



Nurture for today • Learning for tomorrow • Character for eternity

# **Kempsey Adventist School**

## **Child Protection Guidelines**

## **Rationale**

All children and young people have a right to feel safe and to be safe. School staff have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that the children and young people in their care are adequately cared for and where appropriate, that instances of risk of significant harm are reported to authorised agencies responsible for the investigation of such matters.

## **Aims**

To ensure that a child/young person's right to be safe is maintained and that each child/young person is protected against behaviour which could place them at risk of harm.

## **What is a Mandatory Reporter?**

A mandatory reporter in NSW is an individual required by under Section 27 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* to report to the Child Protection Helpline **when he/she has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child, or a class of children, is at risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect, and those grounds arise during the course of or from the person's work.**

Mandatory reporters include those who deliver the following services wholly or partly to children as part of their paid or professional work:

Health care (e.g., doctors, nurses, dentists and other health workers);

Welfare (e.g., psychologists, social workers and youth workers);

Education (e.g., teachers);

Children's services (e.g., child care workers, family day carers and home-based carers);

Residential services (e.g., refuge workers);

Law enforcement (e.g., police).

The NSW legislation also mandates any person who manages an employee from the above services to report risk of significant harm.

**\*\*At KAS all instances of Mandatory Reporting will be made by the Principal**

## **What is Risk of Significant Harm?**

A child or young person is at risk of significant harm if the circumstances that are causing concern for the safety, welfare or well being of the child or young person are present to a significant extent.

### **Policy definition**

- What is meant by 'significant' in the phrase 'to a significant extent' is that which is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of a family's consent.

- What is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child or young person’s safety, welfare or well being.
- In the case of an unborn child, what is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child after the child’s birth.
- Significance can result from a single act or omission or an accumulation of these. (DoCS – 2010)

**Risk of Significant Harm may include, but are not limited to the following behaviours/practices:**

<p><b>Physical Abuse</b></p>	<p>You know of an injury to a child/young person that you suspect is caused by abuse.</p> <p>You know of treatment of a child/young person that may have caused or is likely to cause an injury.</p> <p>Child/young person was injured, or nearly injured, during a domestic violence incident.</p>
<p><b>Neglect</b></p>	<p>You suspect that a parent/carer is not adequately meeting child/young person needs.</p> <p>A child/young person appears neglected.</p> <p><b>Supervision</b> (A child/young person has been or is going to be alone. A parent/carer is not paying enough attention to protect child/young person).</p> <p><b>Shelter/Environment</b> (A child/young person or family is homeless. A child/young person is living in a dangerous environment).</p> <p><b>Food</b> (A child/young person is not receiving appropriate nutrition).</p> <p><b>Medical Care</b> (A child/young person has an untreated/inappropriately treated medical condition).</p> <p><b>Mental Health Care</b> (A child/young person has an untreated/inappropriately treated mental health condition).</p> <p><b>Education</b> (A child/young person of compulsory school age is not enrolled. A child/young person of compulsory school age is habitually absent).</p>
<p><b>Sexual Abuse</b></p>	<p>You learn about sexual contact or sexual abuse of a child/young person.</p> <p>A child/young person has medical findings suspicious for sexual abuse.</p> <p>A child/young person’s behaviour, including sexually abusive behaviour, is concerning.</p>
<p><b>Psychological Harm</b></p>	<p>A child/young person appears to be experiencing psychological/emotional distress that is a result of parent/carer behaviour such as domestic violence.</p> <p>You are aware of parent/carer behaviours, including domestic violence, that are likely to result in significant psychological harm.</p>

