional, physical, sexual, domestic or family violence.

If you do not have the requested information or are not comfortable in sharing it, you are able to say that is the case to the agency you are reporting to.

The person making the report should keep a record of the date and time the report was made and the reference number that will be provided by TFHC or police along with a summary. Ensure this information is stored confidentially.⁷

It is appropriate to inform the Principal, Assistant Principal or Program Director that a report has been made so:

- the Principal can be responsive to the wellbeing of students and staff and the operations of the school or program, ensuring full duty of care is taken and operational requirements are met;
- together you can determine the most appropriate way of supporting those involved, including the reporter;
- together determine if it is safe and appropriate to communicate with a child's parents regarding suspicion of abuse or disclosure. This communication is undertaken by, or in conjunction with the Principal.

Staff members can access counselling support through NT Christian Schools employee assistance program. Email human.resources@ntchristianschools.com.au to request a referral.

If in doubt, make a report - call the 24-hour Child Protection Hotline on 1800 700 250.

4.4.1 If the (alleged) offender is a staff member of NT Christian Schools

Make a mandatory report in accordance with this policy and legislated requirements.

Immediately report your concern or finding to the Principal or Program Director.

If the offender is the Principal or Program Director, immediately report your concern or finding to NT Christian Schools CEO.

If the offender is the CEO, report to the NT Christian Schools Board Chair.

boardchair@ntchristianschools.com.au

The Principal or Program Director, or (when the applicable), the CEO will action Performance Management Policy.

⁷ Privacy Protection Policy and Records Management Policy

4.5 Provision of Training of Child Safe Practices and Mandatory Reporting

NT Christian Schools will provide regular and appropriate to role level of training in Duty of Care, Child Safe Practices and Mandatory Reporting to all staff, directors of the board, visitors, volunteers and contractors, and senior secondary students.

NT Christian Schools will maintain a register to record training provided in regard to Duty of Care, Child Safe Practices and Mandatory Reporting, and monitor regularly to ensure training requirements are met.

Those required by policy or statutory obligation to undertake training may be denied continuation of their engagement with NT Christian Schools or, in regard to staff and directors of the board, disciplinary action for failing to or refusing to undertake training.

4.5.1 Training Provisions and Requirements Summary

Role	Training Requirement
All staff (full-time / part-time / casual)	Child Safe Practices, Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting Course developed or chosen by NT Christian Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 1 week of employment commencing • Each semester Ongoing training and professional development in regard to Child Safe Practices and Student Wellbeing as determined by NT Christian Schools.
Board of Directors	Child Safe Practices, Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting Course developed or chosen by NT Christian Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 1 month of appointment • Annually
Volunteers (Frequently engaged with NT Christian Schools and its entities or attending overnight camps)	Child Safe Practices, Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting Course developed or chosen by NT Christian Schools. Asked to review and sign agreement with NT Christian Schools' <i>Parent, Volunteer, Visitor and Contractor Code of Conduct</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to commencing volunteer role or attending camp. • Annually for ongoing roles.
Contractors (Frequently engaged with NT Christian Schools and its entities)	Child Safe Practices, Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting Course developed or chosen by NT Christian Schools. Asked to review and sign agreement with NT Christian Schools' <i>Parent, Volunteer, Visitor and Contractor Code of Conduct</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to commencing contract agreement. • Annually for ongoing agreements.

Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors (1 off or occasional engagement)	Provision of <i>Campus Visitor Guidelines</i> when visiting campuses.
NT Christian Schools Community	<i>Parent, Volunteer, Visitor and Contractor Code of Conduct</i> publicly available. Provision of resources and invitation to information workshops regarding child development, wellbeing and support as opportunities arise.
Senior Secondary Students (over or approaching 18 years of age)	Safe relationships and interactions, Children's Rights and Mandatory Reporting will be provided as part of Pastoral Care program.

