

**WARRAGUL REGIONAL COLLEGE**

# **CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING POLICY**

**(Formerly Mandatory Reporting Policy)**

**November 2016**



## **COLLEGE VALUES**

Warragul Regional College has four core values: Community: We take care of each other, Achievement: We strive for excellence, Respect: We respect people and property and Effort: We work hard. We expect all members of our learning community to demonstrate these values everywhere and all of the time.

The College is a leading school in this state in implementing a safe collaborative and inclusive environment with student having a strong sense of belonging, identity, self-worth and voice. Underpinning this commitment is School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) and membership of the Safe School's Coalition. These initiatives promote health, wellbeing and social inclusion for every member of the Warragul Regional College community.

Warragul Regional College has a zero tolerance for child abuse.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to explain the roles and responsibilities of school staff to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The full policy with detailed information that all staff in Victorian government schools must follow is found at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

This policy will be reviewed in November 2017

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## **Rationale**

At **Warragul Regional College**, student wellbeing involves all members of the school community ~ staff, students and parents. Warragul Regional College aims to create a safe and supportive environment for learning, and behaviours that reinforce our school community values. The school believes that community values of mutual respect, courtesy, honesty, sensitivity, and support help to build relationships and promote the wellbeing of all members of the school community. A positive approach to behaviour is desirable in order to foster a climate where personal responsibility and self-discipline can develop.

## **Mandatory Reporters**

All staff who are Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers (including principals) or who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT are 'mandatory reporters'. This means that in the course of undertaking their professional duties, they must report to the Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Protection a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual abuse or physical injury and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. They must report as soon as practicable after forming the belief.

There may be times when two or more mandated staff members, for example, a teacher and a principal, have formed a belief about the same child or young person on the same occasion. In this situation, it is sufficient for only one of the mandated staff members to report to Child Protection. The other staff member is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all of the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to Child Protection.

At Warragul Regional College, it is expected that staff who have formed a reasonable belief that a child is being abused will discuss any child safety concern with a principal team member where this is practical.

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## Non-Mandated Staff Members

Any person, who believes on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection, may report their concerns to Child Protection. This means that any person, including non-mandated school staff, is able to make a report to Child Protection or Victoria Police when they believe that a child or young person is at risk of harm and in need of protection, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

## Making A Report

Staff **do not require** the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to Child Protection, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so.

Staff are expected to follow the Department of Education policy for making a report which is set out at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

Reports to Child Protection and Victoria Police are confidential unless you consent or a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary in the interests of justice for your identity to be disclosed

## Staff Training

As part of their initial induction to the school, staff will be informed of child protection reporting requirements and Department of Education policy and will be provided with supporting documentation in their staff handbook.

## Policy Review

The Principal will ensure that this document is reviewed and updated annually.