



MONARO

High School

Policy | Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People

Rationale

This policy aims to protect and support children and young people, their safety, wellbeing and welfare. It sets out roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to child protection including training, reporting on safety, and supporting children and young people, as well as monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements.

Context

- The NSW Government recognises that care and protection for children and young people is a shared responsibility. It begins with parents, but when government support becomes necessary, it is not the sole responsibility of community services but a collective responsibility.
- Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing provides the framework for parents, communities, and government and non-government agencies to work together to support children and families.

Key Policy Statements

- Education has an important role to support children and young people and to identify where problems arise that may put their safety, welfare or wellbeing at risk.
- All staff have a responsibility to report risk of harm concerns about children and young people, within their roles, and to provide support to children and young people.
- Child protection reforms introduce an obligation for government and non-government agencies to coordinate decision making and delivery of services.

Audience and applicability

- All departmental employees, including those in state offices, schools, TAFE NSW, Adult Migrant English Service, Adult and Community Education and State Training Services.

Responsibilities/Delegations

Principals and Workplace Managers will:

Training

- ensure all new staff have participated in an initial (one off) 'mandatory' child protection induction (Child Protection Awareness Training) and a 'compulsory' update each year (Child Protection Update 2016 - school staff). The revised training is available from Term 1, 2016 and accessible at: <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/cpat/index.html>
The Child Protection 2016 'compulsory' update course (MyPL@Edu course code RG00299)
Accessible at: <https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/lists/directoratesaz/stuwelfare/stuwellbeing/childprotect/cp-update/cp-update-2016.htm>.
- Staff training sessions delivered to all staff in staff meeting sessions, Staff Development Days and as a self-paced online course.
- ensure all staff are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect of children and young people.
- ensure all staff are aware of their obligation to advise the principal or workplace manager of concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people that arise during the course of their work
- ensure that all staff are aware of their mandatory obligation to report suspected risk of significant harm and of the procedures for doing so

Reporting

- When responding to 'Allegations against Employees in the Area of Child Protection Policy', DoE also has a responsibility to ensure its employees are treated fairly and the rights of each individual are respected during an investigation and any applicable disciplinary process.
- As an employer, DoE has a responsibility to:
 - Respond to allegations of a child protection nature specifically related to the actions of an employee and ensure appropriate action is taken in relation to the finding, including disciplinary action;
 - Report to the Ombudsman certain allegations or convictions of a child protection nature made against an employee; and
 - Report to the Commission for Children and Young People the names of employees for whom it has completed relevant employment proceedings.

Responsibilities/Delegations cont'd

- | use appropriate tools to inform decision making, such as the online Mandatory Reporter Guide, professional judgment or specialist advice, where there are concerns about risk of harm
- | determine whether concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young people constitute risk of significant harm and, if they do, report these to Family and Community Services
- | seek advice from the Child Wellbeing Unit where there is uncertainty about whether concerns amount to risk of significant harm and maintain confidentiality
- | contact the Child Wellbeing Unit about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people where:
 - there are concerns about risk of harm, that do not meet the threshold of significant harm but are not trivial;
 - the Mandatory Reporter Guide indicates this should be done
 - a case has been reported to Family and Community Services and did not meet the risk of significant harm threshold
 - there is an observable pattern of cumulative harm that does not meet the threshold of significant harm

Supporting children and young people

- | establish effective systems in their workplace for:
 - child protection concerns to be identified in the course of the work of staff reported and action taken, where appropriate, so vulnerable children and young people are supported
 - reasonable steps to be taken to coordinate decision making and coordinate services to children and young people and their families with other local service providers, if required
 - collaborative work with other agencies for the care and protection of children and young people in ways that strengthen and support the family and in a manner that respects the functions and expertise of each service provider
 - there is an observable pattern of cumulative harm that does not meet the threshold of significant harm
- | exchange relevant information to progress assessments, investigations and case management as permitted by law
- | use best endeavours in responding to a request for a service from Family and Community Services provided that the request is consistent with departmental responsibilities and policies.

Staff members will:

Training

- | participate in a child protection induction and in annual updates. This includes all staff - principals, workplace managers, teaching and non teaching staff, part-time, temporary and casual staff and those who join during the year.

Reporting

- | adhere to mandatory procedures for conveying risk of harm concerns to the principal or workplace manager
 - | maintain confidentiality
 - | adhere to mandatory procedures for reporting risk of significant harm to Family and Community Services
 - | ensure, where they have reported any risk of significant harm concerns to the principal or workplace manager, that the principal or workplace manager has reported those concerns to Family and Community Services
 - | report directly to Family and Community Services if they believe the principal or workplace manager has not reported risk of significant harm concerns to Family and Community Services, and they still have concerns about risk of significant harm
 - | ensure that any relevant information that they become aware of, subsequent to a report being made to Family and Community Services or following contact with the Child Wellbeing Unit, is provided to Family and Community Services or the Child Wellbeing Unit respectively. If the additional information forms concerns about risk of significant harm a report must be made to Family and Community Services
- ### *Supporting children and young people*
- | cooperate with reasonable steps to coordinate service delivery and decision-making with other relevant service providers
 - | avoid undertaking any investigation of the circumstances giving rise to a report where risk of significant harm has been reported, without the express prior approval of the relevant Family and Community Services case officer
 - | inform students, including apprentices or trainees, of their right to be protected from abuse and of avenues of support if they have concerns about abuse.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting Requirements

- | The Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy implementation is to be reviewed on an annual basis at the end of each year. Recommendations for improvement are to be actioned
- | Principals and workplace managers must maintain a workplace register of staff participation in annual updates and of inductions of new staff, or they must sight individual records of staff inductions. This applies to all staff including non-teaching staff, part-time, temporary and casual staff.
- | All staff are required to update mandatory training (including a WWCC for all secondary school employees, specified volunteers and contractors by the time period of: 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017), through professional learning courses and present certificates to the Front Office. These will be included onto the school data base and 'Mandatory DoE Policies and Training Register' as evidence of staff compliance with mandatory training and review dates.
- | A record is to be kept of reports to Family and Community Services as confirmation that mandatory reporting requirements have been met. The report reference number should be recorded.
- | Where a reference number has been provided by the Child Wellbeing Unit it must be recorded and kept.
- | exchange relevant information to progress assessments, investigations and case management as permitted by law
- | If serious safety issues remain after a report has been made to, and accepted by, Family and Community Services, principals or workplace managers will refer the matter to the departmental regional officer responsible for student services so the case can be taken up at a senior level within Family and Community Services.
- | Policy review process utilising the A-Z Policy Implementation Tool (AZT) to support high level accountability practices of policies at Monaro High School.