



**AUSTRALIAN
ISLAMIC COLLEGE**

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Introduction

All staff at Australian Islamic College are responsible for the care and protection of students. Everyone in the College community has the responsibility/duty of reporting any concerns related to emotional, physical or sexual abuse and/or neglect. This policy sets out guidelines for those caring for students either directly or indirectly in the College setting in fulfilling our responsibilities for Child Protection.

All children have a right to be protected from harm and schools and teachers owe a 'duty of care' to all students at the College. Schools have a special responsibility to protect children when they are on school premises and to intervene when they believe the welfare of a child is at risk outside the school.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion or nationality are to be protected from sexual abuse, to receive special help if they are abused, to have their opinions heard about matters that affect them, to receive and share information and to be treated with dignity if disciplined.

Under South Australian Legislation, schools and individual teachers have a responsibility in the prevention and reporting of child abuse and neglect and schools are required to establish and maintain child safe environments.

Under the *Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)*, schools have detailed legal responsibilities with respect to child protection. These include ensuring that child safe environments are established and maintained within the school and that instances of child abuse are reported to the relevant authorities.

The Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA) defines child abuse as:

The Act emphasizes child safety, mandates staff in education and care environments to report child abuse and neglect and requires all organisations providing education, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children to comply with principles of child safe environments. The Children and Young People (Safety) Bill 2017 has passed parliament and when fully enacted will replace the Children's Protection Act 1993.

Duty of Care

Duty of Care refers to the responsibility of staff to provide children and young people with an adequate level of protection against harm, including taking reasonable care to protect children and young people from all reasonably foreseeable risks of injury.

The standard of care owed by education and care providers to children and young people is very high. In relationships with children and young people, AIC staff are required to ensure that the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and young people is safeguarded, and that their own behaviour is guided by this duty of care both within and beyond the education and care setting.

Within the protective practices, this duty of care particularly relates to staff:

- expectations about their own conduct
- intervening in the inappropriate conduct of other adults
- reporting unprofessional behaviour of other adults if they observe or are informed of such behaviour.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse and neglect, through the Department for Child Protection, is defined as maltreatment done by a person who has responsibility to care for a child and this document concentrates specifically on that relationship.

However, it is very important to note that the definitions of child maltreatment described in this document can be used to explain some of the behaviour that can occur in schools by one child to another. While the treatment of such behaviour may be dealt with through the colleges Bullying and Behaviour Management policies, the victim of that 'bullying' may display some of the physical and behavioural indicators as those described in this document. These events should be treated seriously by the school with the aim to help both parties.

It is also important to note that the child who is 'bullying' may be doing so because they have been subjected to the same inappropriate behaviour and may require assistance through the College's Child Protection Policy.

Islamic Guidelines

The Australian Islamic College is committed to protecting all students from harm, to decrease the risk of abuse and provide a safe Islamic environment for students to develop academically, spiritually, socially and emotionally.

The notion that all children have a right to be protected from harm, is an important aspect of the Islamic faith. The College believes that God has given all educational institutions and their leaders the responsibility of protecting all children placed in their care. Leaders, as well as those appointed by the leaders, are fully accountable for the well-being of each child in the College.

Islam instructs us to treat our elders with respect and our youngsters with kindness. The welfare of children under our care is paramount to the College's objectives. All staff need to be aware of the proper etiquette and way to address issues of abuse or neglect. Staff are encouraged to deal with all instances of suspected or known abuse with kindness and sensitivity.

It is narrated that the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) kissed Hasan ibn 'Ali while Aqra' ibn Habis was sitting nearby. Aqra' said, 'I have ten children and have never kissed one of them.'
The Prophet looked at him and said, *"Those who show no mercy will be shown no mercy"*.

Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) said: *Indeed, Allah is gentle and loves gentleness, and gives due to gentleness, that which He does not give to harshness.*

General Principles of the Child Protection Policy

The objective of this Policy is:

- To educate staff and the College community about the importance of protecting students from harm.
- To educate staff and the College community on the possible signs of neglect and abuse.
- To provide the means for the College community to have any concerns about abuse and risk raised and addressed as per legal requirements.
- To devise and implement procedures which prevent abuse and minimise risks of abuse.

How will teachers, parents and the AIC community know about mandatory reporting and the processes involved?

Under the Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA) a teacher or any person who is an employee of, or a volunteer in, a school and who is engaged in the delivery of services to children or holds a management position the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of the provision of those services to

children, and who suspects on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected, and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person's work (whether paid or voluntary), is obliged to notify the Child Abuse Report Line of that suspicion as soon as practicable after the suspicion is formed.

The College will educate all concerned parties of the mandatory reporting requirements via the following means:

- Conducting in school and/or out of school professional learning sessions for all teachers.
- Letters to parents and/or information in the school's quarterly online newsletter.
- By making the Child Protection Policy available on the College website.

It is compulsory for all education staff to complete the Department of Education and Child Development's professional non-DECD online induction and training – "Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RAN-EC)". This course will further assist staff to understand their role in promoting safety and wellbeing in children, young people and their families. This course is provided free of charge by the Department of Education and is accessed via AISSA. Staff will need to create an individual AISSA login and once approved, will be able to access the link to the training and many other useful resources to enhance their professional development.

1. Definitions and Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect is maltreatment of a person under the age of 18 years. It is the result of action or inaction on the part of a person who has responsibility to care for a child resulting in harm or injury to the child. The harm may include delayed physical and/or intellectual development. The maltreatment experienced is normally described in five categories. Each category of maltreatment is described by a range of indicators:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Psychological
- Neglect

Neglect is defined as any serious omission or commission by a person which jeopardises or impairs a child's psychological, intellectual or physical development.

Neglect is characterised by the failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Behaviours may include:

- inadequate care and supervision of young children for long periods of time
- failure to provide adequate nutrition, clothing or personal hygiene
- failure to provide necessary health care/medical treatment
- disregard for potential hazards in the home
- forcing the child to leave home at an early age
- allowing children to engage in chronic truancy.

Children can frequently show indicators from more than one category; and the examples listed are not necessarily exclusive to a single category of abuse. Any of these indicators may suggest that a student is being abused, neglected or at risk of harm; however, indicators should be considered in the context of the student's age, medical and developmental history, and capabilities. In addition, mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence within families must also be considered.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child has experienced severe and/or persistent ill-treatment. It can include, but is not limited by injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and fractures caused by a range of acts including beating, shaking, hitting, punching, burning, biting, pulling out hair, illicit administration of alcohol and other drugs, attempted suffocation, excessive discipline or physical punishment.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is defined as physical abuse. FGM is the collective term for traditional practices that involve cutting the external female genitalia.

The following indicators may indicate physical abuse:

- bruises in unlikely places (face, back, ears, hands, buttocks, upper thighs and soft parts of the body)
- inconsistent or absent explanation of bruises
- any bruising on a baby
- pressure marks from fingers on the face, chest or back
- weal, ligature or bite marks
- skull fracture, subdural bleeding, multiple fractures of different ages
- suspicious burns
- poisoning or significant over medicating.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse covers a wide range of behaviour or activities that expose or subject a child to sexual activity that is exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level. These behaviours include observation or involvement with inappropriate fondling of a child's body, making a child touch an adult's genitalia, showing pornographic material or sexual acts to a child, and sexual penetration of the child. Harm from sexual abuse may include significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infections and impaired emotional and psychological development.

The following indicators may indicate sexual abuse:

- genital injuries
- bite marks
- sexually transmitted diseases
- persistent soiling or bed wetting
- sleep disturbance
- inappropriate sexual behaviour based on the child's age
- promiscuous affection seeking behaviour
- excessive masturbation which does not respond to boundaries or discipline
- obsessive and compulsive washing
- wary of physical contact with others

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is a sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, confusing, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to have a reduced capacity to experience a range of emotions, to express emotion appropriately and to modulate their emotional experience. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to be fearful, withdrawn and/or resentful, distressed and despairing.

The following indicators may indicate emotional abuse:

- avoiding home (particularly if the abuser is in the family home)
- running away or continually staying at friend's houses
- fear of the dark, not wanting to go to bed, bedwetting or nightmares
- lying or stealing
- lack of trust in adults
- poor self-image/self-esteem, poor academic performance, poor peer relationships
- secretive, demanding or disruptive behaviour.

