



Safeguarding Children Reporting Policy

Scope and purpose

Lambert School follows all mandatory reporting requirements and has a safeguarding obligation to act on concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people enrolled at the School. All staff at Lambert School are mandatory reporters.

This policy describes how to report, how to support a child or young person, and each staff member's responsibilities, including:

- individual responsibility to contact authorities;
- the process for doing so (including circumstances that might lead to concerns for a child or young person);
- how to support the child or young person to whom the concern relates; and
- the legislation and frameworks that underpin these responsibilities.

1. Mandatory reporting

1.1 Policy statement

This policy is consistent with statutory requirements for mandatory reporting under Tasmanian law, including the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997* (the Act), and is informed by the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023* and the Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework.

As persons who work with children in an educational setting, staff and volunteers at Lambert School are mandatory reporters. As such, they are required to make a report as soon as practicable when they believe, suspect, or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person is being abused or neglected, or there is a reasonable likelihood of this occurring.

In 2009 the Act was amended to enable notifications to be received regarding unborn children, and concerns about the risk of harm to a child, or the impact of family violence, can now be acted upon to limit harm.

The Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework provides additional guidance for child-safe systems and practice. Further information can be accessed at the Tasmanian Framework page (see Sources/Relevant legislation). Where a situation involves immediate danger and requires urgent police or medical assistance, phone 000.

1.2 Definitions – abuse, neglect and “at risk”

The *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997* defines abuse and neglect as including:

- Sexual abuse
- Physical or emotional injury or other abuse to the extent that:
 - the injured, abused or neglected person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological harm detrimental to the person’s wellbeing; or
 - the injured, abused or neglected person’s physical or psychological development is in jeopardy.

The Act considers a child or young person “at risk” if, for example:

- the child has been, is being, or is likely to be abused or neglected;
- a threat to kill, abuse or neglect the child has been made by a person in frequent contact with the child;
- the child’s safety, psychological wellbeing or interests are affected or are likely to be affected (including where the child is exposed to family violence, including as an “affected child” within the meaning of the *Family Violence Act 2004*);
- the child’s guardians are unable or unwilling to maintain the child; and/or
- the child’s guardians are unable or unwilling to prevent the child from suffering abuse or neglect.

1.3 Indicators and types of harm (guidance for staff)

The following sections provide practical guidance to assist staff to identify and respond to concerns. (This guidance does not replace professional judgement; if in doubt, staff should report.)

Neglect

Neglect may occur where a child’s basic needs are not being met, including supervision,

medical care, nutrition, safe living conditions, or where a child is exposed to unsafe environments.

Supervision

Supervision concerns may relate to children being left without appropriate adult oversight, being exposed to hazardous environments, or being placed in situations where a child is not safe.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse includes any sexual activity involving a child or young person, including where a child is used for sexual gratification, is exposed to sexualised behaviour, or is coerced or manipulated. Sexual abuse can occur in-person or online.

Exhibitionism

Exhibitionism includes exposing a child to sexual acts or behaviour, including intentionally exposing genitals or engaging in sexual conduct in the presence of a child.

Sexual grooming

Sexual grooming refers to behaviours used to prepare and manipulate a child or young person for sexual contact or exploitation. Grooming may occur in-person or online and may include targeting a child's vulnerabilities, isolating them, testing boundaries, and normalising inappropriate behaviour.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse includes behaviours that cause significant emotional or psychological harm to a child or young person. It may include persistent criticism, humiliation, threats, intimidation, rejection, and patterns of behaviour that undermine a child's self-worth and wellbeing.

(Note: These categories align to common safeguarding descriptors and are intended as practical guidance for staff decision-making. Where a concern meets the threshold for reporting, it must be reported.)

1.4 What staff must do if they have a concern (mandatory reporting process)

If a staff member has concerns that a child or young person is being abused, neglected, or is at risk of harm, they must make a notification to the appropriate authority. A staff member may make a notification even where they do not have complete information; lack of complete information should not prevent a notification being made.

The responsibility to report is an individual obligation. Staff do not require permission from leadership to report.

Where possible and appropriate, staff should also inform the Principal that a report has been made, noting that informing the Principal does not replace the requirement to report.

1.5 Supporting the child or young person

Staff should respond in a way that supports the child or young person, prioritises safety, and avoids actions that could compromise safety or an investigation. This includes responding calmly, reassuring the child, and not making promises that cannot be kept (for example, promising secrecy). Staff should not conduct an investigation or ask leading questions.

1.6 Privacy, anonymity and notifier protections

Staff can call and be anonymous if they wish, but it is beneficial for authorities to have contact details so they can call again if further information is required.

If a staff member makes a notification, they may decide that they want to discuss the notification with the family, depending on circumstances. However, staff should be cautious about actions that may place the child or young person at greater risk, and should follow advice from authorities where appropriate.

