



Child Protection - Responding to and Reporting Risk of Abuse and Neglect

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| Related Documentation | Child Protection Policy Child Protection Observation Sheet Health and wellbeing notes for children at Family Day Care Child health and wellbeing notes Reportable Conduct and Investigation Procedure Working with Children – Worker Screening Authorised Statement Office of Communities Commission for Children & Young People website (www.kids.nsw.gov.au) Office of the Children’s Guardian website (www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au) Commission for Children and Young People publication- Information for Reporting Bodies: Reporting Certain Misconduct Involving Children, September 2013 (www.kids.nsw.gov.au/Working-withchildren/New-Working-With-Children-Check/Resources) All related documentation is available via the Education and Care Services FRED page |
| Relevant Legislation | Legislation, Standards and Guidance Material Reference Table |
| Responsible Officer | Manager Education and Care Services |

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Definitions

MRG - Mandatory Reporter Guide

Mandatory Reporter - A “Mandatory Reporter” is any person who delivers healthcare, welfare, education, children’s services, residential services or law enforcement to children (aged under 16) as part of their paid work. All child care educators are Mandatory Reporters.

ROSH - Risk of Significant Harm

FACS - Family and Community Services

Objectives

To support Council’s commitment to protecting children and young persons from child abuse and risks to their health, safety and welfare in accordance with applicable child-protection legislation.

To support all Education and Care services staff to meet their obligations regarding Responding to and Reporting Risk of Abuse and Neglect

Training and Competence

Council is committed to staff receiving training relevant to the tasks/activities undertaken in this procedure. Training requirements will be reviewed at least annually as part of the performance appraisal program, and recorded in Pulse. All training will be evaluated to ensure continuous improvement.

Competence of employees, including any contractors, labour hire employees or volunteers, will be assessed prior to their being expected to carry out the tasks associated with this procedure.

DATA AND DOCUMENT CONTROL

Records Management

All records related to this procedure are to be stored in IRIS (Intelligent Record Information System) in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy.

Review and Evaluation

To maintain relevance and currency, this procedure will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis or as required due to changes in relevant legislation and codes of practice or changes to systems and processes.

The procedure will also be evaluated in consultation with employees at appropriately identified intervals to evaluate its effectiveness.

Regular review and evaluation is an opportunity to determine whether the procedure is fit for purpose and reflective of operational practice, and provide an opportunity to implement corrective measures or amend the procedure if required.

Procedure

If an educator or staff member has concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person they are required to follow this procedure. All educators and staff members are required to complete the MRG on each occasion they have risk concerns regardless of their level of experience or expertise. This is a legal obligation.

1. Record all concerns or information regarding the ROSH indicators on a Child Protection Observation Sheet (page 1). or Child Health and Wellbeing Notes (Applicable for Family Day Care Educators)
2. Inform the Nominated Supervisor and Coordinator Education and Care Services or Manager Education and Care Services of your concerns. If the Nominated Supervisor, Coordinator and Manager are not available to discuss your concerns, continue with this procedure. The safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person are paramount and educators and staff do not need permission to complete the MRG or make a ROSH report.
3. Enter all concerns and information into the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) to determine whether the concerns meet the threshold of 'Risk of Significant Harm' (ROSH). The MRG can be found online at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>. A copy of the MRG Decision Report must be printed and kept with the Child Protection Observation Sheet.
4. If the MRG indicates a report is to be made, educators are to report to the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 or submit an eReport through the [ChildStory](#) website. If you think the young person is in immediate danger, phone '000' immediately. The Nominated Supervisor and/or Education and Care Services Senior Leadership Team are available to support educators when making a report.
5. If the MRG indicates the risk of harm is not significant, the Nominated Supervisor will liaise with a Coordinator Education and Care Services regarding referrals to agencies for further support for the family.
6. Give the Child Protection Observation Sheet or Child Health and Wellbeing Notes (Applicable for Family Day Care Educators) and attached MRG Decision Report to the Nominated Supervisor for further action (page 2).

The Nominated Supervisor/Acting Supervisor will:

1. Complete page 2 of the Child Protection Observation Sheet within 48 hours.
2. Liaise with a Coordinator and consider whether the service is best placed to discuss the concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person with the family.
3. If concerns are to be discussed with the family, ensure this is done within 24 hours of becoming aware of concerns.

4. Liaise with a Coordinator Education and Care Services regarding referrals to agencies for further support for the family. This may be in addition to existing intervention services or a change to current interventions to further address risk factors.
5. Share concerns and information with relevant educators who are directly involved with the child.
6. Share general information regarding concerns and strategies at the next team meeting and ensure these are documented in the meeting minutes.
7. Complete the Nominated Supervisor section on the Child Protection Observation Sheet within 48 hours of the incident.
8. Register a copy of the Child Protection Observation Sheet and attached MRG Decision Report on the individual child's file in Council's Electronic Record Management System, using the 'Confidential' sub-folder.