Psychological abuse

Psychological abuse is the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, isolating, neglecting, discrediting, misleading, disregarding, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide a child with the necessities of life. These include adequate supervision, adequate food or shelter, suitable clothing, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial care and emotional security. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic, and can result in detrimental effects on the child or young person's social psychological, educational or physical development and/or physical injury. Neglect should be considered in the context of physical, emotional or psychological abuse.

The following indicators may indicate neglect:

- failure to thrive
- developmental delay
- prone to illness
- sallow or sickly appearance
- abnormally high appetite, stealing or hoarding food
- smelly or dirty appearance
- untreated medical conditions.

Descriptions of these indicators have been taken from the South Australia Department for Child Protection website.

Under the Children's Protection Act 1993, the following definitions apply:

"abuse or neglect, in relation to a child, means—

- (a) sexual abuse of the child; or
- (b) physical or emotional abuse of the child, or neglect of the child, to the extent that—
 - (i) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological injury detrimental to the child's wellbeing; or
 - (ii) the child's physical or psychological development is in jeopardy"

"child means a person under 18 years of age"

Note: Students aged 18 and over may attend school but are legally considered adults and as such the Department for Child Protection does not have a child protection mandate for them. However, they can be considered potentially vulnerable and in need of specialist services and schools do owe a duty of care towards them.

There are many youth-specific agencies available to assist these students, many of which are available on the Department for Child Protection website via this link: <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/child-protection-initiatives/support-services-children-young-people-and-families>

The Australian Islamic College will contact the Police when aware of any assault or crime against a young adult.

2. Myths about Child Abuse and its Prevalence

An accurate understanding of the dynamics underlying child abuse is important because the impact of any form of abuse on the victim can be life changing. Common outcomes associated with abuse include drug abuse, suicide, eating disorders, low self-esteem, psychosomatic illness and self-mutilation.

There are many **dangerous beliefs and myths about sexual abuse**. Some of the common ones are:

- Sexual abuse is not relevant to Muslim families/children.
- Sex between children and adults is not damaging 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 by 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.

3. The Facts about Child Abuse

Children or young people are more often abused by a parent or carer. Adults who were abused as children are at greater risk of developing psychological and emotional problems later in life, and repeating the pattern of abuse with their own children.

A child abuser can be a member of the family (father, step-father, mother etc.) or someone close to the family or the child (teacher, community group leader). A child abuser usually spends a lot of time grooming the child with the child being made to feel that they are in some way complicit in the acts, thus making disclosure a difficult process.

On the whole, abusers are the least obvious people in our community. Many child sex abusers, for example, hold positions of trust within the community with easy access to children and their families. Occupations that some convicted child sex offenders have held include bus driver, entertainer, teacher, scout leader, librarian, principal, church leader, judge.

A recent study carried out by Huddersfield University, UK found that 52% of children were sexually abused in community-based organisations. These included sports and voluntary groups and private tuition classes.

In Australia, a case of child abuse is reported every two and a half minutes.

Almost three times as many girls as boys have substantiations of sexual abuse but boys are more likely to be physically abused. (AIHW, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008)

Two-thirds of all substantiations are for children aged 10 years old and under (AIHW, 2008).

Children with an intellectual disability are at the highest risk of sexual abuse. Research indicates that sexual abuse statistics range between 65% and 85% for these young people (Horsley and Azzopardi, 1990).

4. Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

A mandated notifier is required by law to notify the Department for Child Protection if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected. This obligation arises when a mandated notifier forms this suspicion in the course of their work (whether paid or voluntary) or in carrying out official duties.

A mandated notifier must make the notification as soon as practicable after the suspicion is formed.

If a mandated notifier forms a suspicion outside of their work (whether paid or voluntary) that a child has been or is being abused or neglected, they may make a notification to the Department for Child Protection voluntarily.

Who is a mandated notifier?

According to Section 11 of the Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA) the following are mandated notifiers:

- Teacher in an educational institution (including a kindergarten)
- An approved family day care provider
- Any other person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, a government or non-government organisation that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children, being a person who -
 - Is engaged in the actual delivery of those services to children; or
 - Holds a management position in the relevant organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children.
- Medical practitioners
- Pharmacists
- Registered or enrolled nurses
- Dentists
- Psychologists
- Police officers
- Community corrections officer (or an officer or employee of an administrative unit of the Public Service whose duties include the supervision of young or adult offenders in the community)
- Social workers
- Ministers of religion
- Person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, an organisation formed for religious or spiritual purposes

When does a mandatory reporter make a report?

A mandated notifier must make a report to the Department for Child Protection if they suspect **on reasonable grounds** that a child or young person **has been or is being** abused or neglected.

A mandated notifier does **not have to be able to prove that abuse or neglect has actually occurred**.

Reasonable grounds to report suspected abuse and/or neglect may include:

- When your own observations of a child's behaviour and/or injuries lead you to suspect a child is being abused or neglected
- When a child tells you they have been abused
- A child telling you that they know of someone who has been abused (they may possibly be referring to themselves)
- When your own observations about the behaviour of the child, or their adult caregivers, give you cause to suspect that a child is being, or is at risk of being, abused or neglected
- When you hear about it from someone who is in a position to provide reliable information, perhaps a relative or friend, neighbour or sibling of a child who is at risk.

A mandatory reporter can form the necessary belief, based on reasonable grounds, by noting the presence of indicators, disclosures, injuries, signs, symptoms and behaviours that heighten concerns about child abuse.

Staff may wish to consider the following questions to assist them in deciding if their belief is based on reasonable grounds:

- Can you describe the reasons why you believe a child has been, or is being sexually abused?
- What has the child said or done to suggest they are being sexually abused?
- Have you observed, or been told about the presence of any of the 'possible indicators' of sexual abuse?
- Did the child disclose sexual abuse? What did they say happened? Who did they disclose to and when?
- What other behaviours have you observed and/or interactions with the child are of concern to you? What is the frequency and severity of the behaviour? How long has it been occurring?

For more information about what may be considered abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, refer to point 1, indicators of child abuse or neglect, provided above.

Confidentiality of notification of abuse or neglect

Under section 13 of the Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA) a mandated notifier's identity will not be disclosed except:

- In the course of official duties to another person acting in an official capacity (eg. police acting in the matter of a criminal prosecution), or
- When the Court deems the identity of the notifier to be evidence of critical importance to legal proceedings, or
- If the mandated notifier has consented to the disclosure of their name.

Immunity from civil liability

A mandated notifier is immune from civil liability for reporting a suspicion in good faith (section 12(a) and (b) of the Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA).

A person must not threaten, intimidate or cause damage, loss or disadvantage to a mandated notifier because they have reported, or propose to report, suspected abuse or neglect (section 11(6) of the Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA)).

Failing to report

A failure by a mandated notifier to report a suspicion formed on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected may result in a person being prosecuted and a court imposing a fine. See section 11 of the [Children's Protection Act 1993](#).

A defence to a charge for failing to report

It is a defence to a charge that a mandated notifier has failed to report their suspicions, if the mandated notifier can prove that his or her suspicion was due solely to having been informed of the suspected child abuse or neglect by a:

- Police officer acting in the course of their official duties
- Another mandated notifier who has already made a report about the suspected child abuse or neglect.

A defence does not apply in situations where a mandated notifier possesses additional knowledge of the child's circumstances beyond that reported to them by a police officer or another mandated notifier.

In these circumstances, the mandated notifier must make their own report to the Child Abuse Report Line.

How does a mandatory reporter make a report?

Child abuse report line (CARL)

To report a suspected case of child abuse or neglect call the child abuse report line (CARL): 13 14 78. The report line is available 24 hours a day.

All serious concerns must be reported via the report line and **not** via the online reporting system.

Serious concerns include when you suspect a child or infant is in imminent or immediate danger of:

- Serious harm
- Serious injury
- Chronic neglect or
- When a child is in care of the department and you suspect they are being abused or neglected.

Crisis Care

Crisis Care provides an after-hours response to immediate child abuse and neglect matters, and responds to crisis situations relating to children who are under the Guardianship of the Minister.

Online reporting system

Mandated notifiers may also use the online reporting system to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

To make a report online you must register and login to the online child protection system.

