

Mandatory Reporting Fact Sheet

Systems, policies, and procedures

STANDARD 6

EFFECTIVE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

Criteria 6.1

The entity's Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.

Indicators

6.1.1 Policies and procedures address mandatory reporting obligations

'Comparative studies between countries with and without a mandatory reporting system have found that substantially more cases of child sexual abuse are identified in countries with a mandatory reporting system'. (Royal Commission, 2017)

What is Mandatory Reporting?

Mandatory reporting is the process of notifying relevant authorities about the known or suspected abuse or harm of children. It plays a fundamental and critical role in protecting the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people. Mandatory reporting also supports professionals and community members to identify signs of abuse and overcome any reluctance to report.

Mandatory reporting is proven to have a significant impact in reducing and preventing incidents of child abuse.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Final Report made several recommendations focusing on improving mandatory reporting schemes throughout Australian jurisdictions.

- **Recommendation 7.1** State and territory governments that do not have a mandatory reporter guide should introduce one and require its use by mandatory reporters.
- **Recommendation 7.2** Institutions and state and territory governments should provide mandatory reporters with access to experts who can provide timely advice on child sexual abuse reporting obligations.
- **Recommendation 7.3** State and territory governments should amend laws concerning mandatory reporting to child protection authorities to achieve national consistency in reporter groups.

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards address reporting suspected or known abuse throughout Standard 6 [Standard 7 also requires entities provide education and training on reporting obligations, which includes mandatory reporting). Standard 6.1 and 6.4 specifically reference mandatory reporting requirements to Statutory bodies.

NCSS Standard 6 – Effective Complaints Management

- **Criterion 6.1: The entity’s Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.**
- **Criterion 6.4: The Complaints Handling Policy includes the process of reporting complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, requiring cooperation with any statutory or contractual processes.**

Responsibility of each state and territory

Each Australian state and territory is responsible for implementing a Mandatory Reporting system. Whilst the primary goal of reducing incidents of abuse and harm is the focus, there are significant differences in reporting procedures across the country.

Mandatory reporters are:

- legally obligated to report known or suspected child abuse to the relevant authorities in their jurisdiction;
- generally professionals employed within organisations serving children and young people (people who are mandatory reporters differ across states and territories);
- at risk of legal and professional consequences if they fail to report known or suspected child abuse.

Further information regarding the Mandatory Reporting Requirements for each state and territory can be located here:

- [Australian Capital Territory](#)
- [New South Wales](#)
- [Northern Territory](#)
- [Queensland](#)
- [South Australia](#)
- [Tasmania](#)
- [Victoria](#)
- [Western Australia](#)