Further Information and Support

How to Complete a Child Protection Observation Sheet

- Educators and staff should record all concerns or information regarding the ROSH indicators.
- The concerns and information must be recorded clearly and factually.
- Write about what you saw and heard.
- Do not write about your thoughts and feelings.
- Making sure any bruises and other markings are entered on the body templates on the back of the sheet.
- The sheets are to be kept in a confidential manner at all times.
- Concerns and information may be shared but only with educators who are directly involved with the child.
- It is important to remember that all concerns are to be documented, as other educators may notice other concerns which when combined could illustrate cumulative harm.

Risk of Significant Harm Indicators

Indicators of significant harm are:

- Basic physical or psychological needs not being met
- Parent/caregivers fail to make proper arrangements for their child to receive an education
- Parents unwilling or unable to arrange necessary medical care
- Physical or sexual abuse or ill-treatment
- Living with domestic violence, (consequence is being at risk of serious physical or psychological harm)
- Parent's behaviour resulting in risk or serious psychological harm
- Cumulative Risk – a series of incidents may establish a pattern of significant harm
- Prenatal abuse
- Homelessness.

Mandatory Reporter Guide

Mandatory reporters in NSW should use the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) if they have concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person. The MRG supports mandatory reporters to:

- Determine whether a report to the Child Protection Helpline is needed for concerns about possible abuse or neglect of a child (including unborn) or young person.
- Identify alternative ways to support vulnerable children, young people and their families where a mandatory reporter's response is better served outside the statutory child protection system.
- All educators and staff are required to complete the MRG on each occasion they have risk concerns, regardless of their level of experience or expertise. Each circumstance is different and every child and young person is unique.

Risk of Significant Harm Reports

When educators or staff report to the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 or online via [ChildStory](#) they will need the following details ready:

- The child/young persons details including their name, address, date of birth, siblings
- Incident details including the date, type of risk, person/s causing or contributing to harm
- The impact of the incident on the child/young person
- Details of the support network around the child/young person
- The educator or staff members contact details
- Any interpreter or support requirements (e.g. whether a language or sign interpreter may be required).

The Nominated Supervisor and/or Education and Care Services Senior Leadership Team are available to support educators when making a report.

DATA AND DOCUMENT CONTROL

Your report to Family and Community Services (FACS) will remain confidential. Your permission will be sought, if the information you provide needs to be shared outside of FACS.

Many suspected child protection issues do not require a report to be made but all concerns and information should be recorded on the Child Protection Observation Sheet, monitored and the family provided with resources or a referral to an appropriate agency that may be able to assist them. The Nominated Supervisor will ensure observations, monitoring and any networking with other agencies will be done in a timely and appropriate manner.

E Reporting

Each service is registered to submit a ROSH report directly through the [ChildStory](#) website. Registration enables mandatory reporters to:

- Create eReports after running the MRG
- Be notified by email when there is a change of status for one of their reports
- Log in to the [ChildStory](#) Reporter Community website to see the status of any previous reports they have submitted.

What to do if a Child Discloses Information

A purposeful disclosure is when a child tells you they have been involved in reportable conduct.

If a child discloses to you:

- Find a private place to talk
- Listen to them
- Use a calm reassuring voice
- Show appropriate warm open body language, be open and non-judgemental
- Do not act shocked or disgusted
- Tell the child that you believe them and that they have done the right thing in coming forward
- Tell them they have not done anything wrong
- Tell them you are pleased that they have told you
- Let them know that you will need to tell other people in order to help them
- Provide appropriate comfort (e.g. ask them if they want a hug).

Educators must not:

- Ask leading questions e.g. what happened next?
- Ask inappropriate questions
- Say anything judgmental about the perpetrator
- Make promises that educators cannot keep.

It is crucial for educators to:

- Make the child comfortable throughout the process
- Respond to the child in an age appropriate manner
- Explain to the child what the next steps will be if age appropriate to do so.

Communication with Families

- Do not approach the parents, family or others who may collect the child when responding to concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- Always avoid assuming who the offender is or what is happening within the home environment. Our role is simply to observe and record concerns and observations and report the disclosure if necessary. If a parent or relative of a child accuses educators of making a child protection report, educators should not confirm or deny making the report. Educators should avoid entering into a conversation about the report and refer their enquiry to the Nominated Supervisor or an Education and Care Services Coordinator.

- Your Nominated Supervisor and Coordinator will consider whether the service is best placed to discuss the concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person with the family.
- Once it is decided if it is appropriate to talk to the child or young person's family, the educator or staff member should ask them about what services they may already be accessing and whether they would be willing to receive additional support.
- Do not speak with the family about your concerns if you believe this will place the child or another person at risk, or affect a possible criminal investigation.

For further support and information about Child Protection, Children Referred by Family and Community Services (FACS), Domestic Violence, Interagency Information Exchange, the Role of the Office of the Children's Guardian and Child Protection Legislation, please refer to the Education and Care Services Guidelines and Procedures.

This procedure is required under the Education and Care Services National Regulations and should not be edited or rescinded without permission from the Education and Care Services Senior Leadership Team.

END OF PROCEDURE