

QA2 – REPORTING AND DOCUMENTING CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS PROCEDURE

INFORMATION

It is vital that all concerns are documented, and if required, reported, as soon as possible to ensure that children are protected, and support mechanisms can be put in place. All educators, staff and volunteers are committed to identifying, documenting and reporting child protection concerns related to the children and under age educators within our service. All educators, staff and volunteers understand that they are mandatory reporters.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All team members, visitors, students and volunteers must comply with this procedure.

PROCEDURE

IDENTIFYING IF A CHILD MAY HAVE BEEN HARMED

All educators, staff and volunteers are trained in child protection, including the indicators of abuse/neglect. For detailed information regarding indicators of abuse/neglect, please see our *“Indicators of abuse/neglect Tool”* and if in doubt, please speak immediately to the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person in Charge.

DOCUMENTING A SUSPICION OF HARM

A “suspicion of harm” is where you have a reasonable suspicion that a child (including underage team members) has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm.

If a team member has a suspicion of harm they will:

- Record their concerns as soon as possible, noting as many of the facts as possible, using non-judgmental, opinion free language – the record should include:
 - The time, date and place of when you became suspicious
 - The circumstances that led you to become suspicious
 - If possible, the time, date and place of the suspected abuse/neglect
 - Full details of the suspected abuse
 - The date of the report and team member signature
- Record their own observations as well as precise details of any discussion with a parent (who may for example explain a noticeable mark on a child).
- Not conduct their own investigation
- Bring their concerns to the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person in Charge immediately

- Ensure all relevant paperwork is completed, noting that depending on the situation, incident reports or serious incident notifications may need to be done
- Ensure that the records are stored and maintained in line with privacy and confidentiality requirements.

DOCUMENTING A DISCLOSURE OF HARM

A “disclosure of harm” is where someone, including a child, tells you that harm has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen, to a child.

When receiving a disclosure of harm, team members will:

- Talk to the person (child, parent, other adult) in a private place (if appropriate)
- Stay calm and not display expressions of shock or panic
- Not promise to keep a secret
- Only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report – do not ‘interview’ or probe. Questions such as “What happened next?” or “When did this happen?” are acceptable, but do not ask “Why?” questions
- Avoid going over the information time and time again; you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report
- Tell the child/person they have done the right thing
- If talking to a child:
 - state clearly that the abuse is not the child’s fault
 - be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace
 - do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to
- Document the disclosure as soon as possible to ensure the details are accurately captured – documentation should include:
 - The time, date and place of the disclosure
 - Detail surrounding how the disclosure came to be made
 - A word for word description of the what was said
 - Any actions that were or are being taken
 - The date of the report, and the team member signature.
- Bring the disclosure to the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person in Charge immediately
- Ensure that the records are stored and maintained in line with privacy and confidentiality requirements.

REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

- It is vital that all child protection concerns are immediately reported to the relevant authorities and organisations, noting that depending on the state/territory your centre operates in, there may be more than one report that needs to be made. The Nominated Supervisor will report the concern to the Department of Early Childhood Education and Care.
- It doesn’t matter if you think that someone else may have reported the concern, or if you had previously made a report – if you have information that leads you to believe that a child is at risk of harm, you must make a report.
- Remember, proof is not required to support a claim and it is not the responsibility of staff or educators to determine or investigate whether child abuse, neglect or a criminal offence has actually occurred; this is the role of the relevant organisation and authorities to whom the concern is reported to.

- If you are confused or in doubt about whether to report, contact your relevant authority – they are the experts in this field and will make the determination.
- If your concerns are about the parent/guardian of the child, do not inform them that you have contacted the authorities. If your concerns are about a person who is not the parent/guardian, your Nominated Supervisor, in conjunction with their Area manager, will determine if/when and how the parent of the child will be notified.

See below for a detailed overview of the relevant authorities that need to be notified of child protection concerns, noting that the authority may also direct you to contact other organisations or the police after you have made your report.

Please note – educators and staff should contact the police on 000 if there is an immediate danger to a child and intervene instantly if safe to do so. Police should also be called immediately if the child has been the victim of a criminal offence.

State/Territory	Authority/Organisation to be notified
Queensland	Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety Brisbane and Moreton Bay - 1300 682 254 Far North Queensland - 1300 684 062 North Queensland - 1300 706 147 South East (Logan, Gold Coast and Bayside) - 1300 679 849 South West (Darling Downs) Toowoomba - 1300 683 390 South West (West Moreton) Ipswich - 1800 316 855 Sunshine Coast and Central Queensland - 1300 703 762 After hours service: 1800 177 135

AFTER A REPORT HAS BEEN MADE

- The relevant team members(s) and the Nominated Supervisor will engage in a review after the report has been made to critically reflect on the event and the process undertaken to report. Any areas for improvement that are identified will be actioned as soon as possible.
- Staff who were involved in receiving the disclosure and making the report will be offered support via the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or similar process/system.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Date Reviewed	Modifications
Oct 2019	Reviewed and created new policy document and format.
Oct 2024	Updated contact details

June 2025

Updated to explicitly include underage team members as children for the purpose of child protection matters