

Working Together: Supporting Children on Care and Protection Orders



CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION SHEET

If a child with whom you work closely (eg in your class if you are a teacher) has recently been notified to DHHS by you or another staff member (eg the Principal or other staff member) because of suspected abuse or neglect –

- the notification will have been made to the state child protection service through the Child Protection Advice and Referral Service (CPAARS)
- you may already be aware of the notification (information is shared on a 'need to know' basis)
- feedback will be provided by child protection to the you or the agency you work for (eg Education Department) about whether further assessment will take place (eg through interviewing the child)
- it is important that you continue to offer supportive responses to the child, especially if their behaviours are extreme or challenging
- seek advice or guidance from supervisors, managers or other support service staff.

Confidentiality is extremely important but sharing of information may be in the best interest of the child. Provide information to your supervisor or manager or other staff on a 'need to know' basis.

Interview: If in the course of an investigation or assessment the child is to be interviewed at school

- the arrangements are made by child protection staff, who will convene and run the meeting
- in the context of a school, the principal gives permission
- the child is consulted and a supportive adult of his or her choice should attend
- teachers or other professionals directly involved with the child's day to day care or education are not obliged to attend, but it may be appropriate and in the best interests of the child

In the course of an assessment under the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*, the following processes may occur:

- child protection staff are responsible for planning the assessment and keeping school staff (or other professionals working closely with the child) informed
- child protection staff may request a written report from the school or service to assist with their protective assessment (via written request to the principal or service manager)
- school or service staff may be asked to attend a case conference or a family group conference

- the matter may be taken to the Magistrate's Court (Children's Division) seeking care and protection orders
- the **custody** or **guardianship** of the child may be transferred to the state (short or long term)
- the child may remain at home or be placed away from home with relatives, community members or Departmental carers.

If the Court makes an order transferring custody and or guardianship to the State

- child protection will notify the agency or service working closely with the child (in the case of the Education Department, an **Advice to Schools** form will be completed, providing details of responsibilities and contacts for day to day care and significant decisions in relation to the child. This form will be given to the school.)
- a child on care and protection orders will have a designated child protection worker responsible for his or her case planning
- comprehensive care planning will be conducted using the Looking After Children (LAC) framework. This covers all dimensions of a child's life
- The plan will be developed by the responsible child protection worker in consultation with the child, family, carers, family members, the school and other supports to the child or young person
- responsibility for the educational component of the care plan will be developed in consultation with the child, family, carer and school staff
- an Individual Education Plan will be developed only where the educational support needs of the child require this
- resources to support the specific needs of the child (including educational, recreational, therapeutic, health, social and identity issues) will be discussed between child protection and the key support agencies
- In the case of the needs of a child at a state school, protocols and agreements support the partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services and the Education Department to promote the best interests of children for whom both agencies have a shared responsibility.

Contact numbers for child protection services

- **South** 03 6230 7650
- **North West** 03 6434 6260
- **North** 03 6336 2376
- **CPAARS** 1300 737 639 (for notifications only)