

5.1 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Related Legislation and Policy

1. Legislation

This policy is aligned with the requirements of the following legislation:

- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- [Children and Community Services Act 2004](#)
- [Children and Community Services Amendment Act 2008](#)
- [Young Offenders Act 1994](#)
- [Teachers Registration Act 2012](#)
- [School Education Act 1999](#)
- [National Safe School's Framework](#)
- [Corruption and Crime Commission Act 2003 \(WA\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Commonwealth\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act: Standards for Education 2005 \(Commonwealth\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(WA\)](#)
- [Working with Children \(Criminal Record Checking\) Act 2004 \(WA\)](#)
- [Working with Children \(Criminal Record Checking\) Regulations 2005 \(WA\)](#)
- [Restraining Orders Act 1997 \(WA\)](#)
- [Restraining Orders and Related Legislation Amendment \(Family Violence\) Act 2016](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988](#)
- [Privacy Amendment \(Notifiable Data Breaches\) Act 2017](#)

2. Related Policies/Guidelines/Supporting Documents

This policy is linked to the following school policies and guidelines:

- Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Reporting Policy
- Record Keeping and Retention Policy
- Welfare Policy
- Counselling Policy
- Critical Incident Management Policy
- Complaints and Disputes Policy
- Student Behaviour Management Policy
- Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy
- School Excursions, Camps and Tours Guidelines
- Duty of Care Policy
- Charter of Commitment
- Code of Conduct – Student, Staff and Parent

Overview

1. Policy Statement

At Sowilo Community High School we understand the duty of care we have to our students.

Our school community is committed to providing a safe, positive and educational environment where students are protected from all forms of bullying, harm, neglect or abuse. Our safeguarding practices reflect industry best practices, legislative responsibilities, governance requirements, our school philosophy and our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our students.

This policy has been authorised and endorsed by the Sowilo Community High School – School Council.

2. Introduction

Our Child Protection Policy is based on the following principles:

- Every student has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse or neglect.
- The best interests of our students are our priority. We provide them with a safe environment, we listen to them and we hear them.
- We use a holistic approach to student safety and wellbeing.
- We strongly encourage student safety and wellbeing concerns or challenges to be communicated as early as possible.

We provide a safe environment by:

- Our commitment to providing a culturally safe environment for our school community.
- Having zero tolerance to all forms of bullying, harm, abuse or neglect.
- Implementing systems to protect and empower our students.
- Taking all allegations and disclosures seriously and responding to them in accordance with our policies and procedures and legislative requirements.
- Making sure our staff, volunteers and community partners are supported in their roles by providing appropriate training, information and support.
- Making sure our policies and procedures are accessible to our community.
- Implementing a regular schedule of review of our policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Implementing a strong, detailed and well-structured screening and recruitment process for all staff, volunteers and community partners.

This policy provides information to our school community so they can understand their responsibilities in safeguarding the wellbeing of our students.

3. Background

In 2018, the Council of Australian Governments supported the implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. This formed part of the response to the recommendations made in the 2017 final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. These ten principles provide a nationally consistent approach to creating organisational cultures that foster child safety and wellbeing across all sectors in Australia. They reflect the child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission and cover sexual abuse and other forms of harm to children and young people.

Since January 1, 2009, the Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting of Sexual Abuse of Children) Act has been in effect. It is in place to protect and safeguard the wellbeing of students.

This amendment forms part of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 and includes the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse by certain professions.

This legislation is specific to sexual abuse and carries a penalty for the required professions if they fail to report.

In Western Australia, the mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse are:

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Midwives
- Teachers
- Police officers
- Boarding supervisors

These first five professions were chosen by Parliament because they were identified as most likely to be in contact with children. Following on from the recommendations of the Blaxall Inquiry into abuse at the Katanning Hostel, boarding supervisors were added as the sixth profession in 2016.

The goal of all child safe organisations is to make sure appropriate and adequate safeguards are in place to provide an environment that protect the safety and wellbeing of all students.

4. Policy Communication

This policy is:

- Available for download on our school website.
- Available to Parents/Guardians upon request.
- Provided to new staff at the start of their employment.
- Stored in soft copy on our school drive.
- Stored as hard copy with our administration team.

All Sowilo Community High School all staff including our volunteers, community partners and School Council are expected to be familiar with the contents of the policy including their responsibilities.

Definitions

The following are definitions of terms used throughout the document.

Term	Definition
Child	A person younger than 18 years of age or appears to be under the age of 18 if the age of a person cannot be proven.
Child Abuse and Neglect	Refers to any form of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual abuse or neglect.
Child/Student Protection	Philosophies, policies, standards, procedures, guidelines to protect child/students from both intentional and unintentional harm.
Teacher	<p>The definition of teacher in section 124A of the Children and Community Services Act 2004 has been changed to read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. person who is registered under the Teacher Registration Act 2012; or b. a person who provides instruction in a course that is - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. mentioned in the School Education Act 1999 s11B(1)(a), (b) or (e) and II. prescribed for the purposes of this definition; or c. A person who instructs or supervises a student who is participating in an activity that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. part of an educational program of a school under an arrangement mentioned in the School Education Act 1999 s24(1); and II. prescribed for the purposes of this definition; or d. A person employed by the chief executive officer as defined in the Young Offenders Act 1994 s3 to teach detainees at a detention centre as defined in that section.
Parent/Guardian	The student's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for that student. This includes a person who is regarded as a parent of a student under Aboriginal customary law or Aboriginal traditions.
Duty of Care	A duty imposed by the law to take care to minimise the foreseeable risk of harm to another.
Reasonable Grounds	A person with professional training and including professional judgement, objective observation which identifies warning signs or indicators of student sexual abuse, knowledge of student development and consultation with other staff members with the belief that it is accurate.
Mandatory Reporting	Refers to the legal requirement to report a belief that a child has been or continues to be sexually abused on or after 1/1/2009. The following definition assists in the formation of a belief that a child has been sexually abused.

Term	Definition
	<p>In relation to a child/student the term 'sexual abuse' includes sexual behaviour where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The child/student is the subject of bribery, coercion, threat, exploitation, or violence. The child/student has less power than another person involved in the behaviour. There is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child/student and another person involved in the behaviour.
Mandatory reporter	<p>In Western Australia, a Mandatory Reporter is someone who is required by legislation to report to the Mandatory Reporting Service if they form the belief that a child has been or continues to be sexually abused on or after 1st January 2009.</p> <p>Under Western Australia law, the following professions are Mandatory Reporters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> doctors nurses midwives teachers police officers boarding supervisors
Non-Mandatory Reporter	<p>Any person/profession working in a role that is not recognised as a Mandatory Reporting role. (administration staff, social workers, counsellors)</p>
Protective Behaviours	<p>A personal safety program designed to provide students with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the skills and knowledge to act in ways that prevent or reduce the likelihood of abuse or harm (in all forms) occurring. what to do to get help.
Neglect	<p>Neglect is when children do not receive adequate food, shelter, medical treatment, supervision, care or nurturance to such an extent that their development is damaged, or they are injured. Neglect may be acute, episodic or chronic.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaving a child alone without appropriate supervision. Not enrolling the child into school. Not ensuring the child attends school. Infection because of poor hygiene, lack of medical attention or medication. Not giving a child affection or emotional support. Not getting medical help when required.