In court, the identity of a notifier and any evidence identifying a notifier is protected in accordance with the law, noting that there are limited circumstances where evidence may be required.

2. Where to report (mandatory reporting)

In Tasmania, mandatory reports must be made by any adult who has a reasonable suspicion of, or evidence of, a child suffering abuse, harm or neglect. These reports must be made to Strong Families, Safe Kids (see below), who can also offer helpful advice.

Staff are advised that – *even if they are unsure whether the information they hold meets the criteria for a mandatory report* – they should make the call. Strong Families, Safe Kids can advise – and they are the ones who determine the action that must follow (the School does not).

For information about child wellbeing and safety, or to make a report, contact Strong Families, Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line.

- Phone: 1800 000 123

Additional (non-mandatory) resources

The following resources are not mandatory, but can provide help, support or advice either for staff, or for families.

Tasmanian Resources

For free and confidential support for people who have been affected by sexual assault, contact the Tasmanian Sexual Assault Support Line (24 hour response state-wide):

- Phone: 1800 697 877
This line is run by the Sexual Assault Support Service in the South, and Laurel House in the North West.

For information and support for children, young people and adults affected by family violence, contact Family Violence Counselling and Support Service:

- Phone: 1800 608 122

For support for relationships and to live positive lives, contact Relationships Australia Tasmania:

- Phone: 1300 364 277

National Resources

For domestic, family and sexual violence counselling and support, contact 1800RESPECT:

- Phone: 1800 737 732

For short-term support if you are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping or staying safe, contact Lifeline:

- Phone: 13 11 14

For free professional phone and online counselling for anyone affected by suicide living in Australia, contact Suicide Call Back Service:

- Phone: 1300 659 467

For information and support for anxiety, depression and suicide prevention for everyone in Australia, contact Beyond Blue:

- Phone: 1300 224 636

For information and support for anyone who is affected by complex trauma, contact Blue Knot Foundation:

- Phone: 1300 657 380

For counselling and support for Australian men, contact MensLine Australia:

- Phone: 1300 789 978

For advice for men about family violence, contact Men's Referral Service:

- Phone: 1300 766 491

For free 24/7, confidential and private counselling service for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years, contact Kids Helpline:

- Phone: 1800 55 1800

3. Reportable conduct scheme (workforce-related allegations)

3.1 Purpose and status

Although the SRB guidelines do not yet expressly require a standalone reportable conduct policy, the School is required to comply with the Tasmanian reportable conduct scheme. This section sets out how Lambert School will respond when concerns relate to the behaviour of an employee, contractor or volunteer.

3.2 Key terms and responsibilities

Under the reportable conduct scheme, the relevant statutory role is the Organisational Leader. At Lambert School, the Principal is the Organisational Leader for the purposes of receiving and managing reportable conduct matters.

The reportable conduct scheme requires organisational leaders to:

- notify the regulator upon becoming aware of conduct allegations involving an adult worker (this is called reportable conduct); and
- ensure appropriate action is taken, including oversight of investigations and outcomes.

3.3 Interaction with mandatory reporting

Where an allegation concerns harm to a child or young person by an adult worker, mandatory reporting obligations *may also apply*.

Mandatory reporting and reportable conduct are separate regimes; both may be triggered by the same incident and both must be complied with separately if required.

3.4 Reporting timeframes and action

Where reportable conduct is identified, the Organisational Leader must take immediate steps to manage risk and ensure the safety of children and young people.

Within three business days, the Organisational Leader must make the required notification to the CCYP through the relevant reporting mechanism (that is, the OIR).

At the end of the investigation, the Organisational Leader provides the regulator with the findings and details of any actions taken as a result.

4. Policy implementation

4.1 Communication and training

All staff and volunteers receive information about mandatory reporting obligations, safeguarding expectations, and reporting pathways as part of induction and through ongoing training. This

includes training to clarify the distinction between mandatory reporting and reportable conduct and the role of the Organisational Leader.

4.2 Recordkeeping

Records of reports and actions taken are managed securely and confidentially, consistent with the School's data management systems and privacy obligations.

4.3 Governance oversight

The School Board receives appropriate, de-identified reporting from the Principal (or their delegate) to provide governance oversight and assurance that safeguarding and reporting systems are functioning effectively. The Board does not investigate or manage individual incidents.

5. Sources / relevant legislation

- [Strong Families Safe Kids](#)
- [Office of the Independent Regulator \(OIR\)](#)
- [Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework](#)
- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- [Aboriginal Cultural Safety Guide](#)
- *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023*
- *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*
- *Criminal Code Act 1924*
- *Family Violence Act 2004*
- *Right to Information Act 2009*
- Reportable Conduct Scheme (Tasmania)
- Commissioner for Children and Young People (Tasmania)