

Lane Cove Public School Parents and Citizens Child Safe Reporting Policy

Introduction

- All members, employees, contractors and volunteers of the Lane Cove Public School Parents and Citizens Association (**LCPSP&CA**) must report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person immediately.
- All members, employees, contractors and volunteers of the LCPSP&CA should be confident that concerns and allegations will be dealt with honestly and fairly.
- All members, employees, contractors and volunteers of the LCPSP&CA should be confident in reporting unacceptable behaviour around children and young people.
- Where an allegation is made, the safety and wellbeing of the child is paramount.

Reporting obligations

Any actual, alleged or reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse is to be reported to:

- police and/or other statutory authority/ies in compliance with mandatory reporting obligations and any other legislated responsibilities relevant to safeguarding and protection of vulnerable people, and
- the President of the LCPSP&CA or the Child Safety Officers; and
- the insurer of the LCPSP&CA (by the Executive of the LCPSP&CA).

("Reasonable suspicion" means fair and practical reason to believe an incident involving sexual abuse has occurred based on either verbal communication, hearsay, rumour or observance of behaviour.)

NSW reporting obligations

NSW Police

Contact the police on 131 444 for any situation you consider could be a criminal offence. This includes child sexual assault, physical assault and grooming offences.

It is a criminal offence for adults not to report to police if they 'know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child abuse offence has been committed' – see [section 316A](#) of the [Crimes Act 1900](#) (NSW) .

In addition, people employed in child-related work may be subject to a criminal offence if they fail to reduce or remove risk of a child becoming a victim of child abuse.

Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm may report to Department of Communities and Justice by phoning 132 111 (this is a 24-hour service).

Under the [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#) (NSW):

- a person who is paid to provide education services or a person (paid or unpaid) who is in a management position in education services is a "**mandatory reporter**"
- mandatory reporters must report if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm by going to the [ChildStory Reporter Community](#).

Office of the Children's Guardian

All employees and contractors of the LCPSP&CA must report allegations and findings of sexual offences, sexual misconduct, ill-treatment of a child, neglect of a child, an assault against a child, failure to protect a child or failure to report if a child has been harmed, as well as any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child to the President of the LCPSP&CA. If the matter or complaint involves the conduct of the President of the LCPSP&CA, the report should be made to the OCG.

Types of concerns

All complaints should be reported. This includes:

- disclosures of abuse;
- suspicion of abuse or harm to a child or young person; and
- unacceptable behaviour around children and young people

Child safety Officers

The LCPSP&CA have appointed two child safety officers for whom any concern can be raised and discussed. These are presently:

1. [INSERT] on [INSERT PHONE, EMAIL]
2. [INSERT] on [INSERT]

Raising a concern

The Executive of the LCPSP&CA is committed to fostering a culture and environment where survivors of abuse, members, employees, contractors and volunteers will report physical or sexual abuse.

Members, non-member officers, employees, contractors and volunteers are actively encouraged to report any actual, alleged or reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse. The Executive of the LCPSP&CA is committed to receiving complaints openly and to not dismissing concerns when they are raised.

A child or young person, or any member, non-member officer, staff member, volunteer or student can make a complaint or raise a concern by:

- face-to-face meeting with the President of the LCPSP&CA or either of the child safe contact officers;
- phone call (see contact numbers on previous page); or
- email (see email addresses on previous page).

Note: If you wish to raise a complaint against a child safe contact officer or if you have a concern that one of the child safe contact officers may somehow be conflicted or lack independence from the circumstances of the actual, alleged or reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse, please contact the OCG.

Immediate actions

- Steps are taken to ensure the child is removed from immediate harm, including removing the person the allegation is made about from child-related work if required.
 - If under any investigation (internally or by the police) for committing sexual abuse, an employee, contractor or volunteer is automatically suspended from work or other duties within LCPSP&CA.
 - If found guilty of committing sexual abuse following an investigation or trial, the involvement with LCPSP&CA of any employee, contractor or volunteer, is automatically terminated.

- The incident is recorded on our complaint record form.
- If required, NSW Police and DCJ are contacted and will give us instructions on how to proceed.
- If required, the OCG is contacted and will give advice on how to proceed with an investigation.
- Investigation is carried out in a timely, fair and transparent manner (being mindful of privacy obligations) in line with our policy on responding to child safety reports.
- The child receives information about the investigation process, timeframes and outcome (being mindful of privacy and not compromising any ongoing investigation). The child receives ongoing support from both your organisation and through referrals as needed (for example, counselling).
- After a finding is made, management is to act in accordance with our Responding to Child Safety Reports Policy.
- Critical incident review conducted to improve policies and procedures to prevent the incident reoccurring.

Privacy and confidentiality

All details in relation to any reports or allegations of physical or sexual abuse are to remain private and confidential.

We follow the obligations defined under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Commonwealth).

- All information is recorded on our complaints and allegations reporting form.
- All complaints and allegations reporting forms are stored securely and only accessed by those in the organisation with responsibility for oversight or investigation.
- Information may be exchanged under Chapter 16A of the *Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* with other agencies who have responsibilities relating to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young persons.
- The privacy of those involved is maintained by the LCPSP&CA in accordance with our obligations under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

Communication and support for stakeholders

The Executive of the LCPSP&CA ensures that all our stakeholders (including workers, families and children) know how to raise a concern in the following ways.

- We publish our policies and procedures (including this Child Safe Reporting Policy) on our website.
- We provide our employees and contractors with training opportunities so they understand our complaints and allegations processes.

Review date

This policy will be reviewed annually and after critical incidents, to ensure continuous improvement in our practices and that we keep up to date with relevant legislation and industry requirements.

This policy is due to be reviewed before 25 January 2024.

APPROVAL HISTORY

Version	President of the LCPSP&C	Date of Approval
1	Caleb Taylor	25 January 2023