Term	Definition
Sexual Abuse	<p>Sexual abuse occurs when a child is exposed to, or involved in, sexual activity that is inappropriate to the child's age and developmental level.</p> <p>It includes circumstances where the child has less power than another person involved, is exploited or where the child has been bribed, threatened, or coerced. It also includes situations where there is a significant difference between the developmental or maturity level of the child and another person involved.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing a child to watch or read pornography. • Allowing a child to watch sexual acts. • Fondling the child's genitals. • Having oral sex with a child. • Vaginal or anal penetration. • Using the internet to find a child for sexual exploitation.
Physical Abuse	<p>Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a child's caregiver. It may also be the result of putting a child at risk of being injured.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting, shaking, punching a child. • Burning and scalding a child. • Excessive physical punishment or discipline of a child. • Attempted suffocation of a child. • Shaking a baby.
Emotional Abuse	<p>Emotional abuse occurs when an adult harms a child's development by repeatedly treating and speaking to a child in ways that damage the child's ability to feel and express their feelings.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly putting a child down. • Humiliating or shaming a child. • Not showing love, support or guidance to a child. • Continually ignoring or rejecting the child. • Exposing the child to family and domestic violence. • Threatening abuse or bullying a child. • Threats to harm loved ones, property or pets.
Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS)	<p>The service operated by the Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support. Its primary purpose is to receive and assess mandatory reports of Child Sexual Abuse.</p>

Term	Definition
Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS)	The State Government Department tasked with the statutory responsibility to assess reports of child abuse and neglect and to provide family support.
Online Safety	<p>Measures taken to protect internet users against harm and minimise the risks through use of the internet.</p> <p>Online safety includes risks such as cyber bullying, email scams, defamation, sexting, loss of privacy and loss of personal information.</p>

Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities are referenced in this document:

1. School Coordinator/Principal

The School Coordinator/Principal must:

- Make sure that the wellbeing, safety and protection of students is a priority.
- Follow the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Understand the requirements of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Know the rights of children (UN Convention of the Rights of a Child).
- Maintain an up to date list of the Mandatory Reporters in the school.
- Understand the legal responsibilities of the Mandatory Reporter.
- Organise Mandatory Reporting training for all staff.
- Make sure that all staff, new staff and any volunteers undertake Reporting and Record Keeping training as required.
- Make sure up to date records of staff attending Mandatory Reporting training are kept.
- Inform the School Council when a Mandatory Report has been made.

2. Teaching Staff (Mandatory Reporters)

All teaching staff must:

- Support the school's holistic approach to student safety and wellbeing.
- Understand they are responsible for helping to prevent, identify and report student abuse.
- Follow the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Understand the requirements of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Know the rights of children (UN Convention of the Rights of a Child).
- Understand the Mandatory Reporting Process and their responsibilities as a Mandatory Reporter.
- Recognise the indicators of child abuse, harm and neglect in all its forms.
- Know how to make a report of child abuse to Child Protection Family Services.
- Attend professional development training and workshops as required.

3. Non-Teaching Staff

All teaching staff must:

- Support the school's holistic approach to student safety and wellbeing.
- Understand they are responsible for helping to prevent, identify and report student abuse.
- Follow the Staff Code of Conduct.
- Understand the requirements of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Know the rights of children (UN Convention of the Rights of a Child).
- Recognise the indicators of child abuse, harm and neglect in all its forms.
- Know the process for making a report of child abuse to Child Protection Family Services.
- The school strongly encourages the reporting of any form of abuse to the School Coordinator/Principal.
- Understand how to make a report of child abuse to Child Protection Family Services.
- Attend professional development workshops and training as required.

4. School Council

- Make wellbeing, safety and protection of all Sowilo Community High School students a priority.
- Understand the requirements of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Know the rights of children (UN Convention of the Rights of a Child).
- Confirm that Mandatory Reporting obligations have been met when an incident happens within the school.
- Provide subject matter expertise and guidance as required.

5. Parents/Guardians

- Support the school in making the safety, wellbeing and protection of students a priority.
- Understand the requirements of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Know the rights of children (UN Convention of the Rights of a Child).

Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

1. Summary of indicators

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive nor are they exclusive to a single category of abuse, but they are helpful to staff.

Students can show indicators from more than one category. Each category can indicate that a student is being abused, neglected or at risk of harm. Staff should use these lists in context with the student's age, medical and developmental history and capabilities. They should also consider the domestic violence history, drug abuse, alcohol abuse within the family environment.

There are 5 main types of abuse and neglect:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Psychological
- Neglect

A student can suffer one or more of these forms of abuse. Remember that abuse and neglect can happen within a family or through a person outside the immediate family.

2. Examples of indicators

The signs of abuse listed below may be helpful to staff if they are concerned that a student has been or is at risk of being harmed.

Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse
<p>Possible signs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken bones or unexplained bruises, burns, welts in various stages of healing. • The student is unable to explain the injury or the explanation is vague, inconsistent or unlikely. • Family history of violence • Delay in seeking medical help. • Parents show little or no concern about their child, the injury or getting treatment. • Repeated injuries, illnesses with frequent visits to health services. • The student seems fearful of going home, or of their parent/guardian. • Injury by parent/guardian reported by the student. • The student avoids any physical contact. • Arms and legs are covered by long sleeves in hot weather. • Parents/Guardians disclose they are concerned they may hurt the student. 	<p>Possible signs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct or indirect disclosure of sexual abuse. • Inappropriate sexual behaviour for their age or development. • Inappropriate knowledge of sex for their age or development. • Fear of being alone with a certain person. • Pain or bleeding in the genital or anal region with redness or swelling. • Student implies they must keep secrets. • Bed wetting or soiling. • Sudden or unexplained fears. • Presence of sexually transmitted infection.

Emotional Abuse/Psychological Abuse	Neglect
<p>Possible signs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/Guardian constantly criticises, insults, threatens, puts down or rejects their child. • Parent/Guardian shows little support, care, guidance or love. • The student shows extremes in behavior from passive to aggressive. • Physically, emotionally and/or intellectually behind others of the same age. • Highly anxious. • Lack of trust. • Feeling worthless • Big appetite or no appetite. • Compulsive lying and stealing. • Reluctance to go home. • Attention or affection seeking. • Self-harming, rocking or sucking thumb behaviour. • Fearful when approached by someone they know. 	<p>Possible signs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of hunger/malnutrition, stealing, hoarding or begging for food. • Poor hygiene – unwashed hair and skin, body odour. • Untreated medical problems. Frequent illness, minor infections or sores. • Student states no one is home to look after them. • Frequent late or absent from school. • Frequently tired. • Clothing not appropriate for the weather. • Alcohol or drug abuse in the home.