Link: <https://my.families.sa.gov.au/IDMProv/landing.html>

For help, use the below link to view the instructions for using the online child protection reporting system:

https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net916/f/online_child_abuse_reporting_new_users_instructions.pdf

Mandated notifiers should use the “notification checklist” (Appendix A) to make sure they have all the necessary information ready when they make a report to the child abuse report line via phone or online. It must be remembered, that online reporting is only for reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

Details to provide

When making a notification, you need to be able to tell the child abuse report line (CARL) as much information as you have about:

- Child’s name, age, date of birth, address
- Description of injury, abuse and/or neglect (current and previous)
- The child’s current situation
- The location of the child, parent or caregiver and alleged perpetrator
- When and how did you find out about the abuse.

If the child is Aboriginal you should also provide the Clan group of the child, if known.

The report line staff will ask more detailed questions similar to below.

Child identification details and context

You will need to provide enough detail to identify the child or young person and give context to your report, including:

- The child’s full name

- Date of birth or age
- Current address
- Contact number
- School / kindergarten they attend
- Ethnicity (ie Aboriginal, kinship group, non-English speaking)
- Who are the parents, do they all live in the same house, are there siblings in the house?
- Alleged perpetrator's name, age, address, relationships to the child or children, current whereabouts
- Current whereabouts of the child or children of concern
- Details of when the next expected contact with the alleged perpetrator will occur
- If there are any family court orders, apprehended violence orders or domestic violence orders in place.

Notifier details

You will be asked to provide details about yourself including:

- Your full name, job title, agency name or address, contact number
- Your relationship to the child or children of concern
- Type of contact you have with the family, frequency and last time you saw the child or children
- If are you working with the child or the family, and If so, in what capacity.

Considerations

You will also need to provide your reasons for contacting the child abuse report line (CARL). Questions may include:

- Are the caregivers aware that a report is being made?
- Have you given any expectation of action to the child?
- What action are you expecting the department to take?
- What action can you take?
- What action have you already taken, what impact has that had and how has it helped?

Details of concerns

You will be asked questions about the allegations that may include:

- What has the child disclosed: what did he/she say and what was his/her emotional presentation?
- Who saw or heard what and when?
- Size and location of injuries, if any, with descriptions of bruising (colour and appearance)
- Has the child been seen by a Doctor? If so, provide the name and contact number.
- Has the matter been reported to police?
- Who else is aware of the concerns?
- Are the caregivers protective?
- Describe any caregiver behaviour that is of concern, including how often and how severe.
- Describe any behaviour by the child that is of concern, including how often it occurs.

You will also be asked about the child's family and family history, including issues like:

- Domestic violence
- Drug and alcohol use or abuse
- Violence to people outside the family
- Relevant health factors
- Extended family or other support networks
- Child care arrangements
- Nature of involvement with any agencies
- Mental health issues/presentations and details of diagnosis if known
- Physical or intellectual disability.

When problem sexual behaviour is being reported, specific details of the behaviour are required including:

- Type, context, frequency
- Who the child or young person is engaging in sexual behaviour with (ie is it evident there is a power imbalance?)
- Responses to behaviour (ie parents, school, parent's understanding of the behaviour, family attitudes to sexuality, appreciation of child's possible disability, mindfulness of age appropriate behaviour).

More detailed information relating to "problem sexual behaviour" is available at:

https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/responding_to_problem_sexual_behaviour_in_child_ren_and_young_people.pdf

Before the call is concluded

You will be asked some final questions before completing the report:

- What prompted you to call? (if this is not already obvious)
- Are the caregivers aware a report is being made?
- Is the child or are the children aware a report has been made? What was their response?

Following up or adding to a report

Mandated reporters are entitled to know if their concerns are going to be recorded as "child protection" or otherwise. This is the only feedback you are entitled to. Other feedback may be provided by contacting the responsible office, although this is at their discretion and may depend largely on your ongoing role with the child or young person.

If you need to add to a report you have made, you should contact the child abuse report line (CARL) again.

How has the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) been varied to take into consideration the legislation?

The Australian Islamic College is not subject to the FOI Act and therefore the information which they will hold cannot be accessed by a third party under the FOI Act. The FOI Act only applies to Government Departments and statutory authorities.

What is the teachers' obligation with respect to the storage and retention of notes and reports?

Under the Privacy Act the College and our staff have obligations to keep secure and confidential any notes and reports that they prepare about individual students. These obligations apply irrespective of whether a report has been made to the Department. There are also other requirements with respect to collection, correction, use, access and transfer of information under the Privacy Act. For further information refer to the College's Privacy Policy.

Once the report has been provided to the Department for Child Protection, the report becomes a 'government record' held by the Department and must be treated by the Department in accordance with the requirements imposed on the Department by the Act and any other statutory obligations.

There is nothing within the Act which requires a teacher to provide the report or their notes to the school nor does it make them automatically the property of the school. However, many schools have in place school policies and procedures which require these types of documents and records to be provided to the Principal of the school and to be kept as school records. In which case the Principal and the school will also have obligations under the *Privacy Act* to keep confidential and secure any notes or reports it may receive.

Because the reporting obligations under the Act are obligations placed upon the teacher personally, it is recommended that the teacher:

- Keep a copy of the report and any notes the teacher provides to the Department for Child Protection in compliance with their obligations under the Act;

- Keep a record of receipt by the Department for Child Protection of the report (this is usually in the form of receipt number) as evidence that the report was made to the Department for Child Protection;
- Keep a copy of the report and any notes the teacher provides to the school;
- Should retain copies of any notes, the report and the receipt of the report by the Department for Child Protection, when the teacher leaves the school.

Where to go for information and assistance

The Department for Child Protection is the agency responsible for legislation regarding the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse.

Their Head Office contact details are: Department for Child Protection, 31 Flinders Street, Adelaide, SA 5000.

Phone: 8124 4185

Their website is: www.childprotection.sa.gov.au

5. Grooming Behaviour

Grooming in a child protection context refers to deliberate actions undertaken to engage in sexual activity with a child. It differs from sexual abuse in that it is primarily a preparatory activity occurring before abuse occurs, but is continued during and after the abuse to ensure the safety of the groomer.

Grooming is a subtle, gradual, and escalating process of building trust with a child and those around the child, both children and adults, with the express purpose of the sexual gratification of the perpetrator and generally involves engaging in sexual activity with the child. It is deliberate and purposeful and occurs both before and after the abuse. Abusers may groom children and supporting adults for weeks, months, or even years before any sexual abuse actually takes place. The grooming may occur in person or via cyber media.

In the early stage, a committed offender will employ grooming behaviour and because it is so subtle and gradual the child may not be aware of the actual abuse when it occurs and that it is wrong or harmful. The grooming occurs not only with the child but also with those supporting networks around the child which might act as a deterrent or protective element. The perpetrator will invest significant energy and patience to minimise the risk of detection and exposure.

The groomer will employ manipulation, guilt, shame, bribery, coercion or exploit low self-esteem to psychologically manipulate the child and as a result the child becomes increasingly dependent on the groomer and increasingly alienated from protective elements including possible sources to disclose to. Plausible deniability is part of the strategy that the groomer employs to ensure that staff don't take seriously the possible disclosures of a child. This is a deliberate strategy employed to maintain the secrecy of the abuse, so that the abuse is concealed and to ensure the silence of the child.

The groomer will exploit vulnerabilities of the protective elements around the child, including parents and family circumstances, organizational and systemic weaknesses. Groomers are very adept at identifying anomalies, boundary ambiguities, and the lack of systemic awareness; at deflecting attention from their own actions and intentions.

While distinguishing between appropriate intent and inappropriate intent is very difficult, particularly for a child, it is essential that schools have very clear expectations and boundaries around behaviours so that there can be rigorous accountability when dealing with children.

Organisations must invest in increasing understanding around providing a safe environment for children and adults to challenge existing practice, to be able to raise concerns around unprofessional behaviour and to have a shared understanding of what a safe school is.

Grooming behaviour with children may include, but is not limited to:

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

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;
- Recognizing 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). This could include, for example, texting or emailing the teen without the parents' knowledge.

In addition to grooming the child, the groomer will use deflection strategies to remain unchallenged. Some of these strategies may include where the perpetrator:

- Promotes self and creates a reputation as caring, child-loving, competent, available, trustworthy, truthful.
- Raises doubts about the motives, mental health, reliability of the child or anyone else who might approach support services with allegations.
- Fosters dependency as someone the family can rely on.
- Positively represents child to others to be perceived as someone who would never harm the child.

Preventing or interrupting the Grooming process

Organisations unfortunately provide a vast array of opportunities for groomers to enact the grooming process. Some abusers prefer children within particular age bands and some studies have shown that groomers will take child focussed employment primarily to get access to a particular cohort of children.