5 Roles and responsibilities

Evidence of Compliance	
CEO	
Ensure Principals, Program Directors, Operational Directors have provided semi-annual training for all staff.	Leadership reports, Canvas engagement reports
Report (with appropriate privacy protections) any incidents (alleged or founded) of child abuse or harm by a staff member or student toward a student of NTCS to the Board	CEO report, Board meeting minutes
If a staff member or volunteer of NT Christian Schools is the alleged offender, ensure all reporting to appropriate agencies has been completed. (TFHC, TRB)	Notification records
If a staff member or volunteer of NT Christian Schools is the offender, ensure Performance Management, Complaints and Investigations policies have been enacted.	Investigation notes
While this policy does not address historical claims regarding child abuse, CEO is to ensure appropriate appointments for navigating such issues.	S:\EXECUTIVE\NRS\National Redress Scheme Documentation\National Redress Scheme Documentation
Senior Director of Education	
Review policy regularly to monitor for currency and relevance to current legislation.	Policy Register review date, Amendment History
Ensure access to Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting policies, procedural documentation and appropriate training resources is available to stakeholders.	Websites and Compass Documents contain link to policy. Policy and Advisory Library
Principal / Program Director / Operational Directors	

Evidence of Compliance	
Ensure training of staff, volunteer's & contractors regarding Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting is undertaken each semester, and within 1 week of employment ⁸ . & Records are kept	Staff meeting notes. Canvas engagement data
Ensure staff who do not undertake training at the start of each semester or join the staff team mid semester complete training within 1 week.	New staff induction documents Canvas engagement data
Ensure any documentation made in relation to child protection or mandatory reporting is handled sensitively and confidentially.	Personal records, not visible to other staff.
Ensure that mandatory reporting obligations have been met when an incident occurs at their campus.	Personal records, not visible to other staff.
Provide confidential space for debrief and counselling support to reporter.	Personal records, not visible to other staff.
Human Resources Manager	
Support campuses and entities to meet staff induction requirements.	Induction check lists and records
All Staff and Adults	
Review Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting policies and related documents regularly. Participate in continual education and training to develop knowledge, skill and awareness to provide a safe and supportive environment for students and peers.	Staff meeting and training records Canvas engagement records PD and training records
Act upon reporting obligations.	Reference number of report provided by receiving agency recorded with date and time.
Advise the Principal or Program Director (or CEO where applicable) of report being made or need to do so.	Personal records, not visible to other staff.
NTCC Teaching and Learning Coordinator	
Ensure mandatory reporting is integrated appropriately into curriculum programs such as Yr10 Health, Sexual Health and Wellbeing unit and Yr12 PCG program.	Curriculum program

⁸ Care and Protection of Children Act (2007) NT, section 30; Non-Government Schools Registration Standards: 2.1, 2.5, 8.4, 9.2, 9.4, 13.1

6 Definitions and acronyms

The following terms used throughout this policy are defined as follows:

Term	Definition
Abuse	deliberate treatment of a person (or risk of) that causes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological hurt.
Adult	any person 18 years of age or older (including students of NT Christian Schools).
Assault	the threat of, or direct or indirect application of force to a person causing harm or fear of harm, evidenced by bodily movement or threatening words.
Child / Children	a person(s) younger than 18 years of age or a person apparently younger than 18 years of age if the person's age cannot be proven. ⁹
Disclosure	when someone shares information with you – it may be something that is said, written or done as a reaction to a question, statement or situation.
Domestic or Family Violence	conduct committed by a person against someone they are a relative of, are in or have been in family, guardianship or intimate relationship with where they threaten to or do any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause harm • Damage property, including injuring pets • Intimidation • Stalking • Economic abuse¹⁰
Exploitation	involves sexual and other exploitation of a child. It can include (but not limited to) sexual abuse of the child and involving the child as a participant or spectator in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An act of a sexual nature • Prostitution • A pornographic performance¹¹
Gross Indecency	an act of sexual nature other than intercourse. It does not need to include physical contact. It may include instructing another person to do a sexual act
Harm	any significant detrimental effect caused by an act, omission or circumstance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing or development of the child.¹² Harm can be caused by, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, psychological or emotional abuse, or neglect of the child; • Sexual abuse or other exploitation of the child • Exposure of the child to physical violence or domestic and family violence.
Information Sharing Authority	schools or other government funded agencies who provide services for or in connection with children, and individuals including, but not