Myths about Child Abuse and its Prevalence

It is important for staff to understand the dynamics of child abuse and the impact on them as both can be life changing.

Common outcomes can include low achievement, low self-esteem, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, psychosomatic illness and suicide.

1. Common myths about sexual abuse:

- Sex between adults and children is not dangerous if it is in the context of a loving relationship.
- It is not the abuse which causes the problem but the effects of the intervention of others.
- Those abused turn into abusers.
- Children frequently lie about sexual abuse.
- Sexual abuse is more common in lower socio-economic areas and families.
- Only men sexually abuse children.
- Sexual abusers are readily identified by 'normal' people.

2. Common myths about general abuse relating to schools:

- There will not be a problem because all the volunteers/employees are female.
- There will not be a problem here because the young people come from privileged backgrounds and will complain if there is an issue of abuse.
- If we get the selection procedures right, we will eliminate the possibility of abuse.
- We use police clearances here, so we are covered.
- It is one of the other children's parents/brothers/sisters to whom I am entrusting the student/ren, so it will be OK.
- We did not need to screen this person because he is a friend of the teacher, principal etc.
- My workers, volunteers and casuals are youth themselves so there is no risk.
- We are pretty good at identifying young people here who are a bit 'odd'.

3. Facts about child sexual Abuse?

- Students are at significant risk of developing both psychological and emotional problems later in life.
- Students can be at risk of repeating the abuse pattern with their own children.
- An abuser can be a member of the family or someone close to the family (chaplain, teacher, community group leader etc.) that holds a position of trust with ready access to the children and their families.
- An abuser usually spends time grooming the student with them being made to feel they are, in some way, complicit in the acts. This makes disclosure a difficult process

Child Abuse Reporting Process

1. Child abuse reporting process

Staff	Mandatory Reporting of Student Sexual Abuse	Reporting of other forms of abuse and concerns of sexual abuse where a belief has not been formed
Teaching (Mandatory Reporters)	<p>If a belief is formed on reasonable grounds that a student is or has been the subject of sexual abuse on or after 1/1/2009, follow the Mandatory Reporting Process to report the abuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report online at www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au • Inform School Coordinator/Principal that a Mandatory Report has been made. • Provide the Mandatory Report receipt number and MRS feedback letter from the MRS (Mandatory Reporting Service). • Securely store the reporting information. 	<p>Submit a completed Child Protection Reporting form to CPDUTY@cpfs.wa.gov.au or call the Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document observations, information and disclosures. • Consult with other staff or welfare team if required. • Provide documentation to the School Coordinator/Principal. • Securely store the reporting information.
Non-Teaching Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document observations, information and disclosures. • Consult with other staff or welfare team if required. • Provide information and documentation to the School Coordinator/Principal. • Securely store the reporting information. 	<p>Submit a completed Child Protection Reporting form to CPDUTY@cpfs.wa.gov.au or call the Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document observations, information and disclosures. • Consult with other staff or welfare team if required. • Provide documentation to the School Coordinator/Principal. • Securely store the reporting information.
School Coordinator/Principal	<p>If you are a Mandatory Reporter, follow the Mandatory Reporting Process if a belief is formed on reasonable grounds that a student is or has been the subject of sexual abuse on or after 1/1/2009.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a Mandatory Report has been submitted, then collect the report receipt and documentation. 	<p>Submit a completed Child Protection Reporting form to CPDUTY@cpfs.wa.gov.au or call the Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889.</p> <p>Follow relevant procedures in the <u>Child Protection in Department of Education Sites</u> policy before informing parent/guardian.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform the School Council.

Staff	Mandatory Reporting of Student Sexual Abuse	Reporting of other forms of abuse and concerns of sexual abuse where a belief has not been formed
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Follow the relevant procedures in the Child Protection in Department of Education Sites policy before contacting parent/guardian. 3. Lodge an online incident notification 4. Inform the School Council. 5. Securely store the reporting information. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Securely store the reporting information.

2. Reporting allegations of abuse perpetrated by staff

Staff	Reporting Allegations of sexual abuse perpetrated by staff	Reporting allegations of physical or emotional abuse perpetrated by staff
Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a belief is formed that a child has been subject to sexual abuse then make a Mandatory Report. Provide report receipt to School Coordinator/Principal Securely store the reporting information. <p>Note: If allegations concern the School Coordinator/Principal then report to the Chair of the School Council. The Chair of the School Council will report to the Regional Executive Director.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document observations, information and disclosures. Provide information to the School Coordinator/Principal. Securely store the reporting information. <p>Note: If allegations concern the School Coordinator/Principal then report to the Chair of the School Council. The Chair of the School Council will report to the Regional Executive Director.</p>
Non-Teaching Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document observations, information and disclosures. Provide documentation to the School Coordinator/Principal. Securely store the reporting information. <p>Note: If allegations concern the School Coordinator/Principal then report to the Chair of the School Council. The Chair of the School Council will report to the Regional Executive Director.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document observations, information and disclosures. Provide documentation to the School Coordinator/Principal. Securely store the reporting information. <p>Note: If allegations concern the School Coordinator/Principal then report to the Chair of the School Council. The Chair of the School Council will report to the Regional Executive Director.</p>
School Coordinator/ Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a belief is formed that a child has been subject to sexual abuse then make a Mandatory Report. Report to Standards and Integrity Directorate (SID) on 1800 655 985 (24 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to Standards and Integrity Directorate (SID) on 1800 655 985 (24 hrs) Inform Regional Executive Director and School Council (unless otherwise directed by SID)

Staff	Reporting Allegations of sexual abuse perpetrated by staff	Reporting allegations of physical or emotional abuse perpetrated by staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform Regional Executive Director and School Council (unless otherwise directed by SID) • Follow the relevant procedures in the Child Protection in Department of Education Sites policy before informing parent/guardian. • Lodge an online incident notification form and quote the Mandatory Report receipt number. • Securely store the reporting information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the relevant procedures in the Child Protection in Department of Education Sites policy before informing parent/guardian. • Lodge an online incident notification form and quote the Mandatory Report receipt number. • Securely store the reporting information.

The Mandatory Reporting Process – Overview

1. What is Mandatory Reporting?

Mandatory Reporting is the act of formally making a report to the Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS) of the Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS). Under Western Australia law, a mandated reporter who forms the belief, based on reasonable grounds, in the course of their paid or unpaid work that a child is or has been sexually abused on or after 1st January 2009 must make a report to the MRS.

In Western Australia, under the Children and Community Services Act 2004, it is a legal requirement for registered teachers to report child sexual abuse to the Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS).