Within an organisational context, holding all staff members accountable to the school code of conduct and challenging boundary crossings and violations is one of the most accessible strategies to combat grooming behaviour.

Employees, other professionals and volunteers, and others, must have very clear understandings of the expectations around interactions with students and processes for reporting concerning behaviours. Where an employee is investigated for behaviours considered to be grooming, school authorities are obligated to report this to both the Director General of DES and the TRBSA.

6. Cyber Predators

The internet is one of the main sources of communication for young people today. The popularity of various social media as well as chat rooms, discussion groups and interactive games makes them a very attractive place for predators as they can remain virtually anonymous whilst participating in a range of paedophilic

activity. There are significant concerns in this area, and schools, parents and students need to be informed consumers of this space.

More information is available on the Australian Government website regarding online safety via the below link:

<https://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/public-safety-and-law/online-safety>

Paedophiles can socialise together, trawl for inappropriate content (such as child pornography) and easily make collections of this and distribute to others.

They can pretend to be people other than themselves and they find a sense of security by operating from the confines of their own homes. Grooming children online with the intention to meet them in real life is an activity many undertake. They often set up bogus email accounts and handles (a nickname for a person who uses the Internet) which protect their identity online.

Children need to think carefully about a handle they choose. Handles such as *Angel-Babe*, *Sweet-Sixteen* and *SexyKid* appear harmless on the outset, however can attract the wrong attention. Paedophiles are often attracted to people with these types of names.

Paedophiles may also erase the history of what they have done online from their personal computers, making it a lengthy task for authorities to charge them with an offence.

Paedophiles conduct numerous activities online:

- Swapping child porn pictures in chat rooms or through email or P2P networks;
- Swapping personal information of children that they have collected;
- Participating in online communities with the intention to groom children for personal sexual gratification or to meet them in person;
- Forming networks with other paedophiles;
- Trading techniques on how to avoid the authorities.

The College is active in the education and awareness of Cyber Safety through our Bullying Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy which reinforce the importance of this issue for the College community. The College is a regular participant in Cyberbullying initiatives and these issues are addressed and supported through regular professional development for staff and targeted programs for students.

The Think You Know website has information for parents on keeping their family safe on the internet and information on how to report cyber abuse. Follow the link to their website for detailed information:

<http://www.thinkuknow.org.au>

How to report Cyber Predators

If you think a child is in immediate danger, call Triple Zero (000).

If there is no immediate danger, the below link takes you to the Think You Know website where you can report online child sexual exploitation, online grooming, inappropriate or illegal content, cybercrime, cyberbullying and online extremist material: <http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/report>

The below websites also contain information on cyber predators for both parents, teachers and students to use:

www.esafety.gov.au

www.thinkuknow.org.au

www.acma.gov.au
www.constablecare.org.au
www.netaalert.net.au
www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com

7. Interagency Reporting of Child Protection Matters

The information sharing guidelines for promoting safety and wellbeing (ISG) provide a consistent state-wide process for information sharing between relevant government agencies and with contracted non-government agencies where there is a risk to the safety or wellbeing of a person.

In 2013 the South Australian Cabinet directed that the scope of the ISG be broadened to include information sharing for all vulnerable population groups, including all adults, irrespective of their status as parents or caregivers, where there are threats to safety and wellbeing.

Key requirements of the ISG are:

- Verify the identity of the person with whom you are sharing personal information
- Seek the consent of children and adults wherever safe and practicable to do so
- If consent can't be sought or is refused, continue to share information necessary to prevent serious risks to safety
- Ensure information is secure, provided in a timely manner, accurate and only includes information relevant to the purpose
- Follow your agency's appendix for approval and recordkeeping requirements.

The ISG provides a simple flow chart (Appendix C) of information sharing actions and decisions to help ensure the responses to serious risks to safety remain focused on those risks – and are not compromised by misunderstandings about privacy or confidentiality. This is critical to the work of the ICP where confusion or insecurity about what information should be sought or shared may mean that abuse isn't exposed, or a prosecution is unsuccessful or opportunities to protect a child from harm are missed.

Where information is disclosed in good faith, no civil or criminal liability is incurred; the disclosure will not be regarded as a breach of any duty of confidentiality or secrecy imposed by law; and the disclosure will not be regarded as a breach of professional ethics or standards or any principles of conduct applicable to a person's employment or regarded as unprofessional conduct.

8. The Role of the Department for Child Protection and SAPOL

The *Department for Child Protection SA* is the government department with the statutory authority to investigate child protection concerns in South Australia.

It is not the College's role to investigate child maltreatment issues, including concerns of sexual abuse. That responsibility lies with DCP and South Australia Police (SAPOL). All disclosures or strong concerns of abuse or neglect should be reported to CPFS by the Principal or teacher. CPFS will then decide on how to proceed.

The *South Australian Police* also have a role in responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect. SAPOL intervene in instances where it is believed that a criminal offence has occurred which may lead to criminal charges being laid. In the case of a report of child sexual abuse, DCP will forward all reports to the SAPOL.

Where abuse and neglect has occurred within a family and there is the possibility of criminal charges being laid, the police and the DCP may undertake a joint investigation to reduce the trauma of the interviewing process to the child or young person.

A mandated notifier is immune from civil liability for reporting a suspicion in good faith (section 12(a) and (b) of the Children's Protection Act 1993).

A person must not threaten, intimidate or cause damage, loss or disadvantage to a mandated notifier because they have reported, or propose to report, suspected abuse or neglect (section 11(6) of the Children's Protection Act 1993).

Department of Child Protection

In cases of child sexual abuse the teacher will provide a written report to DCP.

For other forms of abuse, the Principal should report all disclosures or strong concerns to the DCP of abuse or neglect arising from the actions or inactions of parents/caregivers and maintain a written record of this communication and subsequent actions. The DCP will then decide how to proceed. The decision to progress the matter further is the responsibility of the DCP.

The DPS is required to provide feedback to people making reports on child abuse. The Principal should seek undertakings from the DPS that they will be kept informed within the bounds of confidentiality.

The school should be aware that the powers of the Department of Child Protection includes:

Apprehension of children in need of care and protection (without warrant)

Interviewing the child: DCP has the authority to interview the child at school before contact is made with the parent/caregiver. Before doing so, the principal or 'person in charge' at the school must be notified. The child should have the option of having support at the interview from a staff member of their choosing.

Removal of children from the school: DCP officers may remove a child from the school if they have the permission of the parent/caregiver or if they have apprehended the child. The Principal should satisfy themselves that all conditions have been met before this occurs and document all conversations.

Medical examination: DCP may require that a medical examination occur as soon as possible so that bruising, marking and other symptoms can be recorded for future reference. This examination can only take place if permission has been obtained from the parent/caregiver or the child has been apprehended (when parent/carer permission is not obtained).

Parents/Caregivers

To avoid interfering with any investigative process initiated by DCP or the Police, the Principal and teacher must seek advice from DCP or Police prior to informing the parent/carer of a concern of abuse or neglect.

9. Response to disclosure of abuse or neglect

When hearing a child reveal abuse or neglect, the most important thing is to make sure the child feels supported and safe.

The "Guidance in responding to children and young people" – **Appendix B** outlines in more detail how education and care staff can respond effectively to children.

The lists below provide a broad overview.

After a child has told you about abuse or neglect

You can show your care and concern by:

- Remembering the child may be experiencing a crisis
- Listening carefully
- Controlling your own expressions of panic or shock

- Taking what the child says seriously
- Using the child's own vocabulary
- Telling the child that this has happened to other children and that some adults do wrong things
- Reassuring the child that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Telling the child you will do your best to support them but do not make promises you may not be able to keep
- Explaining to the child that you need to tell someone who can help them.

Clarifying the situation

Open questions

You may need to ask more questions to clarify the situation. Open questions are the best way to gain more information from children. Examples of open questions are:

- How did it happen?
- What happened?
- Who was there?
- How does it make you feel?
- How often does it happen?
- How does the other person react?

Leading questions

Leading questions **should never** be asked as children often get confused. Examples of leading questions are:

- Did mum or dad hit you?
- Did mum or dad leave you by yourself again?
- I bet that made you cry?

If a student makes a disclosure of abuse or neglect staff should be aware of the immediate needs of the student. Children will rarely use adult language or specific terms when disclosing abuse, the language used will be at the developmental level of the child, so staff may not initially pick up the nuances of the disclosure.