<p><b>Relinquishing Care</b></p>	<p>Parent/carer states he/she will not or cannot continue to provide care for child under the age of 16 or a young person over age 16 when he/she is currently unable to make an informed decision (temporarily or permanently). If the young person is 16 years old or over and able to make informed decisions, please refer to Mandatory Reporter Guide 2009.</p> <p>Child/young person is in voluntary care for longer than legislation allows.</p>
<p><b>Carer Concern</b></p>	<p>You have information that the child/young person is significantly affected by carer concerns.</p>
<p><b>Self-harm or Harm to Others</b></p>	<p>Child/young person reports and/or exhibits behaviour indicating a desire to either harm themselves or another person</p>
<p><b>Substance Abuse</b></p>	<p>Use this when a child/young person discloses significant substance use by a parent/carer.</p> <p>You observe a parent/carer to be significantly impaired by substance use. Inappropriate parent/carer substance use is reported to you by a third party.</p> <p>A child is born and there is evidence that the child was exposed to alcohol or drugs.</p>
<p><b>Mental Health</b></p>	<p>A child/young person discloses significant parent/carer mental health concerns.</p> <p>You observe a parent/carer to be significantly impaired by mental health concerns.</p> <p>Parent/carer mental health concerns are reported to you by a third party.</p>
<p><b>Domestic Violence</b></p>	<p>You are aware of an incident of domestic violence (observed by you or reported to you) that did not result in injury to a child/young person or psychological harm to a child/young person.</p> <p>You suspect domestic violence based on observations of extreme power/control dynamics (e.g., extreme isolation) or threats of harm to adults in household.</p>
<p><b>Any Other Instance</b></p>	<p>Child/young person reports and/or exhibits behaviour which causes a mandatory reporter to develop a concern that they may be at Risk of significant harm in any area not already defined in this table.</p>
<p><b>Unborn Child</b></p>	<p>Use this when you are concerned for the welfare of an unborn child upon his/her birth.</p>

## Child Protection & Student at Risk Processes at KAS

(These processes should be read and implemented in conjunction with the KAS Child Protection Policy and both the KAS Staff and Volunteer Codes of Conduct)

### General Implementation:

- Where a staff member is involved in a conversation with a student/school community member, where issues of risk of significant harm have been/or appear likely to be disclosed, the student/school community member must be informed that in all circumstances the information will be shared with the Principal and in some circumstances, may be shared with another appropriate staff member. Students/school community members may be informed that this is necessitated by mandatory reporting requirements.
- All concerns regarding student welfare, regardless of whether or not the welfare matter falls within the definition of Risk of Significant Harm as defined in this guidelines document, must be immediately reported in full to the Principal, or their delegate, via the submission of a *KAS Student at Risk* form. Where this is not practicable, the Principal, or their delegate, must be contacted by phone and email immediately. Phone and email reporting to the Principal does not negate the requirement to complete a *KAS Student at Risk* form.
- The *KAS Student at Risk* forms can be downloaded from the General Documents folder in the staff section of the KAS Server and/or Google Drive. Upon initial completion by a staff member, all forms must be immediately submitted to Dean of Student Wellbeing who will then refer the matter appropriately for further action.
- The Principal and/or their delegate will file a copy of all *KAS Student at Risk* forms.
- Where mandatory reporting is required, the Principal, and/or their delegate, will contact Child Protection Helpline by telephone as soon as practicable to make an official notification on **132 111**
- Any staff from Family and Community Services, or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification, will interview staff and children/young person's only in the presence of the Principal and/or their delegate.
- In all instances where mandatory reporting occurs or *KAS Student at Risk* forms are completed, any subsequent information sheets and/or discussions are to be managed in a sensitive and professional manner and are to be recorded and maintained in a strictly confidential manner.
- Following the completion of a *KAS Student at Risk* form, affected students are to be monitored by the staff member the incident was first referred to by the Dean of Student Wellbeing, and any subsequent signs or indications of risk are also to be reported.
- In all cases, if in doubt, a staff member must report a student at risk of harm/significant harm to the Principal immediately.
- All KAS staff will receive Child Protection training by a qualified and/or appropriate person/agency annually.
- All KAS staff and/or volunteers will receive an annual induction regarding the school's Child Protection policies, guidelines and procedures and will be asked to sign a new copy of a relevant KAS Code of Conduct on an annual basis.