2. When to report?

The Mandatory Reporter must report the belief that a student has been or is being sexually abused **as soon as practicable**. This is extremely important, as once a report has been made, steps can be taken to protect the safety and wellbeing of the student. CPFS and Western Australian Police (WAPOL) can conduct parallel investigations into the protectiveness of the child's caregiver and whether a crime has been committed.

It is an offence when Mandatory Reporters fail to report a belief that a student is being or has been sexually abused.

3. Making a report

All Mandatory Reports are made to the [Department for Child Protection's Mandatory Reporting Service](#).

A report can be lodged in two ways:

a. Verbal Report

Verbal Reports can be made by calling the Mandatory Reporting Service on 1800 708 704.

All verbal reports must be followed by a written report lodged within 24 hrs. of the verbal report. It is an offence not to provide a written report after lodging a verbal report.

b. Written Report

Lodge a written report by:

- Using the Department's secure [Mandatory Reporting Web System \(MRWeb\)](#). This is the preferred method to submit a report. or;
- Download the [PDF Mandatory Report Form](#), print it out and complete the form in full then send the completed form via fax (1800 610 614) or post (PO Box 8146, Perth BC WA 6849).

4. Information that must be provided

There are 3 tiers of information that must be provided in a report.

These are:

a. Information that must be provided under legislation:

The Mandatory Reporters name contact details and the grounds on which the mandatory reporter believes the student has been sexually abused.

b. Information about the student, the offender, and the legal guardian:

The student's name, date of birth, current address and the names of the student's parents or legal guardians. If possible, include any information regarding the alleged offender (name, contact details and relationship to the student).

c. Any other important information:

This could include information about the student's current whereabouts, school, cultural background, language background, any concerning behaviours or injuries that indicate sexual abuse.

Following the submission of the report, the Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS) will provide a standardised letter to the Mandatory Reporter. This letter confirms that a report has been received and provides a receipt number.

5. After a report has been made

Once a report has been made and submitted to the MRS, the Mandatory Reporter will:

- Inform the School Coordinator/Principal that a report has been submitted. Provide them with documented information and the report receipt number.
- If a feedback letter is received from the MRS, inform the School Coordinator/Principal of the action to be taken by the Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support.

6. School Coordinator/Principal Responsibilities

The School Coordinator/Principal will complete the following tasks:

- Lodge a [Reportable Incident Notification Form](#) with the Department of Education – Director General.
- Notify the School Council Chair that a Mandatory Report has been made. Provide a report number and date.
- Contact the Parents/Guardians if authorised by the MRS/Police Child Abuse squad.

7. Storage of records

All documentation relevant to the Mandatory Report are stored securely in alignment with the Record Keeping and Retention Policy.

8. The Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS) responsibilities

The Mandatory Reporting Service will:

- Provide a copy of all written reports and any other information that may assist to the WA Police.
- Undertake an initial assessment into the protectiveness of the child's caregivers and whether there is an ongoing role for CPFS.

9. Where to go for more information

The Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support is the agency responsible for the legislation regarding the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse.

The Mandatory Reporting Service (MRS) has been established by the Department to receive and investigate reports of sexual abuse.

Please refer to the contact information below.

Visit: <https://mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/MakeaReport.aspx>

Mandatory Report Service

Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support

Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Free call **1800 708 704** (excluding mobile telephones)

Fax 9223 1190

Email mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Postal Address PO Box 8146
PERTH BC WA 6849

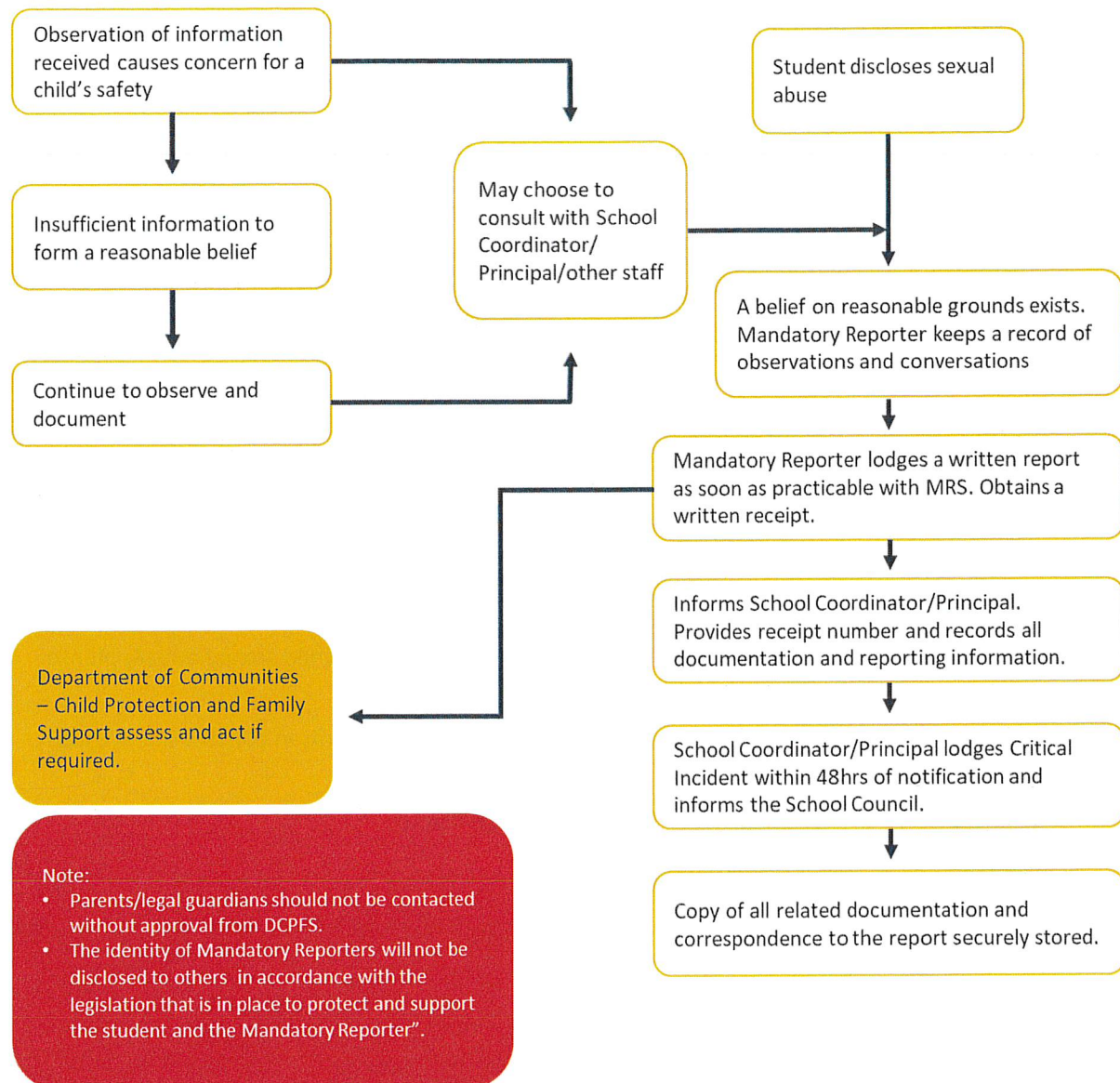
For child protection enquiries not related to mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse, please contact the Central Intake Team on 1800273889

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation contact the Western Australia Police by dialling 000.