Most disclosures are accidental, that is the child did not intend to disclose, and it is likely that the disclosure will only be partial. Staff should not attempt to elicit a full disclosure, or ask direct questions. The child should be encouraged to speak freely, ie a free narrative, but staff should not try to direct the child down a particular path of thought.

The following are suggested elements that should form part of the school policy and be discussed at staff training:

- Use 'protective interrupting' if students begin to disclose in class or in a public area to protect them from sharing the information with too many other people
- Acknowledge that you have heard them and stop them from disclosing any further
- Be supportive and gently indicate that they might tell you about it in a more private situation
- Quietly arrange to see them as soon as possible, in a situation away from other students
- Establish clear limits on confidentiality by telling the child that a report will be made to a person who will be able to provide help and protection and that you will help them throughout the process
- Put your own feelings aside and listen as if the information is not sensational
- Provide reassurance that the student is believed, that they were right to tell and it was not their fault
- remain as objective as possible as a staff member and do not make judgements about what has happened
- Listen to students in an appropriate private location within the school, that is a place where the interactions can be observed but not heard by others
- Be supportive and understanding

- Be empathetic to student feelings; the student may be confused because of the relationship with the abuser; eg: loving parents shouldn't do abusive things
- Acknowledge that it is difficult to talk about such things
- Try to identify students' immediate fears
- Let students tell the event in their own words; when reporting, do not paraphrase but try to be as accurate as possible
- If you are unable to answer all the questions of the child, it is OK to let them know
- Once you have established that they have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed, do not pursue the conversation any further. This is important to ensure that questions cannot be raised later about possible manipulation of the disclosure
- Allow students the option of support during any agency interview and reassure them of the availability of continuing support
- Document the conversation that you have had remembering as accurately as you can, the words and phrases used by the child to describe what has happened to them
- Document the disclosure and subsequent discussion and actions
- Explain what will happen next
- Try and stay with the student after the disclosure to provide a sense of security until necessary steps have been taken to ensure the safety and support.

Staff must be careful that they:

- **Don't** push for details or conduct an investigation. Other agencies have this responsibility.
- **Don't** express judgement of the student, perpetrator or family.
- **Don't** get angry, upset or show shock.
- **Don't** ask questions that may make the child feel guilty or inadequate.
- **Don't** ask leading questions, for instance 'Did Daddy hit you?'
- **Don't** put words in students' mouths or interrogate as this could jeopardise the interviewing process of CPFS and Police.
- **Don't** promise not to tell when there are clear limits on confidentiality.
- **Never** make false promises.
- **Don't** give a lecture about right and wrong.
- **Don't** say 'forget it', 'you'll get over it' or other such minimising statements.
- **Don't** give excessive pity.
- **Respect the confidentiality of the disclosure** and do not share the information with anyone other than the Principal and either the Department for Child Protection or the Police. This includes not engaging in general staffroom discussion about the disclosure.

Staff must be aware that a disclosure can arouse within themselves strong feelings of shock, anger and helplessness. It is important to try and control these feelings and work through them after the disclosure.

Even a hint of disbelief could cause a child to stop disclosing.

Children left at the College

It is imperative that the College exhausts all avenues in attempting to contact the child's family and emergency contacts.

In some cases, the Principal will decide someone reliable to drive the child home to establish contact with the family. It would be wise in some circumstances to ask a staff member to accompany the Principal or the staff who is taking the child home.

If the College has exhausted all avenues to make any contact the child's family, including the listed Emergency Contacts, the Principal should contact the Local District Office of the Department of Child

Protection and explain it is an emergency. After hours, the Crisis Care Line, also operated by the Department of Child Protection, is to be contacted.

10. Recruitment and Selection of Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

The College has effective human resource practices in place to ensure all new employees, volunteers and contractors are adequately screened, trained and supervised. (See the College's Recruitment and Selection Policy).

Criminal History Checks

Under the Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA), all Non-Government Schools in South Australia are required to conduct Criminal History Checks on all persons who are in regular contact with children or who work near children on a regular basis, or who supervise such persons, or who have access to children's records. Such persons do not actually have to be employees of a school but may be volunteers (Entrusted Person Volunteers) or contractors.

Entrusted Person Volunteers include persons engaged in the following:

- Any overnight camps/school sleep-overs/billeting
- Working one to one with other people's children
- Acting as a coach or manager of teams or groups of children or young people
- Working in resource centres, offices, managing canteens, etc.
- Accepting a position on governing/school councils, boards or committees.

The TRBSA conducts criminal history checks for all teachers. The College does not require a police clearance from teachers.

All non-teaching staff must go through the DECD Screening process including renewals. They are not required to obtain a Police clearance.

The DECD Fact Sheet – DCSI online application process Applicant Information is available via the below link: https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/dcsi_online_application_process.pdf

Screening is required to assess whether a potential employee or volunteer could pose a risk to the safety of children, while working for the College.

11. 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. This website contains some excellent material for professionals, and parents and friends. Of particular interest is the information on 'Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – a guide for professionals'. <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/>

The Association of Independent Schools South Australia (AISSA) has very helpful information and resources for staff on Child Protection and other professional development opportunities.

Crisis Care

State-wide social work service response for child protection in crisis situations (parent body is the Department of Child Protection).

13 16 11 (24 hour telephone service for people in crisis and needing urgent help).

08 8124 4422.

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 ring Crime Stoppers on **1800 333 000** or go to your local police station.

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. www.napcan.org.au

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

Department for Child Protection - Family Helpline – 08 9223 1100 / 1800 643 000 – is a free confidential telephone counselling and information service for families with relationship difficulties. It operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Department for Child Protection – Ngala Parenting Line offers phone advice and support to parents and carers of children up to 18 years old. This is a free call-back service. Their team of qualified and friendly staff are on hand to offer reassurance and encouragement along the parenting journey. To request a call-back use the below link:

<https://www.ngala.com.au/what-we-do/services/ngala-parenting-line/parent-line/>

Women’s Domestic Violence Crisis Line - 1800 800 098 (after hours diverts to Homelessness Gateway Service) for crisis counselling, support and referral to safe accommodation

MensLine Australia – 1300 78 99 78 to manage conflict and anger, relationship issues and violence in the home

1800RESPECT – 1800 737 732 for sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling

Child Protection Service – The Women’s and Children’s hospital Child Protection Service is provided for families living in northern, western and eastern Adelaide and northern and western country areas. Referrals are provided through Families SA. The Flinders Medical Centre Child Protection Service is provided for families living in southern metropolitan Adelaide, South East and Riverland areas of South Australia.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) – 1800 220 400 - Provides mental health services to children and young people up to 18 years and their families who are experiencing emotional, behavioural or psychiatric problems. To find an office follow the below link:

<http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/services/az/divisions/mentalhealth/index.html>

Parenting & Child Health website - <http://www.cyh.com> – provides links to parent support services

Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800 - a free and confidential telephone counselling service for 5 to 25 year old’s in Australia available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Their website also contains useful information for parents. Website: www.kidshelpline.com.au

Lifeline Australia – 13 11 14 - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week service for crisis support and suicide prevention. Website: www.lifeline.org.au

Websites providing background information on child abuse for schools

The following sites provide a wide range of background information on child abuse for schools.

Australian Institute of Family Studies - <https://aifs.gov.au/publications>

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.

Australian Institute of Criminology: <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications>

This site has links to the criminal aspect of child abuse.

Department of Child Protection South Australia: <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/>

The Australian Islamic College acknowledges with gratitude the contribution made to this document by the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA).

