



# Yarrunga Primary Child Safe

## A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST

### Protective Concerns

You are concerned about a child because you have:

- Received a disclosure from a child about abuse or neglect
- Observed indicators of abuse or neglect
- Been made aware of possible harm via your involvement in the community external to your professional role.

At all times remember to:

- Record your observations
- Follow appropriate protocols
- Consult notes and records
- Consult with appropriate colleagues if necessary
- Consult with other support agencies if necessary

STEP 1	RESPONDING TO CONCERNS	STEP 2	FORMING A BELIEF ON REASONABLE GROUNDS	STEP 3	MAKING A REFERRAL TO Child FIRST	STEP 4	MAKING A REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If your concerns relate to the immediate protection of a child; or you have formed a belief that a child is at significant risk of harm <b>Go to Step 4</b></li> <li>2. If you have significant concerns that child and their family need referral to Child FIRST for family services <b>Go to Step 3</b></li> <li>3. In all other situations <b>Go to Step 2</b></li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider the level of immediate danger. Ask:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Have you formed a belief that a child has suffered or at risk of suffering significant harm? <b>YES/NO</b></li> <li>b. Do I have any doubt about the child's safety and the parent's ability to protect the child? <b>YES/NO</b></li> </ol> </li> <li>2. If you answered yes to one of the above questions <b>Go to Step 4</b></li> <li>3. If you have significant concerns that child and their family need referral to Child FIRST for family services <b>Go to Step 3</b></li> </ol>		<p><b>Child Wellbeing Referral</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact your local Child FIRST Phone: Hume 1300 786 433</li> <li>2. Have your notes and observations ready as well as child and family details</li> </ol>		<p><b>Mandatory/Protective Report</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact Child Protection Intake provider immediately  North-eastern rural and regional LGAS Tel. 1800 650 227  After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services Call: 131 278</li> <li>2. Have your notes and observations ready as well as child and family details To report child abuse, contact your regional Child Protection office as soon as possible.  If you are making a report, please use the main Intake Unit number. For all other enquiries, please contact the appropriate regional office.</li> </ol>

## Definition of Abuse

The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989, defines child abuse as "...the harming (whether physically, emotionally, sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person." The following lists are indicators of abuse. They should not be seen as an exhaustive list and should not be used as a checklist.

Physical Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect
<p>Physical abuse is when a child suffers or is likely to suffer from a non-accidental act that results in physical harm. It can be inflicted in many ways, including, but not limited to; beating, shaking, burning, hitting, drowning, suffocation, biting, poisoning, use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles) or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or). Physical abuse also involves the fabrication or inducing of illness.</p> <p>Possible physical indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained bruises</li> <li>• Burns and/or fractures bones</li> </ul> <p>Possible behavioural indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing wariness or distrust of adults</li> <li>• Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)</li> <li>• Fear of specific people</li> <li>• Unexplained absences</li> <li>• Academic problems</li> </ul>	<p>Emotional abuse is when a child suffers persistent emotional harm such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This can include repeated rejection, isolation, threats of violence, degrading, ignoring, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes the seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others.</p> <p>Possible physical indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development</li> <li>• Physical signs of self-harming</li> </ul> <p>Possible behavioural indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibiting low self-esteem</li> <li>• Exhibiting high anxiety</li> <li>• Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour</li> <li>• Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful</li> <li>• Self-harming</li> </ul>	<p>Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism as well as non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours.</p> <p>Possible physical indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of sexually transmitted diseases</li> <li>• Pregnancy</li> <li>• Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge</li> </ul> <p>Possible behavioural indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displaying sexual behaviours or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age.</li> <li>• Difficulty sleeping</li> <li>• Being withdrawn</li> <li>• Complaining of headaches or stomach pains</li> <li>• Fear of specific people</li> <li>• Showing wariness or distrust of adults</li> <li>• Displaying aggressive behaviour</li> </ul>	<p>Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.</p> <p>Possible physical indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent hunger</li> <li>• Malnutrition</li> <li>• Poor hygiene</li> <li>• Inappropriate clothing</li> </ul> <p>Possible behavioural indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stealing food</li> <li>• Staying at school outside of school hours</li> <li>• Aggressive behaviour</li> <li>• Misusing alcohol or drugs</li> <li>• Academic issues</li> </ul>

