

Child Safe Mandatory Reporting Policy

Quality and Impact



Introduction	<p>The policy guides staff on their responsibilities in relation to the protection of the wellbeing of children and young people. Protecting children from harm is a responsibility shared by everyone in the community. Making a report about suspected child abuse or neglect is an important part of this responsibility.</p>
Eligibility	<p>This policy applies to the following Learning Links staff legislated as Mandatory Reporters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allied Health– occupational therapists, speech pathologists, psychologists (registered), psychologists (provisionally registered) and other allied health professionals (e.g., undergraduate students on clinical placement) • Education – Education Specialists, Early Childhood Teachers • Children’s Services – Educators, Child Care workers • Managers – CEO, General Managers, Managers of programs providing child-facing services, Team Leaders, Coordinators • Funded Programs – HIPPY Home Tutors; Play Helpers • Customer Care Representatives • Administrative Support Officers in one or more of the above areas.
Policy	<p>Our Mandatory Reporting Policy identifies those staff legislated to comply with mandatory reporting obligations regarding the safety and wellbeing of children of ages 0-15 years.</p> <p>In NSW, mandatory reporting obligations apply to those staff who deliver services wholly or partly to children as part of their professional work or other paid employment.</p> <p>It also includes management and support role positions that support child- facing service delivery.</p> <p>Mandatory reporters are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities.</p> <p>A mandatory reporter must make a report when they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) and those grounds arise in the course of, or from, their work or role.</p> <p>A mandatory reporter has a duty to report, as soon as practicable, the name or description of the child and the grounds for suspecting that a child is at Risk of Significant Harm. It is important to note that mandatory requirements only relate to children, not young people.</p> <p>In NSW, mandatory reporting is regulated by the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (the Care Act) and Mandatory Reporters are guided by the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide.</p>
Mandatory Reporting – The Mandatory Reporting Guide (MGR).	<p>The MRG is a Structured Decision Making (@SDM) tool intended to complement mandatory reporters’ professional judgement and critical thinking.</p> <p>The MRG supports mandatory reporters in NSW to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether a report to the Child Protection Helpline is needed for concerns about possible abuse or neglect of a child; and • Identify alternative supports for vulnerable children and their families. <p>The Mandatory Reporter Guide provides information regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What needs to be reported in relation to concerns about a child’s wellbeing and Risk of Significant Harm • When to report

Confidentiality	<p>Reports made to the Child Protection Helpline are confidential and the reporter's identity is generally protected by law. The law offers the following protections to a person who makes a report in good faith:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reporter will not be liable for defamation • The reporter is protected from civil and criminal liability • The reporter is protected against retribution for making, or proposing to make, a report. • Except in specific, limited circumstances, the report, or its contents, is not admissible in any proceedings • A person cannot be compelled by a court to provide the report or disclose or give evidence of any of its contents • There is an overriding public interest against disclosure of a report under the <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i>. <p>Current legislation allows NSW Police access to the identity of the reporter, if this is needed in connection with the investigation of a serious offence against a child or young person. The request must come from a senior law enforcement officer and the reporter must be informed that their identity is to be released – unless informing them of the disclosure will prejudice the investigation.</p> <p>This policy provides confirmation to staff that all information regarding completion of the MRG and/or lodgement of a mandatory report must remain confidential to Learning Links. Staff must not communicate lodgement and or/ related discussions with a child to the parent/s or carer/s.</p>
Reporting Agencies	<p>Staff lodge Mandatory Reports with Family and Community Services (Department of Communities and Justice).</p> <p>Mandatory Reporters may be required to report to other Learning Links staff and the following NSW government agencies in accord with procedures listed in Learning Links Mandatory Reporting Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Office of Children's Guardian (OCG) • NSW Police • NSW Children's Ombudsman • Other Health and/or Education bodies and professionals
Communication	<p>Child Safe information is shared in several ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Meetings • Staff Briefings • eLearning courses on the Kajabi platform • Induction information and sessions for all new staff, volunteers and students on placement • Staff emails • Staff Information Sessions (Calendar)
Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safe Policy • Mandatory Reporting Procedure • Child Safe Reportable Conduct Policy • Child Safe Reportable Conduct Procedure • Child Safe Sexual Abuse Policy • NDIS Reportable Incident Procedure • Child Safe Organisation Role-based Training Requirement Matrix for Staff and Volunteers
Review	<p>This policy and guidelines will be reviewed every two years and will incorporate current information, legislation and feedback as required.</p> <p>This policy is owned by: Service Quality, Risk and Compliance</p> <p>Policy updated on: 11 July 2022 Policy updated by: GM, Service Quality, Risk and Compliance Version number: 2.0 This version approved by: CEO This document can be viewed on: Learning Links Intranet, Preschool Website, Kajabi Policy Pack</p> <p>Policy due for review: 11 July 2024</p>