APPENDIX A – Notification Checklist

Notification checklist

(Information you should have with you, if available, when you make a notification)

Identification details:

- ☐ full name (including aka: 'also known as' by other surnames)
- ☐ date of birth/age/year level
- ☐ current address; contact number
- ☐ school or care setting
- ☐ Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identity/kinship group
- ☐ non-English speaking/disability
- ☐ alleged perpetrator's name, age, address, relationship to child/young person, current whereabouts
- ☐ current whereabouts of child/young person
- ☐ next contact with alleged perpetrator

child/young person
siblings
parents/
caregivers

Notifier details:

- ☐ your full name, job title or role in the school or care setting
- ☐ name, address and contact number of school or care setting
- ☐ your relationship to child/young person of concern
- ☐ type of contact you have with the family/how frequent
- ☐ capacity in which you are working with child/family

Details of concerns:

- ☐ if child/young person disclosed: What did child/young person say?/What was the emotional presentation?
- ☐ who saw/heard what and when
- ☐ size and location of injuries/description of any bruising
- ☐ child/young person been seen by a GP; if so, name and contact number
- ☐ description of carer behaviours of concern and frequency/severity
- ☐ description of any of child's/young person's behaviours of concern and frequency/severity

Other family details:

- ☐ are parents separated; any Family Court orders
- ☐ does custodial/non-custodial parent have a partner/partner's name
- ☐ knowledge about the functioning of the family or family violence/animal cruelty/violence to people outside of the family or drug/alcohol abuse/mental health problems or extended family or other support networks/child care arrangements or nature of involvement with any agencies/any relevant health factors

History of education/care actions:

- ☐ response from parents/caregivers when concerns have been raised with them
- ☐ 'take up' from parents/caregivers of referrals facilitated for them
- ☐ special supports for the child/young person (SSO support/breakfast program/transport/uniform/modified/learning program/counselling/mentoring/overnight care)
- ☐ referrals and involvement of integrated support services team with child/young person
- ☐ involvement of other government or non-government services
- ☐ files/documents available for transfer to child protection staff
- ☐ your discussion with principal/director or delegate about this notification
- ☐ your record of this notification on the official form in your site leader's office

APPENDIX B – Guidance in responding to children and young people

Guidance in responding to children and young people

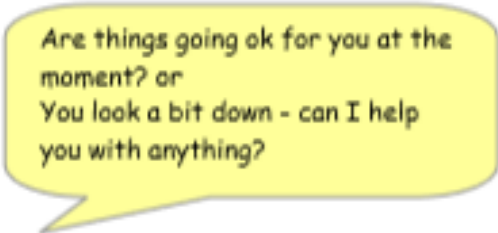
Sometimes children and young people use the opportunities that arise in education and care settings to share personal information. Recognising and respecting the significance of those moments for children and young people is part of the staff member's duty of care. Sometimes what is shared will be about serious matters such as abuse or neglect.

Your role in these situations is to do everything you can to enable the young person to share what they wish to share. This means listening respectfully, showing you care by your manner and allowing the child/young person time. Research clearly indicates that a supportive response to children/young people's disclosure of abuse or neglect contributes in a positive way to their potential long term recovery.

When might children and young people talk with adults about their concerns?

Some children and young people will initiate a conversation with a counsellor or another trusted staff member by themselves. For others this will only happen if *staff* initiate conversations and some children/young people will only allude to their problems via a range of non verbal methods. For this reason it is important that staff:

- Pay attention to children and young people's wellbeing and deliberately structure opportunities to ask after their welfare when there isn't an audience. Open questions such as



Are things going ok for you at the moment? or
You look a bit down - can I help you with anything?

are good examples. (See below for more about 'open' and 'leading' questions.)

- Take note of the children or young people who seem to deliberately want to stay behind, want to be in your area at lunchtime or connect with you on yard duty. Whenever possible, take these chances to talk rather than rush away yourself or hurry the child/young person away. If it's not possible for you to talk at that time, let them know you are aware they want to speak with you, that you think it's important and will follow up with them as soon as you can. Make an effort to do this, preferably before the end of that day.
- Recognise that play, art work and many forms of written work can be used by children and young people to express their sadness, fears or anger. Always follow up concerns raised through such expressions and seek support from senior staff as appropriate.

What might the child or young person be feeling when they share information about abuse or neglect?

A child may experience a range of emotions when disclosing, including:

- Guilt – children/young people often blame themselves for the abuse and may feel guilty for telling someone about it
- Shame – children/young people are often ashamed of the abuse itself, particularly sexual abuse
- Confusion – children/young people may be confused about their feelings for the 'perpetrator' particularly if it is a family member
- Fear – children/young people are often fearful of the repercussions of telling. They may be scared of the 'perpetrator', that the abuse may recur or that their actions will cause their family to break up.

What are leading and open questions?

Leading questions can usually be answered by a "yes" or "no". Leading questions tend to suggest information and ideas (put words in people's mouths).

Open questions tend to *invite* information and allow the individual to only say what they wish to say. Open questions keep the conversation open and are rarely answered by a "yes" or "no".

For example:

Child/young person's statement	Leading question ☒	Open question ☑
I don't like my uncle looking after me.	Does he make you afraid?	How does he make you feel?
I don't want to work, my hand hurts.	Is that a cigarette burn on your hand? Did mum or dad do that to you?	Your hand looks sore: how did it happen?
I'm scared to go on the camp with my class.	Has someone in the class been hurting you?	What's making you feel scared?

Using open questions is the most supportive way of responding to children and young people's personal disclosures. It is a gentle and respectful approach that protects both the child/young person's emotions as well as protecting against you influencing what the child/young person wants to say.

Remember the central role you play in these kinds of situations is to support the child/young person. This means that as soon as you think a child/young person is distressed by being asked clarifying questions, you should stop. Reassure them that they don't have to talk more with you and that you're going to do everything you can to help them.

What if the child keeps talking after I have formed a suspicion that they have been abused or neglected?

The purpose of your discussion with a child/young person is to support them and to respect their decision to speak with you about matters of importance to them. It is not necessary to ask more clarifying questions once you have formed a view about what your next actions should be. However *it is necessary to hear the child/young person out*. Interrupting them or cutting the conversation short will not give them the sense of being heard or of being supported that is so important to their wellbeing. When it appears that they have exhausted what they wish to say you can finish with a question such as,

Is there anything else you want me to know? or
Is there something you want to ask me? or
What would you like to happen now?

What should I say when the conversation is finished?

This is a difficult moment for many staff as they want to acknowledge the seriousness of what has been shared with them but they do not want to fall into the trap of making promises or alarming the child/young person with responses that show how impacted they are by what they have been told. Consider saying

Thank you for talking with me.
I'm really pleased you've told me what's happening /happened to you. I'm going to get advice now about the best way to help you.

Don't leave a child/young person alone in this situation. Offer to walk them back to class or organise for someone they nominate to accompany them. If more appropriate, allow them to remain where they are in the company of someone they nominate.

What if a child/young person begs me not to do anything or talk with anyone?

Depending on the situation disclosed and the age of the child/young person, consider saying,

You trusted me to tell me about your situation.
I want you to trust me now to find the best help I
can for you.
I'd be letting you down and/or breaking the law if I
kept this a secret.

If you form a suspicion the child/young person is being abused by a family member or other adult into whose care or company they are supposed to return at the end of the day, this poses a risk that will need to be communicated with the Child Abuse Report Line. If you are given information to suggest that parents /caregivers or other adults have been aware of the harm this too is very important information to provide to the Child Abuse Report Line in their risk assessment processes. ([Pre-Notification Checklist](#), [Notification checklist](#))

Alternatively it may be an adult at the site who is causing the child/young person distress or harm in which case the staff member must report this immediately to their site leader so they can follow procedures for responding to allegations involving adults at the site - as well as making a notification where appropriate.

([Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Students](#))

If the concern involves another child/young person at the site then decisions need to be made with the site leader about what is an appropriate response to that child/young person, their parents, other children/young people at the site and whether there are obligations to report the behaviour to any other agencies.

([Responding to Problem Sexual Behaviour involving Children and Young People](#))

It may be that the kind of harm described by the child/young person warrants an immediate response from a medical or mental health care provider or a referral for short or long term therapeutic support. ([Support Resources](#))

What if I think I can't handle the conversation?

Remember it is best if you can manage your emotions for the sake of the child/ young person. However, if you are concerned in this way try to stay calm and consider saying, at an appropriate break,

Thank you for starting to tell me this - I think
it's going to really help us if I get someone to
join us so we can hear what you want to say and
between us know the best way to help. Would you
like to suggest a staff member?

What are examples of open questions that might help gather appropriate information from children/young people – who are able and willing to provide it?

Clearly the age of the child/young person is significant and will influence the language used to frame open questions and how long the child/young person is expected to engage in talking. The following list is not provided to suggest any kind of conversational order. Obviously staff will ask questions most appropriate to how and where the conversation begins - in response to a specific disclosure, to a general appearance, to an incident, to a drawing etc

What's making you feel frightened /sad /depressed/like crying/running away?

What's making you feel like you don't want to go home /go to class/ go to...your grandparents' house/ the OSHC site/ football practice/ church group...?

Where were you when you felt like this?

Where were you when this happened?

Why do you like playing that game?

What's happening here in the drawing?