Call ACE National Relay Services on 133 677 for assistance if you:

- Have a hearing or speech impairment.
- Use a TTY or a computer modem.

The Mandatory Reporting Process – Flowchart



Confidentiality and Legal Protection of Mandatory Reporters

Mandatory Reporting legislation provides protection and support for:

- Mandatory Reporters
- A person who provides information on which a report is made.

The identity of Mandatory Reporters will not be disclosed to others. Disclosing a Mandatory Reporter's identity can lead to a fine of up to \$24,000 and 2 years imprisonment.

Circumstances where a Mandatory Reporters identity is disclosed include:

- The MRS must send a copy of every written report to the WA Police.
- The WA Police may be required to reveal a person's identity to investigate or prosecute a suspected offence.
- A Department of Child Protection officer may need to reveal the reporter's identity with certain child protection, family law and adoption proceedings.
- The Mandatory Reporter may have provided written permission for their identity to be disclosed.

A Mandatory Reporter and any informants who act in good faith are protected from:

- Civil or criminal liability.
- Breach of duty of confidentiality.
- Breach of professional ethics, standards, codes of conduct or from engaging in unprofessional conduct.

Non-Mandatory Report – Child Abuse and Neglect

1. How to report all other forms of abuse or neglect

This can happen in 2 ways:

- A child makes a direct disclosure of abuse.
- A staff member observes indicators of abuse or receives information that causes concern.

Complete the following actions:

- Document the information provided to you – disclosure, observations, other information.
- Consult with other school staff – teaching, non-teaching, welfare, psychologists.
- Provide information to the School Coordinator/Principal.
- The School Coordinator/Principal will send the information to the Department of Communities – child Protection and family support.
- The School Coordinator/Principal will not contact the parents/guardians of the student unless authorisation is given by the Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support.

2. Where to go for more information

Visit: <https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Pages/Ifyouareconcernedaboutachild.aspx>

Central Intake Team

During business hours:

Free call: 1800 273 889

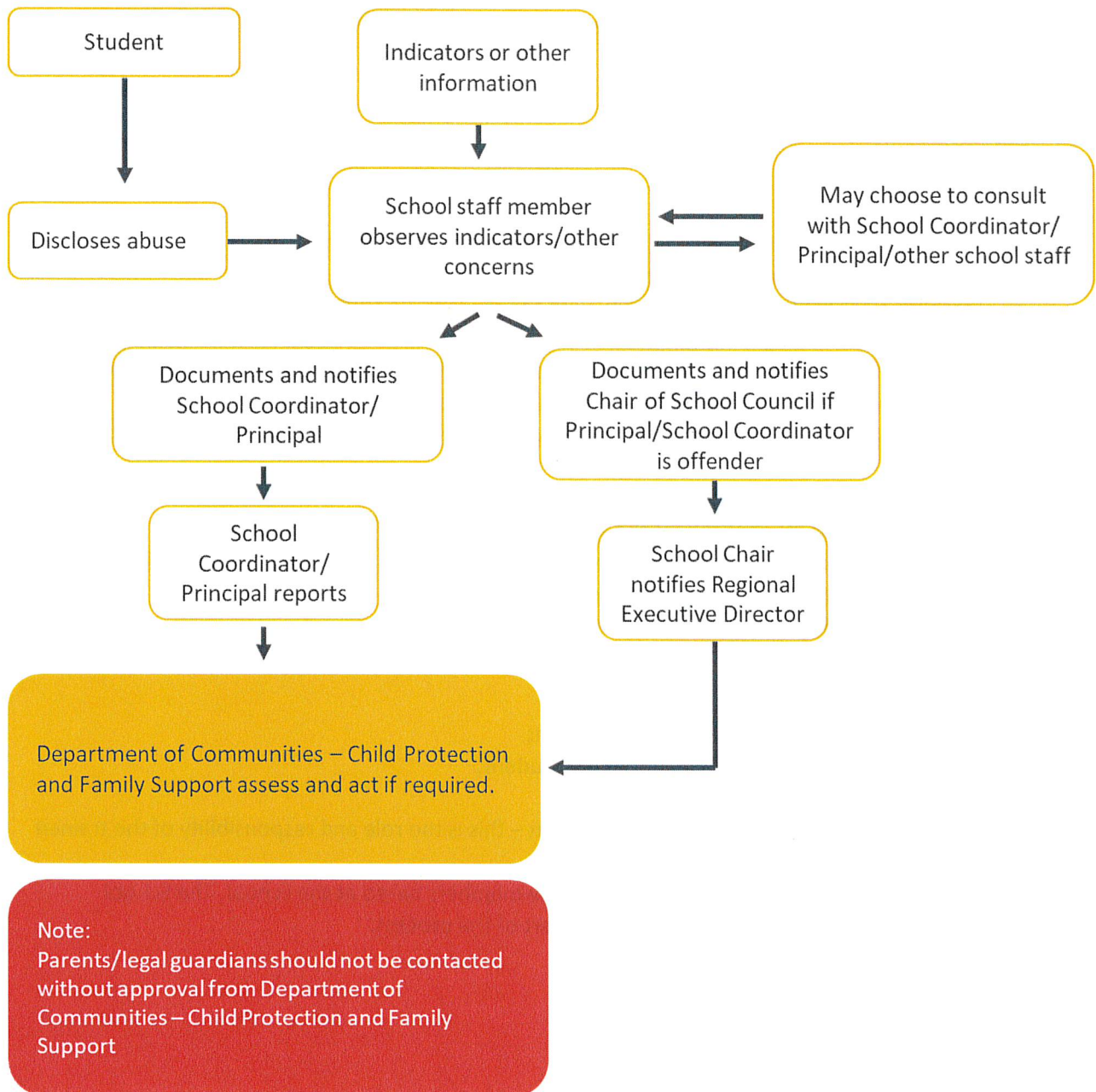
Email: cpduty@cpfs.wa.gov.au

Out of business hours: Crisis Care Unit 9223 1111

If you are a referrer from a government or non-government agency reporting concerns then complete the [Child Protection Concern Referral](#) form.

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation contact the Western Australia Police by dialling 000.

Non-Mandatory Report – Child Abuse and Neglect – Flow Chart



Tips for Responding to a disclosure

It is important for staff to prioritise the needs of the student who makes a disclosure of sexual abuse.