# Child Safety Reporting Process

**Who can report?**

Parent

Child

Staff member or volunteer

**What to report?**

Any child safety concerns, including:

1. disclosure of abuse or harm
2. allegation, suspicion or observation
3. breach of Code of Conduct
4. environment safety issues

Call 000 if the child is in immediate danger

**How?**

Face-to-face verbal report, letter, email, telephone call, meeting

**Who to?**

Child Safety Person, Principal, Leadership

**What happens next?**

The Child Safety Person, Principal or Leadership will:

1. Offer support to the child, the parents, the person who reports and the accused staff member or volunteer
2. Initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process (if required)
3. Decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should/must be reported to the police or Child Protection and make report as soon as possible if required.

**Outcome**

Investigation; outcome decided; relevant staff, volunteers, parents and child notified of outcome of investigation; policies, procedures updated where necessary.

## Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse

When a child discloses abuse, this must be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately and carefully both for the child's wellbeing and to ensure that your actions do not jeopardise any legal action against the abuser.

The following are some 'rules' that should be followed.

- Don't panic.
- Remember that the safety and well-being of the child come before the interests of any other person.
- Listen to the child and accept what the child says.
  - Look at the child directly, but do not appear shocked.
  - Don't seek help while the child is talking to you.
  - Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone.
  - Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help.
  - Let them know that you need to tell someone else.
  - Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
  - Be aware that the child may have been threatened.
- Write down what the child says in their own words – record what you have seen and heard also.
- Tell the principal or welfare coordinator as soon as possible.
- Refer to Child FIRST, Child Protection and/or Police
- After making the referral, look after yourself. Discuss the matter with the principal or welfare coordinator.

## REMEMBER

- Record suspicion - Make notes, recording what you observe. Date and sign the entry
- If your suspicions are diminished, continue to monitor situation closely, in consultation with others.

## Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse

Things <b>TO SAY</b> when a child discloses:	Things <b>NOT TO SAY</b> when a child discloses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat the last few words in a questioning manner</li> <li>• 'I believe you'</li> <li>• 'I am going to try and help you'</li> <li>• 'I will help you'</li> <li>• 'I am glad that you told me'</li> <li>• 'You are not to blame'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'You should have told someone before'</li> <li>• 'I can't believe it! I am shocked!'</li> <li>• 'Oh that explains a lot'</li> <li>• 'No not ... he's a friend of mine'</li> <li>• 'I won't tell anyone else'</li> <li>• 'Why?' How? When? Where? Who?'</li> </ul>
Things <b>TO DO</b>	Things <b>NOT TO DO</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassure the child that it was right to tell you.</li> <li>• Let them know what you are going to do next.</li> <li>• Immediately seek help, in the first place from the designated child protector.</li> <li>• Write down accurately what the child has told you. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure place for an indefinite period.</li> <li>• Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not attempt to deal with the situation yourself.</li> <li>• <b>Do NOT</b> formally interview the child:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Never ask leading questions.</li> <li>○ Never push for information or make assumptions.</li> <li>○ Only necessary relevant facts should be obtained, when clarification is needed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do not make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incident.</li> <li>• Do not keep information to yourself or promise confidentiality.</li> <li>• Do not take any action that undermine any future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged perpetrator or parent or carers.</li> <li>• Do not permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegations to the designated child protection officer.</li> </ul>

### Responding to signs of Child Abuse

- Make notes – record what you observe. Date and sign the entry
- Continue to observe – record what you observe, date and sign each entry
- Consult Colleagues – Get support and advice from colleagues or principal
- When talking to children – do so with respect and remember the child's privacy and confidentiality.
- Talk to the Parents – only if you believe it will not jeopardise the safety of the child

### The intake worker will ask for certain information:

- Details – the child's or young person's name, age and address
- Indicators of harm – the reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse or neglect
- Reason for reporting – the reason why the call is being made now
- Safety assessment – assessment of immediate danger to the child or children. For example, information may be sought on the whereabouts of the alleged abuser or abusers
- Description – description of the injury or behaviour observed.
- Child's whereabouts – the current whereabouts of the child or young person
- Other service – your knowledge of other services involved with the family
- Family information – any other information about the family
- Cultural characteristics – any specific cultural or other details that will help to care for the child, for example, cultural origins, interpreter or disability needs