

# Mandatory Reporting Western Australia

## 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

*Mandatory Legislation in WA falls under The Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)*

The health, safety and wellbeing of children is paramount in all organisations providing services to children across Australia. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the need for improvement in the processes and outcomes of reporting child abuse. NCSS Standard 6 focuses on effective complaints handling and reporting obligations and supports organisations to implement robust and transparent reporting procedures. This fact sheet provides information on mandatory reporting in Victoria.

#### WHO ARE MANDATORY REPORTERS?

WA mandatory reporters are:

- doctors
- nurses and midwives
- teachers
- police officers
- boarding supervisors
- ministers of religion

**With regard to the Catholic Church specifically, mandatory reporters include clergy, religious, lay ministers, church elders and religious brothers and sisters, who provide services to children.**

#### WHAT REQUIRES REPORTING?

Mandatory reporters are legally required to report any reasonable concerns, whether in their paid or unpaid duties, regarding the sexual abuse of a child or young person.

If a mandatory reporter has concerns about a child regarding other forms of abuse (physical, emotional and neglect) then this should continue to be reported, but there is no penalty if a report is not made. You do not require proof to make a report.

### HOW DO I MAKE A REPORT?

If a reporter believes the child is in imminent danger and at risk of immediate serious harm, they must call 000.

Reports must be made to the Department of Communities - Child Protection and Family Support's Mandatory Reporting Service. A verbal report can be made by calling 1800 708 704 and must be followed up by a written report within 24 hours.

Written reports can be made using the online reporting form found [here](#).

You can also print the PDF [mandatory reporting form](#) and email it to [mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au](mailto:mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au)

If you have any concerns about other forms of abuse of a child that does not include sexual abuse you should make a report.

In metropolitan areas contact the Department's Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889 or email [CPDUTY@cpfs.wa.gov.au](mailto:CPDUTY@cpfs.wa.gov.au).

In country areas report concerns to the Department through a local [district office](#).

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REPORT IS MADE?

The Mandatory Reporting Service will make an initial assessment on reports regarding sexual abuse and take the most appropriate action. All written reports will be provided to Western Australian Police for assessment and action where required. An investigation may occur collaboratively between child protection services and the police. Not all reports will result in an investigation.

The reporter will receive a standardised letter stating that a report has been received and providing a receipt number.

Organisations must maintain records of all reports made as per record keeping policies and procedures.

### WILL THE CHILD OR FAMILY BE INFORMED THAT I HAVE MADE A REPORT?

The identity of a reporter or referrer must remain confidential unless in the following circumstances:

- the reporter chooses to inform the child or family about the report
- the reporter consents in writing that their identity can be disclosed
- a court or tribunal requests it in order to ensure the safety of a child

### WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT REPORTING CONCERNS ABOUT THE SAFETY, WELFARE AND WELLBEING OF A CHILD?

If you are a mandatory reporter, you are legally bound to report any concerns you have regarding the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child.

Failure to make a report regarding the known or suspected sexual abuse of a child carries a fine of \$6000 for all mandatory reporters.

Mandatory reporting must be included in child safeguarding policies and procedures including the Code of Conduct. Failing to report regarding concerns about the welfare, safety and wellbeing of a child will also lead to disciplinary action within an organisation.

Failure to provide a written report following a verbal report carries a fine of \$3000.

Further information regarding mandatory reporting in Western Australia can be found [here](#).