1. Things you should do

Consider the following:

- Be calm
- Find a confidential/quiet place to talk (i.e. office with closed door).
- Acknowledge that you have heard them.
- Establish clear limits on confidentiality with the student. Be truthful - reassure the student that telling you was the right thing to do but do not promise them secrecy before they disclose. Explain to them that a report will be made to a person who will be able to provide help and protection and that you can provide support throughout this process.
- Provide reassurance to the student that they are believed, it was right to disclose and it is not their fault.
- Allow the student to use their own words.
- Avoid making the student repeat the story to anyone else in the organisation.
- Document the information provided by the student and any other observations or indicators.
- Document the disclosure and subsequent actions taken.
- Communicate the next steps to the student.

2. Things to Avoid

- Avoid asking leading questions to the student.
- You cannot promise confidentiality to the student.
- Do not confront the alleged offender.
- Do not interview or investigate the allegation – this is the role and responsibility of the trained professionals.
- Do not share information to siblings or family members based at the school. The School Coordinator/Principal will manage this as part of the process.

Retention of Records and Notes

The school retains records of reports, allegations and findings related to grooming and child abuse involving former or current student and/or staff.

We follow the requirements outlined in our Record Keeping Policy that is aligned with the requirements of:

- The Australian Standards AS ISO 15489: Records Management.
- The Child Abuse Prevention Standard 10.9.
- Children and Community Services Act.

The school will retain copies of:

- Reports or notes submitted to the Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support in compliance to our obligations under the Act.
- Record of the receipt supplied by the Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support as evidence of a report being made to the Department.
- The initial report and any notes, documentation, information provided by the Mandatory Reporter, non-Mandatory Reporter or other staff members.

1. Storage and Access

The reports and documentation are:

- Stored securely as per our Record Keeping and Privacy Policy (under the Privacy Act 1998).
- Accessible by a limited number of people. Procedures for internal and external access to these records are documented in our Privacy and Compliance Policy and Record Keeping and Retention Policy.

2. Destruction of Records

- Records and documentation are not removed or destroyed without the approval of the Director General.
- If we cannot store or retain the records safely and securely then records will be forwarded to the Director General with permission for retention in accordance with the State Records Act 2000.

Grooming Behaviours

As a school we prioritise creating a safe and secure educational environment for our students and staff.

This includes a shared commitment to safety, constantly reviewing our practices to protect our staff and students and creating an environment where inappropriate behaviour or concerns can be raised.

1. What is Grooming?

In a child protection context, grooming refers to deliberate actions undertaken by an individual/individuals to allow them to engage in sexual activity with a child. Grooming is a preparatory activity that occurs before sexual abuse happens and will continue during and after the abuse to ensure the safety of the groomer and to allow them to continue to abuse the child.

Grooming is a subtle, gradual and escalating process that focuses on building trust with a child and those around them (other children and adults). It is deliberate and purposeful. The grooming may occur in person or via cyber media and can last days, weeks, months and years before any sexual abuse takes place.

The groomer may use guilt, shame, bribery, coercion and can exploit low self-esteem to psychologically manipulate the child making them increasingly dependent on the groomer. This allows them to alienate the child from their normal protective elements – friends, family, parents.

Using plausible deniability as a strategy, the groomer maintains the secrecy of the abuse making sure the child remains silent and staff will not take any disclosures seriously.

Grooming may be difficult to distinguish from the genuine concern/relationship building in a professional capacity. Distinguishing between appropriate intent and inappropriate intent can be very difficult, particularly for a student.

As a school, we have very clear boundaries around staff behaviour. These expectations and boundaries are clearly communicated to allow for maximum accountability and safety for staff and students.

2. Grooming behaviour with children

Grooming behaviours with children may include, but are not limited to:

- Selecting, befriending a child and gaining his or her trust and exploiting their vulnerabilities.
- Testing a student's boundaries through telling inappropriate jokes, roughhousing, backrubs, tickling, or sexual games/exposure to sexual themes.
- Moving from non-sexual touching to 'accidental' sexual touching. This typically happens during play so the student may not even identify it as purposeful, inappropriate touching. It is often done slowly so the student is gradually desensitized to the touch.
- Manipulating the student to not tell anyone about what is happening. The abuser may use a student's fear, embarrassment, or guilt about what has happened. Sometimes, the abuser uses bribery, threats, or coercion.
- Causing the student to feel responsible for the abuse. The student may not notice or may become confused as the contact becomes increasingly intimate and sexual.

3. Grooming behaviour with adolescents

Grooming behaviour with adolescents may include additional strategies, such as:

- Identifying with the adolescent. The abuser may appear to be the only one who understands him/her.
- Displaying common interests in sports, music, movies, video games, television shows, etc.
- Recognising and filling the adolescent's need for affection and attention.
- Giving gifts or special privileges to the adolescent.
- Allowing or encouraging the adolescent to break rules (e.g., smoking, drinking, using drugs, viewing pornography).
- Communicating with the adolescent outside of the person's role (e.g., teacher, or coach).
- Promotes self and creates a reputation as caring, student-loving, competent, available, trustworthy, truthful.
- Raises doubts about the motives, mental health, reliability of the student or anyone else who might approach support services with allegations
- Fosters dependency as someone the family can rely on.
- Positively represents student to others to be perceived as someone who would never harm the student.

4. Preventing or interrupting the grooming process

At Sowilo Community High School, we align to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations by using the following strategies:

Structural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school building and classrooms are open plan.
Staff/Volunteers/Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school uses a clear, structured and well defined recruitment process to ensure that all staff meet the required criteria to work at the school. • Staff attend professional development training in Child Protection, Reporting, Record Keeping, Protective Behaviours and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. • All staff are must follow the Staff Code of Conduct. • All staff, volunteers and community partners are provided with information relating to the management of breaches of the Staff Code of Conduct. • Clear professional boundaries and expectations are communicated to the staff via the staff handbook, staff meetings, staff Code of Conduct and supervision/mentoring. • Volunteers and community partners are provided with information that provides them with a clear understanding of professional boundaries and accountabilities. • There are clear guidelines and a well-defined process relating to the investigation if the code of conduct is breached.
Protective Behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Protective Behaviours curriculum includes information on grooming and the identification of grooming behaviours. • Cyber safety is taught to all students as part of the Protective Behaviours curriculum.

Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security cameras are installed throughout the school. • There is a defined process for admission to the school building and grounds for external visitors.
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents must follow the Parents Code of Conduct. • Parents are kept updated on student protection information, cyber safety and related policies.

Cyber Safety

1. Overview of Cyber Safety

Online platforms are used by schools as a valuable tool for communication, education and learning. They allow students to engage in learning in new and interactive ways. Students use the internet for school activities and their own personal use accessing various social media platforms, chat rooms, interactive games and discussion groups.