Who taught you this game?

Who is that in your drawing?

Where does your story come from?

Tell me more about what happened?

Tell me more about how this happened?

Can you point to where it hurts?

Who is making you feel like this?

Tell me more about what he/she does?

How do you feel about going home /going to class/ to...your grandparents' house/ the OSHC site/ football practice/ church group...?

Have you felt like this/ experienced this before?

Has this happened before?

Does mummy or daddy know what happened?

Do other people know what's happened?

Was someone else there at the time?

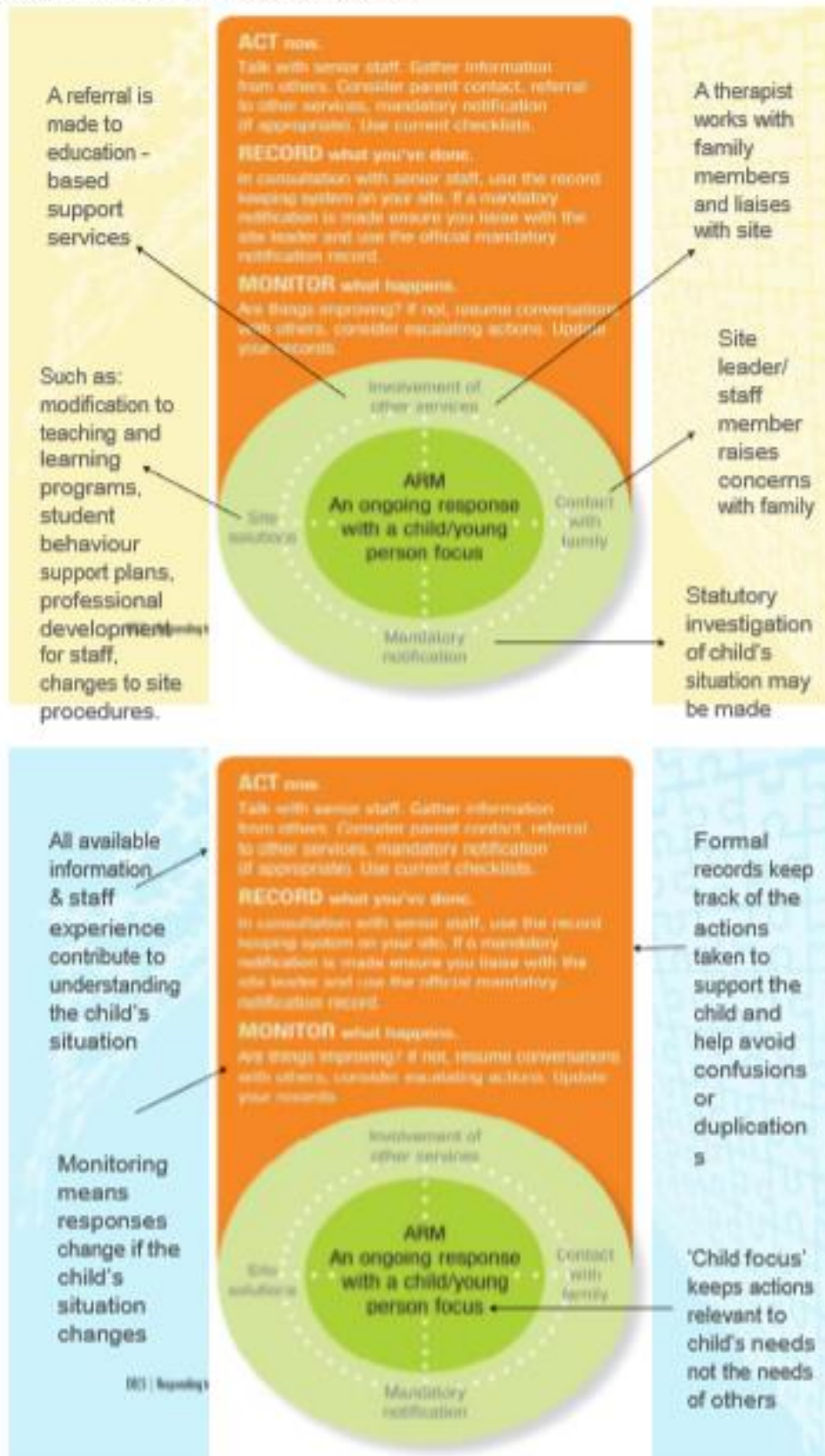
Is there anything else you want me to know?

Is there something you want to ask me?

What would you like to happen now?

What is the longer term responsibility in responding to children/young people about whom concerns have been raised?

Follow the ARM response (Act Record Monitor)



Summary guide of the dos and don'ts of appropriate responding when abuse or neglect is disclosed or suspected

Do

- listen with care, show care and use open questions
- find a private place if possible
- be patient, don't rush them or yourself
- stop asking questions if the child/young person does not want to talk further and/or becomes distressed
- record what you have been told
- speak with a senior member of staff ASAP to help you determine your next actions (for example referral to support services, report to the Child Abuse Report Line, police contact)
- respect their privacy by sharing only relevant information with the people who need to know (Information Sharing Guidelines for promoting the safety and wellbeing of Children, Young People and their Families)
- look after yourself

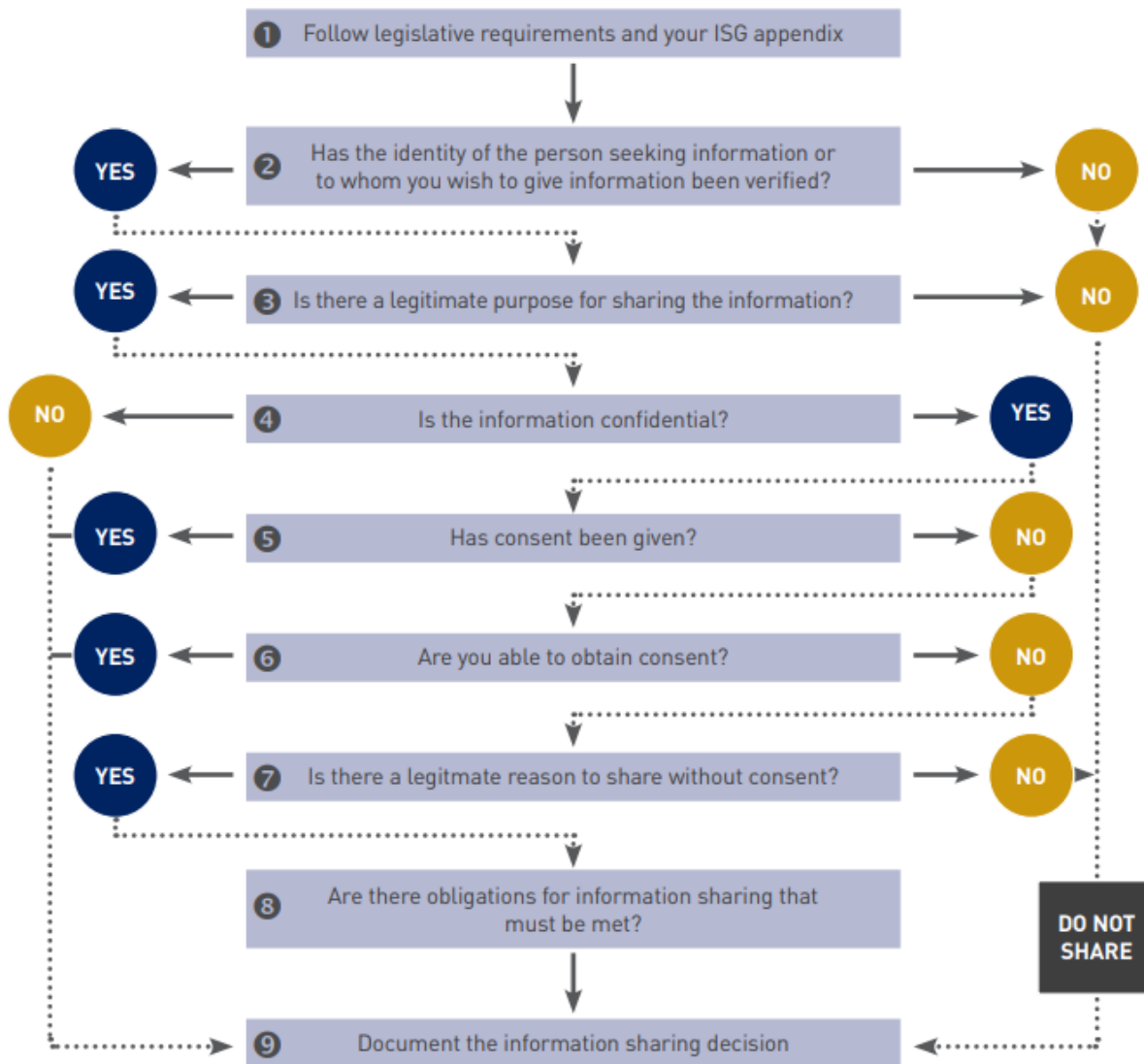
Don't

- stop the child from talking or saying what they wish to say
- act scared or shocked
- doubt the child (question the validity of their story)
- threaten to harm or punish the perpetrator
- promise that everything will be fine, that they will be safe, happy, better
- insist that they answer questions, provide more information when unwilling/unable to do so
- ask leading questions or interview others (investigate matters)

