Child Safety Reporting Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain the roles and responsibilities of staff and their duty of care in relation to the reporting requirements around abuse to children in line with the Child Safe Policy & Procedure (Q Drive).

RATIONALE

Children and young people under the age of 18 are potentially vulnerable and can unfortunately be exposed to situations beyond their control which can lead to harm.

POLICY

NIET is committed to the care, safety and protection of all students and has a zero tolerance of child abuse. This responsibility extends to the identification and timely response to concerns regarding possible sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child.

All staff are required to hold a current Working with Children Check. Any registered Teachers employed by NIET are part of the State of Victoria mandatory reporters. However, all persons have a duty of care to ensure the safety of children.

Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory Reporters are defined as:-
- teachers and principals;
- registered medical practitioners;
- nurses; and
- police.

Mandated staff members are required by law to make a report to Department of Health & Human Services (Child Protection) as soon as practical after they have formed reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. It is expected that all NIET staff will make a report in these circumstances. Reasonable grounds of sexual offences on a child under the age of 16 MUST be reported to the Police.

On each occasion that reasonable grounds is formed, or when new information becomes available, it must also be reported to the DHHS or the Police if of a sexual nature on a child under the age of 16, even if there have been instances of other reports made relating to the child by other parties.

Reasonable grounds are more than a rumour or speculation but maybe less than having proof.

Reasonable grounds may include:
- A child tells the professional that he/she has been abused;
- A child states that they know someone who has been abused;
The professional observes the child’s behaviour which leads them to believe that the child has been abused; or
The professional observes physical signs or indicators of abuse.

Responsibility

If any NIET staff member or volunteer that is not a mandatory reporter believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, they must report their concerns to the company’s Child Safety Representative/Officer or to a NIET management team member for action.

These instances must also be reported to DHHS or Victoria Police where the child’s parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from harm. Under the new criminal offences “Failure to Protect”, Failure to Disclose” there is a legal obligation for all adults to report child abuse. Failure to do so can result in a criminal offence.

Confidentiality

As much as is reasonably possible, an individual’s right to privacy is to be protected. Due process and privacy is maintained for the individual making the report and for the student and their family.

Record Keeping

All reports of alleged abuse or harm, or risk thereof, are duly recorded. Reports are to record factual details, such as: places, times, dates, names of people, observable behaviours or evidence of harm on the Child Safety and Wellbeing register.

IMPLEMENTATION

Making a report

Staff do not require the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to Child Protection or the Victorian Police, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so. Staff is expected to follow the Department policy for making a report set out at:


Reports to Child Protection and Victoria Police are confidential unless you consent or a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary in the interests of justice for your identity to be disclosed.

Roles

It is the role of the of NIET Management team to ensure all current staff and potential employees are aware and informed of the NIET Policy on Child Safety reporting.

Staff training

As part of their initial induction to NIET, new staff will be informed of child protection reporting requirements and must complete online training provided the DHHS prior to formal commencement
with NIET. All internal staff are also required to complete the online training yearly to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities in child safety reporting.

RELATED POLICIES
- Access and Equity Policy & Procedure
- Privacy Policy and Procedure
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Staff Recruiting Policy & Procedure
- Child safe Policy & Procedure

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
- Child Safe Standards 2016
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Crimes Act 1958
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Child Safety Incident Report Form
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Register
- 2017 Skills First Program funding contract 4.2

Revision History:

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<th>Date</th>
<th>December 2016 Version 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Source:</td>
<td>Q:\VERSION CONTROLLED DOCUMENTS Acts, Regulations, Codes of Practice, ISO/AS/NZ Standards ASQA Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 Skills First Program VET Funding Contract 2017</td>
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<td>Review Date:</td>
<td>December 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authorised by Director:</td>
<td>Carol Campbell</td>
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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

1. If your concerns relate to a child in need of immediate protection; or you have formed a belief that a child is at significant risk of harm*.
   - Go to Step 4
2. If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services.
   - Go to Step 3
3. In all other situations
   - Go to Step 2

* Refer to Appendix 2: Definitions of child abuse and indicators of harm in the Protocol – Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people

**STEP 2**  FORMING A BELIEF ON REASONABLE GROUNDS

1. Consider the level of immediate danger to the child.
   - Ask yourself:
     - a) Have I formed a belief that the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm?
       - YES / NO
     - b) Am I in doubt about the child’s safety and the parent’s ability to protect the child?
       - YES / NO
   - If you answered yes to a) or b)
     - Go to Step 4
2. If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services.
   - Go to Step 3

**STEP 3**  MAKING A REFERRAL TO Child FIRST

1. Contact your local Child FIRST provider.
   - See over for contact list for local Child FIRST phone numbers.
2. Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details.

**STEP 4**  MAKE A REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION

1. Contact your local Child Protection Intake provider immediately.
   - See over for contact list for local Child Protection phone numbers.
   - For After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services, call 131 278.
2. Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details.

* Non-mandated staff members who believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection are able to report their concerns to Child Protection

For further information refer to Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people – A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children’s Services and Victorian Schools.
### Contact Numbers

**Department of Education and Early Childhood Development**

**Department of Human Services Child Protection**

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<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>(03) 9265 2400</td>
<td>Box Hill</td>
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<td>Northern</td>
<td>(03) 9488 9488</td>
<td>Geelong</td>
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**Office for Children and Licensed Children’s Services:**

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#### Important Information for Government Schools

- **Principals of Victorian Government schools must report all incidents to the Emergency and Security Management Unit on 03 9589 6166.**

- **Victoria Police**
  - **Catholic Education Offices**
    - Catholic Education Office, Melbourne: (03) 9267 0228
    - Catholic Education Office, Ballarat: (03) 5337 7335
    - Catholic Education Office, Sale: (03) 562 1600
    - Catholic Education Office, Sandhurst: (03) 5443 2377
  - **Independent Schools Victoria**
    - (03) 9825 7200
  - **Victoria Aboriginal Education Association, Inc.**
    - (03) 9481 0800
  - **Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit**
    - (03) 9267 7666
  - **Centre Against Sexual Assault**
    - (03) 9825 7200
  - **Gatehouse Centre, Royal Children’s Hospital**
    - (03) 9345 6391
  - **Child Safety Commissioner**
    - (03) 8801 5884
  - **Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency**
    - (03) 8258 8200

#### Other

- **Northern Grampians, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Yarrambat, Horsham**
  - Ararat, Pyreees, Hepburn, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Moorabool

- **Hume**
  - Wodonga, Towong, Indigo
  - Alpine, Benalla, Mansfield, Wangaratta

- **Greater Shepparton, Strathbogie, Moira**
  - Mitchell, Murrindindi

- **Loddon-Mallee**
  - Greater Bendigo, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander

- **Victoria Police**
  - (03) 9267 0228

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