



# NARNIA CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE

ACN 002 919 584

(Administered by St. Philip's Christian Education Foundation Ltd.)



Foundation Office

For the Whole of Their Life

## CHILD PROTECTION

### **Policy:**

To provide and maintain a safe environment is the main consideration at Narnia Christian Preschool and Early Childhood Centre.

It is the aim that the Centre takes a preventive stance on Child Protection issues, by developing and maintaining an open and aware culture that is dynamic in its processes and encourages active participation from all Educators and Staff at Narnia.

It is important for individuals to feel that voicing a concern is not viewed as an accusation and that Educators, Staff and others have confidence that their concerns will be dealt with professionally and in a timely manner.

### **Background:**

This Policy is based on the *Children and Young Peoples Act (2008)*, as well as information provided by Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS) and Office for Children Youth and Family Support (OCYFS).

**Definitions of Child Abuse:** (Child: person under the age of 12 years old Young person 12 up until 18 years old)

***Physical abuse:*** is any non-accidental injury or serious harm inflicted upon a child or young person by any person who is in a position of power over that child.

***Sexual abuse:*** occurs when anyone uses their power or authority to take advantage of a child or young person's trust or uses fear to involve that child in activity for the sexual gratification of the abuser.

***Neglect:*** is failure to provide an adequate standard of nutrition, shelter, clothing, hygiene or medical care. It also includes inadequate supervision, which may result in exposure to dangerous or life threatening situations.

***Emotional:*** is a chronic attack on a child or young person's self esteem. It can take the form of name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child or young person. It also incorporates the impact of domestic violence on children and young people which impacts on their development and wellbeing.

## **MANDATORY REPORTING**

### **What is Mandatory Reporting?**

The legal requirement to report a reasonable belief that a child or young person is experiencing or has experienced non accidental physical injury or sexual abuse.

### **Who is mandated to notify?**

Subsection 356(2) of the *Children and Young Peoples Act 2008 (ACT)* has a list of people that are mandated reporters. Paragraph 356(2)(j) provides that a person caring for a child at a childcare centre is a mandated reporter. Under s356 of the Act it is an offence for a mandated reporter not to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.

You do not have to be able to prove the abuse has occurred. It is your legal responsibility to report what you believe has occurred from evidence presented.

A mandated reporter is not legally required to report emotional abuse or neglect but is encouraged to do so as a voluntary reporter if they believe or suspect that a child or young person is being abused or neglected or is at risk of abuse or neglect.

### **Procedure:**

It is very important to report concerns about child abuse and neglect in a timely manner. Narnia Educators and Staff must comply with the following procedure to ensure Mandated Reporting requirements are met.

#### ***If Child Abuse (any form) is suspected;***

1. Discuss with the Centre Director to decide severity and next step taken:

a) The Centre Director shall notify the Principal of the suspected abuse.

b) The Centre Director or Principal shall contact the **Child Protection Helpline on 132111** (TTY 1 800 212 936). Support Line for Mandatory Reporting 8am – 5pm Mon – Fri 1300 760 641.

The Child Protection Helpline is a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, statewide call centre staffed by professionally qualified caseworkers to receive and screen all reports.

c) The Centre Director will comply and follow the directions given by Care and Protection Services eg whether to contact the parents/legal guardians or not, gather evidence, may include taking photos and any other requirements.

d) The Centre Director, Educators and staff are to collate accurate documentation of events

e) The Director will notify a Children's Services Licensing Advisor of the reported suspected child abuse.

If in the event a parent or legal guardian is suspected of perpetrating abuse, the Centre will contact Care and Protection Services as soon as possible. This is to allow Care and Protection Services the opportunity to investigate appropriately.

If in the event an Educator or other Staff member is suspected of perpetrating abuse, the Centre will contact Care and Protection Services as soon as possible.

This is to allow Care and Protection Services the opportunity to investigate appropriately. Reported to police – complete a SI01 Notification of Serious Incident Form and submit to Department of Education and Communities (DEC) within 24 hours.

Report not made to police – Complete NL01 Notification of Complaint and Incidents (other than serious incidents) form and submit to Department of Education and Communities (DEC) within 7 days.

2. Relevant staff need to be **debriefed** by the Centre Director.

3. **Counselling** is to be provided to relevant Educators and staff members, to equip them on how to deal with the issues appropriately and professionally, as well as giving Educators help to care for affected child/children.

4. Educators and staff must have attended training or professional development on child protection.

### **Source:**

- Department of Housing and Community Services (dhcs) ACT / Keeping Children and Young People Safe, a shared community responsibility / A guide to reporting child abuse and neglect in the ACT  
[http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/5660/Web\\_copy2009\\_Keeping\\_Children.pdf](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/5660/Web_copy2009_Keeping_Children.pdf)
- NCPC (National Child Protection Clearinghouse) / resource sheet / August 2010 / Daryl Higgins, Leah Bromfield, Nick Richardson, Prue Holzer & Claire Berlyn  
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/rs3/rs3.pdf>

*This policy and procedure links to the following:*

*National Quality Standards: 2.3.4*

*Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*

*Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*

*Ombudsman Act 1974*

*Education and Care Services National Regulation, Regulation 8.*