All resources listed in this document are available from the DECS website, at <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/childprotection/>

APPENDIX C – ISG FLOWCHART

ISG DECISION-MAKING STEPS



If you are unsure at any stage about what to do, consult your line manager/supervisor.
If as a supervisor/line manager, you are unsure and need help or advice, you may need to seek legal advice or consult the SA Principal Advisor Information Sharing at Ombudsman SA on (08) 8226 8699 or 1800 182 150 (toll free outside metro area).

ISG PRACTICE GUIDE

1. Before proceeding, check your ISG appendix for guidance:

- share information in a manner that is consistent with legal obligations and organisational policies and procedures
- follow the ISG STAR principles to make information sharing Secure, Timely, Accurate and Relevant
- collaborate with other providers to coordinate services and manage/mitigate risk.

2. If you do not know the person seeking information or to whom you wish to provide information, you need to verify who they are and for whom they work before sharing information.

3. You have a legitimate purpose for information sharing if you believe it is likely to:

- divert a person from offending or harming themselves
- protect a person or groups of people from potential harm, abuse or neglect
- protect service providers in situations of danger
- help service providers more effectively address risks to safety and wellbeing
- alert other service providers to an individual's need for assistance.

4. Generally, information is considered confidential when the person providing it believes it won't be shared with others

Assume that people will consider most information about themselves and their families to be confidential unless they have indicated otherwise.

5. Seeking informed consent is the first approach

This means the person understands the purpose for information sharing, with whom it will be shared, and what might happen as a result of sharing. If informed consent has been obtained, information can be shared.

6. It may be unreasonable to obtain consent if you are concerned that in doing so, the person might:

- move themselves or their family out of the organisation's or agency's view
- stop using a service seen to be necessary for the client or their children's safety or health
- coach or coerce a person to 'cover up' harmful behaviour to themselves or others
- abduct someone or abscond
- harm or threaten to harm others
- attempt suicide or self-harm
- destroy incriminating material relevant to a person or group's safety.

It may be impracticable to obtain consent if, for example, after reasonable attempts, you cannot locate the client. Discuss your concerns with a colleague/supervisor.

7. There is a legitimate reason to share information without consent if it is believed that failure to share information will lead to risk of serious harm

Disclosure of information without consent is permitted if:

- (1) It is authorised or required by law, or
- (2) (a) it is unreasonable or impracticable to seek consent; or consent has been refused; and
(b) the disclosure is reasonably necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to the life, health or safety of a person or group of people.

The decision to share without consent must be based on sound risk assessment and approved by the appropriate officer in your agency or organisation.

8. Situations where you must share information:

- eg you hold a suspicion, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person has or is being abused or neglected, you must report this to CARL (131 478).
- eg you believe a person poses a serious risk to themselves or others, consider if you should notify SA Police (131 444) or Mental Health Triage Services (131 465) (formerly known as ACIS).

9. Keep records – particularly in relation to consent issues

As a minimum, document when sharing information is refused or occurs without consent. Follow your organisation's instructions about recording other significant steps.

Appendix D – Educator Recruitment Procedures

Educator Recruitment Procedures	
Name:	Date:
Service Name: Australian Islamic College Adelaide	

Recruitment Process

The Principal will oversee and approve the recruitment process by:

- Ensuring there is a documented position description for the vacant position that is accurate and current.
- Arranging for the position to be advertised.
- Ensuring there is a standard list of interview questions for all applicants.
- Reviewing the applications that have been received and shortlisting applicants based on selection criteria.
- Arranging suitable interview times with the shortlisted applicants.
- Conducting interviews by a panel (such panel to include the Executive Principal where applicable).
- Conducting referee checks of the most suitable candidate.
- Making an offer of employment in writing (containing the specific terms and conditions of employment) which the applicant must sign as an acceptance of the offer.
- Arranging induction of the new employee to the College including completion of necessary paperwork, including sighting original identification and qualifications and completing the induction checklist with the new employee.
- Notifying unsuccessful applicants by letter, telephone or email.
- Recruitment and selection decisions will be made by the Principal.

Job Description

Every position must have a position description which:

- Summarises the job and describes the tasks to be performed.
- Details the skills, qualifications and experience required to perform the job and whether these are essential or desirable criteria.
- Clearly describes the expectations for staff members to provide a safe and supportive environment for children.

Advertising

- Positions may, at the discretion of the College and where relevant, be initially advertised internally via email in the first instance. This process allows current employees the opportunity to be considered for a transfer or to nominate a suitable contact as a potential candidate.
- External advertising will occur when a suitable internal candidate (including employee contact) is unavailable, or may occur concurrently with the internal advertising where the College believes it is in the College's best interests to source additional candidates.

The Job Advertisement

The job advertisement will be written in clear, concise and non-discriminatory language and will contain:

- The title of the position
- A summary of the role and conditions of employment
- The essential and desirable criteria for candidates
- Information about what applicants should provide with their applications
- Clear, concise details about our College and our safe, supportive work practices
- Advice that the successful applicant, where applicable, will need to hold TRBSA registration, and for non-teaching positions will need to undergo a successful DCIS screening.

- The email address of a contact person.
- The closing date for receipt of applications.
- A statement that the College is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Interviews

The Principal will conduct the interviews along with a panel of suitable senior staff. The format of the interview will be to:

- Advise the applicant about the position and the College.
- Discuss the applicant's skills and experience as they relate to the position.
- Answer any questions the applicant may have.
- Advise the applicant of the next steps in the selection process.
- Obtain permission to contact the applicant's nominated referees.

Screening and References

If progressing with a candidate, due diligence will be completed prior to offer.

SCREENING:

- All applicants must provide original identification and other original documentation to confirm their qualifications and experience as required by the College.
- All applicants must demonstrate the right to work in Australia.
- All teachers must be registered or provisionally registered with the relevant Teacher Registration Board of the applicable State. Or, additionally, in the case of South Australia, have received Special Authority to Teach from the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia (pursuant to Part 6 of the Teachers Registration and Standards Act 2004, Section 30(1)).
- All non-teaching members of staff (including Board members) must undergo a Department of Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) Screening.
- As deemed appropriate by the College, paid or unpaid employees who work with students but are not required to hold a Working with Children Check (e.g. a parent volunteer) may be required to consent to a criminal history check (Police check).

References

At least two verbal reference checks are mandatory for any role at the College. In addition:

- One of the referees should include the candidate's most recent direct supervisor; and
- One of the referees should include the candidate's most recent Principal (where applicable).

Priority should be given to reports of referees who can comment on the candidate's most recent child related employment or other activities. Referees will be questioned regarding the candidate's attitude and behaviour toward children in their previous role/s.

If reference checks cannot be undertaken until the preferred candidate has resigned from their current position, the offer will be made subject to the receipt of two satisfactory references that meet the requirements detailed above.

The College reserves the right to contact any persons who may have relevant knowledge of the candidate's qualifications and experience, whether or not such persons are nominated as referees by the candidate.

Selection of Candidates and Offer of Employment

Following the interviews, the College will check the work histories and references of the most suitable candidates(s) after obtaining their permission. If a decision is made to employ the most suitable candidate, we will make a written offer of employment. The successful applicant must sign a contract of employment containing the specific terms and conditions of their employment.

Exit Interviews

If an employee resigns, management will undertake an exit interview with the person to:

- Gather information about the effectiveness of the recruitment process.
- Identify possible areas for improvement in organisational processes, management, job design, remuneration or career planning and development.
- Receive positive feedback on what is working well.