As a school we recognise that we must:

- Make sure we protect our students from harm when they are learning online.
- Make sure our school community (staff, students, school council, community partners and parents/guardians) is an informed consumer in this space.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations recognise the importance of providing safe physical and online environments to protect students.

The Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006 is the legislation in Western Australia that protects students under the age of 16, or that the offender believes is under the age of 16, from an adult who uses electronic communications with the intent to procure the student to engage in sexual activity or to expose the student to any indecent subject matter.

2. Online Safety at Sowilo Community High School

We take the following steps to manage the risks involved with the online safety of our students:

Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete risk assessment for all technology used by students and staff. • Implement guidelines for social media use at school and guidelines for incident inside and outside of school hours. • School's internet system and access is restricted and different for both staff and students.
Engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online safety is included as part of the School Charter of Commitment and Code of Conduct. • All members of the school community are active participants in maintaining safe online environments. • Creation of the School Community Engagement Plan for Online Safety. • Actively work with all students to empower them to help cultivate safe online environments – mentoring, school council, surveys, curriculum, school meetings, social media platforms.
Educate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach online safety as part of the Protective Behaviours Curriculum. • Provide an online safety action plan for staff, students and parents/guardians. • Teach the students that sharing images online can be considered as an offence, with those images being considered child exploitation material. • All Staff attend <u>professional development</u> for teachers on online safety to learn about current research, teaching strategies and case studies. This training is linked to the 4.4 and 4.5 Australian Professional Standards for teachers.

Respond

- Follow the Incident Report Process for Online Safety Incidents – mild, moderate, serious, severe.

Responding to a Cyber Incident – Process

We align our reporting process with the information provided below by [Think U Know](#) and [eSafety Commissioner](#).

See summary of reporting topics below:

REPORT	<u>Report online child sexual exploitation</u> Report inappropriate sexual behaviour towards a child.
REPORT	<u>Report inappropriate content</u> Report internet content which you believe is prohibited or inappropriate.
REPORT	<u>Report cybercrime</u> Report cybercrime to the Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network (ACORN).
REPORT	<u>Report cyberbullying</u> Report cyberbullying of adults to ACORN or children to the eSafety commissioner.

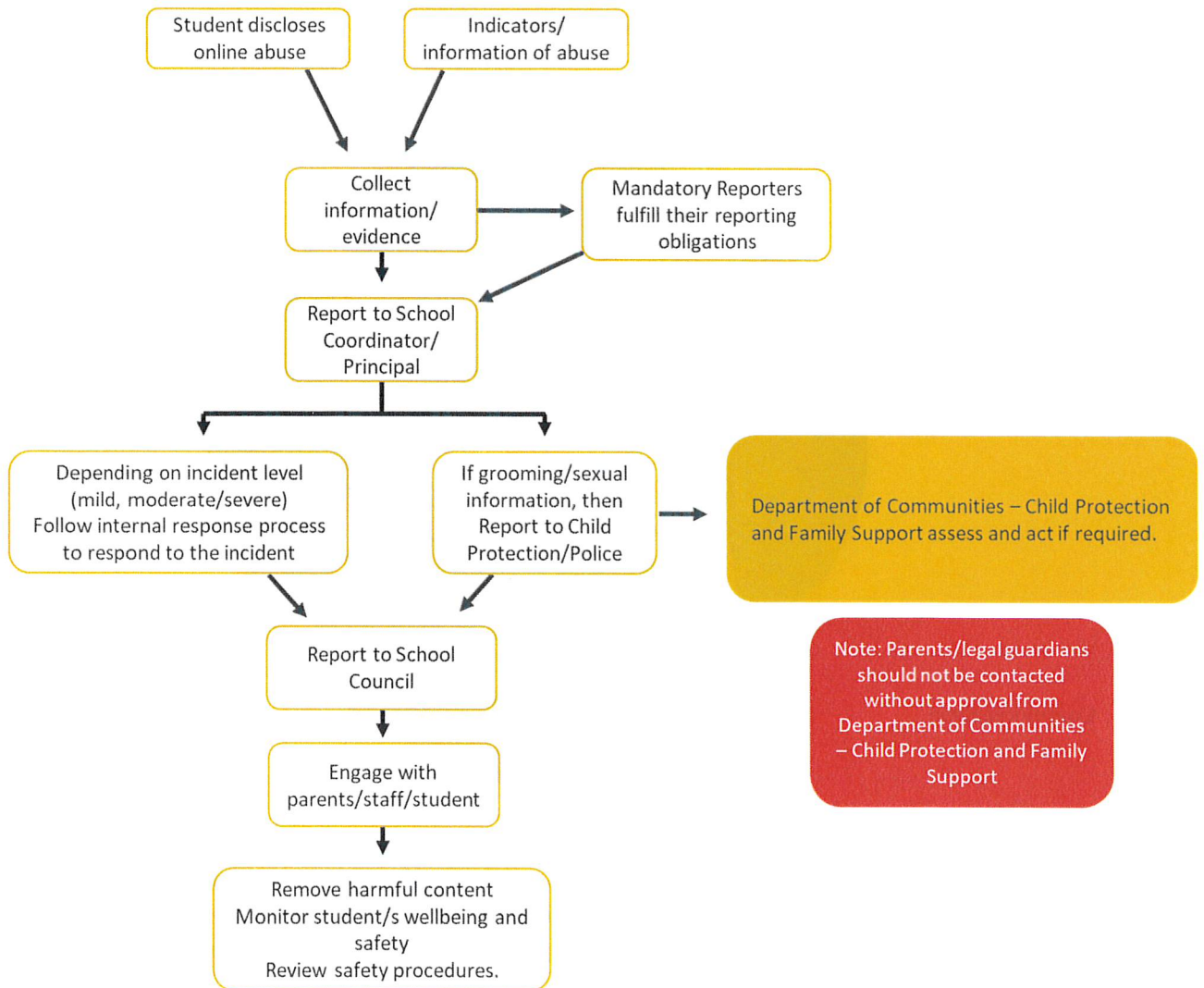
School staff are expected to follow the reporting process outlined in the table below.

Step	Details
Student reports online incident; or Staff/other students suspect inappropriate or unlawful online behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the safety and wellbeing of the student. Be aware of Mandatory Reporting obligations.
Document and collect evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document what has occurred. For non-explicit material – take copies of URL's or screenshots of messages. Do not copy or view explicit image. Refer to school guidelines for sharing of explicit material. Confiscate student personal device if informed consent provided and under the school's Privacy and Behaviour Management
Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to School Coordinator/Principal as soon as possible. School Coordinator/Principal may consult with other staff. Respond to the incident in line with the Student Protection, Behaviour Management and Student Safety and Wellbeing Policies.
Report to School Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Coordinator/Principal to report to chair of school council.