⁹ Care and Protection of Children Act (2007) NT

¹⁰ Domestic and Family Violence Act (2207) NT

¹¹ Care and Protection of Children Act (2007) NT, section 16

¹² Care and Protection of Children Act (2007) NT, section 15

	limited to Principals, Teachers, Carers, and Health Practitioners are protected to share information regarding a child for the purpose of providing care and support in the best interest of the child. ¹³
Mandatory Reporting	is when the law requires you to report known or suspected cases of abuse and neglect or family and domestic violence.
Neglect	a parent or caregiver repeatedly not providing a child's necessities of life such as nutrition, hydration, physical and mental health care, hygiene, clothing and shelter and appropriate care and supervision to protect them from injury and illness.
Notifier	see Reporter
Offender	a person who causes harm or injury to another person by their actions or conduct.
Physical abuse	using physical force that injures or puts someone in danger.
Reasonable grounds	generally, grounds are <i>reasonable</i> where they have some basis due to direct observations or asserted or believed facts, and where it is likely that another person given the same information and context would likely have a similar concern. For further advice or guidance call the Child Protection Hotline (1800 700 250) or NT Police (131 444).
Reporter	the person (required) to make a mandatory report.
Residential Services	a care facility providing accommodation – including student boarding.
Sexual abuse / exploitation	Any sexual act or act of gross indecency directed against a person or committed in the presence of a child, sexual servitude or any other form of sexualised mistreatment that may include, but limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual intercourse or other sexual interactions, including indecent touching involving or in the presence of a child. • A child aged less than 16 years has been, or is likely to be, a victim of a sexual offence; or gross indecency. • When an adult with the special care of a young person aged 16 to 18 years under (for example the parent, step-parent, guardian, carer, teacher, coach, club leader, boss) has sexual intercourse with or commits an act of gross indecency upon them, • A child aged less than 14 years is, or is likely to be, sexually active even if that child's parent is aware of the situation. • A child aged 14 or 15 years has been or is likely to be a victim of sexual offence, and the age difference between the child and offender is greater than 2 years. • A child has been, or is likely to be, a victim of criminal or sexual offences, including sexual misconduct against a student by a co-worker or colleague¹⁴;
TFHC	(Northern Territory Government) Department of Territory Families, Housing and Community – responsible for providing support services across child protection and domestic and family violence.

¹³ Care and Protection of Children Act (2007) NT, section 293

¹⁴ Sexual Offences (*Evidence and Procedure*) Act - section 3 and Criminal Code Act (1983) NT – section 125 Division 2, -134, 187, 188, 192

Victim	a person who suffered harm, injury, loss or damage as a direct result of actions or conduct of another person.
Violence	physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, intimidation, harassment or damage to property, or threats of any of these. Any behaviour using force intended to hurt or damage, that is threatening, controlling or intended to make another person feel unsafe. See also Domestic or Family Violence.
Wellbeing	a person's physical, psychological, spiritual and emotional health.

7 Related legislation and policy

7.1 NT Christian School policies and procedures

- Mandatory Reporting Guidelines
- Child Protection Policy
- Staff-Student Interactions Guidelines
- Performance Management Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Privacy Protections Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Protected Disclosures (Whistleblower) Policy

7.2 Legislation

- Care and Protection of Children Act (2007) NT – sections 15, 16, 26
- Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act (2011) NT
- Domestic and Family Violence Act (2007) NT
- Criminal Code Act (1993) NT – sections 125 Division 2, 134, 187, 188, 192
- Sexual Offences (Evidence and Procedure) Act (1993) NT

7.3 Other relevant resources

- National Principles of Child Safe Organisations
- ACECQA National Quality Framework, Quality areas 2.7
- Department of Education NT, Mandatory Reporting of Harm and Exploitation of Children Guidelines 2020.
- Department of Education NT, Non-Government Schools Registration Standards