

**Anglican Diocese of Grafton
Safe Ministry
BULLETIN No 1, 2020**

Mandatory Child Protection Reporting

Information for clergy, stipended lay ministers, others providing religion-based activities to children and SRE teachers

On 1 March 2020 amendments to the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (Care Act) expanded mandatory reporter obligations to include persons in religious ministry or persons providing religion-based activities to children.

Mandatory reporting obligations already apply to persons who work in health care, welfare, education, disability services, children's services, residential services, law enforcement and registered psychologists providing a professional service as a psychologist (whether or not exclusively to children).

Mandatory reporting is a legislative requirement to make a report to government authorities when there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm and those grounds arise in the course of, or from a person's work or role.

Making a decision about whether to make a report?

If you are uncertain, you should use the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) to help decide whether you should make a report. The MRG is a structured online tool that works by posing specific questions that will help you work systematically through the issues relating to any concerns you have about a child. At the end of the process, a decision report will guide you as to what action to take.

The MRG can be accessed at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>.

Registration is not required to access this tool.

Making a report

If you need to make a report, you should do so by calling the NSW Child Protection Helpline on 132 111. The Child Protection Helpline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

When making a report you will need to have the following information to hand:

1. Child/young person details – Name, address, D.O.B., siblings
2. Incident details – Date, type of risk, person/s causing or contributing to harm
3. Impact of the incident on the child/young person
4. Network of support around the child/young person
5. Your personal and contact details
6. Interpreter/ support requirement: whether a language or sign interpreter may be required, whether a support is required for a person with a disability or an Aboriginal agency is involved.

eReporting

Please do not attempt to register to use this option at the moment. We are working with the Department of Communities and Justice to resolve some difficulties that arise because Diocesan clergy, employees and volunteers do not have a common form of email address.

Informing the Diocese

You are not required to inform the Diocese if you make a report under the mandatory reporter legislation.

Under the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme, however, you are required to report if the risk of harm is resulting from the actions or behaviour of an employee or volunteer of the Diocese. If you think this is the case please contact the Director of Professional Standards on 1800 370 757 or at dps@graftondiocese.org.au as a matter of urgency.

Want to know more?

The NGO Learning Centre is a free public website for staff of non-government organisations working with children, young people, families and communities in NSW. The website offers an online training course on understanding the child protection reporting process. The website is accessible at <http://ngolearning.com.au/>.

Protections for reporters

Amendments have been made to the Care Act to build on existing protections for people who make reports to government authorities in good faith by providing these reporters with protection against defamation and civil and criminal liability. The section also provides that the report does not constitute a breach of professional etiquette or ethics, or amount to unprofessional conduct. All reporters are now protected against retribution for making, or proposing to make, a report.

Phillip Bonser
Director of Professional Standards
Wednesday, 22 April 2020

DISTRIBUTION:

Clergy, stipended Lay Ministers, LLM's, SRE teachers, other persons providing religion-based activities to children.