Step	Details
Report to Child Protection and Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Coordinator/Principal to report incidents of online grooming or inappropriate behaviour to students online. • Report to eSafety Commissioner for cases of online grooming. • Mandatory Reporters must follow the Mandatory Reporting process. • Confirm with child protection authorities to contact the parents/guardians.
Communicate with parents/guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with parents/guardians as soon as possible so the school, students and parents/guardians can work together to respond to the incident. • Focus on the safety and wellbeing of the student/s involved.
Remove content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove any material that may cause harm. • If the incident is cyber bullying then follow the Behaviour Management Process.
Record incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record the incident in the incident management system.
Check student/s/staff involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check on the wellbeing and welfare of the student/s or staff involved.

Note: Sowilo Community High School has zero tolerance to cyber bullying. Staff are provided information and training on cyber bullying during induction. Students are provided information on cyber bullying through the Protective Behaviours curriculum.

Responding to a Cyber Incident - Flowchart



Our Protective Behaviours Curriculum

1. The value of teaching Protective Behaviours



Protective Behaviour education focuses on teaching and developing communication skills, social skills, life skills, self-esteem, resilience and empowering students. The aim of teaching Protective Behaviours is to prevent harm or abuse, reduce violence and promote a life that is rich with achievement and positive experiences.

The Protective Behaviours curriculum is taught to all students as part of our Health Curriculum and staff integrate the subject matter both informally and formally throughout the wider academic curriculum and in activities and electives. We use Protective Behaviours in the counselling process and in behaviour management.

Protective Behaviours encourages our students to:

- Assert their right to feel safe.
- Listen to what their body tells them.
- Taking action to solve problems on their own or to seek help from other people.

2. The Protective Behaviours Curriculum

We base our curriculum of the [WA curriculum for health](#) recommended by School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA).

The following subjects taught in the Protective Behaviours curriculum include but are not limited to:

- Feelings – myself and others
- Personal space

- Relating to others
- Values
- Bullying
- Resilience
- Mental Health
- Body awareness and ownership
- Being assertive
- Cyber bullying and online safety
- Food and safety
- Sexual Health
- Alcohol and Drug education
- Communication – safe and unsafe feelings
- Trust and friendship

External organisations including [Yep Crew](#) and [Helping Minds](#) are scheduled to present to students throughout the school term/year.

3. Professional Development for Staff

Teaching staff attend Professional Development training in Protective Behaviours. This is offered by [WA Child Safety Services](#) and endorsed by [AISWA](#).

All staff and school council members complete eLearning module this provided by [Child Safe](#).

Where to go for Further Information

- The Department for Child Protection is the state government department responsible for issues specifically related to the protection of children, including the handling of abuse and neglect cases. Their website contains some excellent material for professionals, parents and friends. The Department for Child Protection website click on this link:
<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx>.

- For sexual abuse reports, the Mandatory Reporting Service must be contacted through one of the following means:

Telephone: 1800 708 704

Email: mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au

Fax: 1800 610 614

Post: PO Box 8146

Perth BC, WA 6849

This unit is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for make a report or to raise concerns.

Details regarding mandatory reporting can be obtained through

www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au.

- To contact CPFS for assistance with a specific case that does not involve sexual abuse, the school will need to speak to the Duty Officer at the local office, available during office hours. All offices are listed in the White Pages or on the website.

After Hours

Child Abuse Services WA

Telephone: 9223 1111 / 1800 199 008

Crisis Care

Telephone: 9223 1111 / 1800 199 008 (a 24-hour telephone service for people in crisis and needing urgent help).

- **WA Police Service Child Abuse Investigation Unit**
If the matter is urgent and the safety of a child is at risk, call 000. If you are a victim of child abuse or paedophilia, or if you have information about someone else being abused, you should contact police on **131 444**.
- You can also report child abuse to the Child Protection Squad on **9492 5444**, email them on Child.Abuse.Investigation@police.wa.gov.au, or you can ring Crime Stoppers on **1800 333 000** or go to your local police station.
- **WA Police Cyber Predator Team** can be contacted on 9492 5444 or complaints can be lodged on the WA Police Website www.police.wa.gov.au.
- The websites below contain information on cyber predators that for both parents, teachers and students may find informative:
www.esafety.gov.au
www.thinkuknow.org.au
www.acma.gov.au
www.constablecare.org.au
www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com
www.netalert.net.au

- **The National Association of the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)**
NAPCAN is an Australian organisation that seeks to resource and network child welfare professionals and practitioners working to prevent child abuse and neglect from happening before it starts, through the provision of parenting brochures, training, support networks and information. To visit their website use this link: www.napcan.org.au.
- **Child Safe Organisations WA**
<https://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/our-work/resources/child-safe-organisations/>

The following support service is available for staff at schools who may experience personal issues resulting from making a report:

- **Prime Corporate Psychology Services**
Offers an employee assistance program including counselling, management and referrals.
Telephone: 9492 8900 / 1800 674 188

Each school may already have an assistance program available to their staff to provide help in overcoming problems that may cause difficulties in their work or personal lives.

The following services and organisations can provide help, advice and support to the school, parents or children who are affected by the effects of abuse and to prevent abuse from recurring:

- **Department for Child Protection and Family Support** (see previous page for details).
- **Parenting Line**
Telephone: 9272 1466 / 1800 654 432
- **Family Helpline** is a free confidential telephone counselling and information service for families with relationship difficulties.
Telephone: 9223 1100 / 1800 643 000
- **Men's Domestic Violence Helpline** provides a free telephone, referral and counselling service for men to help them change their violent behaviour toward female partners.
Telephone: 9223 1199 / 1800 000 599
- **Women's Domestic Violence Helpline** provides a free 24-hour telephone support and counselling service for women experiencing family and domestic violence.
Telephone: 9223 1188 / 1800 007 339
- **Child Health and Community Health Services**
Refer to the White Pages for contact details of local Child Health Centres.
- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services**
Telephone: 1800 220 400 – 24-hour mental health advice line
- **State Child Development Centre**
Telephone: 9481 2203
- **Disability Services Commission**
Telephone: 9426 9200 / 1800 998 214
- **Kids Helpline** is a free and confidential telephone counselling service for 5 to 25-year olds in Australia available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Telephone: 1800 551 800
- **Sexual Assault Resource Centre Counselling Line** offers a free, 24-hour emergency service for people aged 13 or over who have been sexually assaulted or sexually abused recently (within the last two weeks).

Telephone: 9340 1828 / 1800 199 888

- **Lifeline Australia** offers a service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can provide information about other support services, if required. To contact Lifeline Australia call 13 11 14.

The following sites can provide a wide range of background information on child abuse for schools that are interested:

- **Australian Institute of Family Studies**

<https://aifs.gov.au/>

This site lists recent publications relating to information on child abuse that have been updated on the web site of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse.

- <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications>

This is the Australian Institute of Criminology site and has links to the criminal aspect of child abuse.