

## **Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Procedure**

### **Procedure statement:**

- Education has an important role to support children and young people and to identify where problems arise that may put their safety, welfare or wellbeing at risk.
- All staff have a responsibility to report risk of harm concerns about children and young people, within their roles, and to provide support to children and young people.
- Child protection reforms introduce an obligation for government and non-government agencies to coordinate decision making and delivery of services.

### **Audience and applicability:**

*All departmental employees, including those in state offices, schools, TAFE NSW, Adult Migrant English Service, Adult and Community Education and State Training Services.*

### **Context:**

- The NSW Government recognises that care and protection for children and young people is a shared responsibility. It begins with parents, but when government support becomes necessary, it is not the sole responsibility of community services but a collective responsibility.
- Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing provides the framework for parents, communities, government and non-government agencies to work together to support children and families.

### **Legislation:**

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998; Crimes Act 1900, Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Privacy And Personal Information Protection Act 1998; Health Records And Information Privacy Act 2002; Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998; Ombudsman Act 1974, Education Act 1990

### **Responsibilities and delegations:**

#### **Principals and workplace managers**

##### *A) Training:*

- ensure all staff have participated in an initial child protection induction and an update during the past year
- ensure all staff are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect of children and young people
- ensure all staff are aware of their obligation to advise the principal or workplace manager of concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people that arise during the course of their work
- ensure that all staff are aware of their mandatory obligation to report suspected risk of significant harm and of the procedures for doing so.

### *B) Reporting:*

- use appropriate tools to inform decision making, such as the online Mandatory Reporter Guide, professional judgment or specialist advice, where there are concerns about risk of harm
- determine whether concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young people constitute risk of significant harm and, if they do, report these to Family and Community Services
- seek advice from the Child Wellbeing Unit where there is uncertainty about whether concerns amount to risk of significant harm
- contact the Child Wellbeing Unit about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people where:
  - there are concerns about risk of harm, that do not meet the threshold of significant harm but are not trivial
  - the Mandatory Reporter Guide indicates this should be done
  - a case has been reported to Family and Community Services and did not meet the risk of significant harm threshold
  - there is an observable pattern of cumulative harm that does not meet the threshold of significant harm.
  - inform parent/caregiver as advised.

### *C) Supporting children and young people*

- establish effective systems in their workplace for:
  1. child protection concerns to be identified in the course of the work of staff, reported and action taken, where appropriate, so vulnerable children and young people are supported
  2. reasonable steps to be taken to coordinate decision making and coordinate services to children and young people and their families with other local service providers, if required
  3. collaborative work with other agencies for the care and protection of children and young people in ways that strengthen and support the family and in a manner that respects the functions and expertise of each service provider
- exchange relevant information to progress assessments, investigations and case management as permitted by law
- use best endeavours in responding to a request for a service from Family and Community Services provided that the request is consistent with departmental responsibilities and policies.

## **Employees**

### *A) Training:*

- participate in a child protection induction and in annual updates. This includes all staff – principals, workplace managers, teaching and non-teaching staff, part-time, temporary and casual staff and those who join during the year.

### *B) Reporting:*

- adhere to mandatory procedures for conveying risk of harm concerns to the principal or workplace manager
- adhere to mandatory procedures for reporting risk of significant harm to Family and Community Services
- ensure, where they have reported any risk of significant harm concerns to the principal or workplace manager, that the principal or workplace manager has reported those concerns to Family and Community Services
- report directly to Family and Community Services if they believe the principal or workplace manager has not reported risk of significant harm concerns to Family and Community Services, and they still have concerns about risk of significant harm
- ensure that any relevant information that they become aware of, subsequent to a report being made to Family and Community Services or following contact with the Child Wellbeing Unit, is provided to Family and Community Services or the Child Wellbeing Unit respectively. If the additional information forms concerns about risk of significant harm a report must be made to Family and Community Services

### *C) Supporting children and young people:*

- cooperate with reasonable steps to coordinate service delivery and decision-making with other relevant service providers
- avoid undertaking any investigation of the circumstances giving rise to a report where risk of significant harm has been reported, without the express prior approval of the relevant Family and Community Services case officer
- inform students, including apprentices or trainees, of their right to be protected from abuse and of avenues of support if they have concerns about abuse.

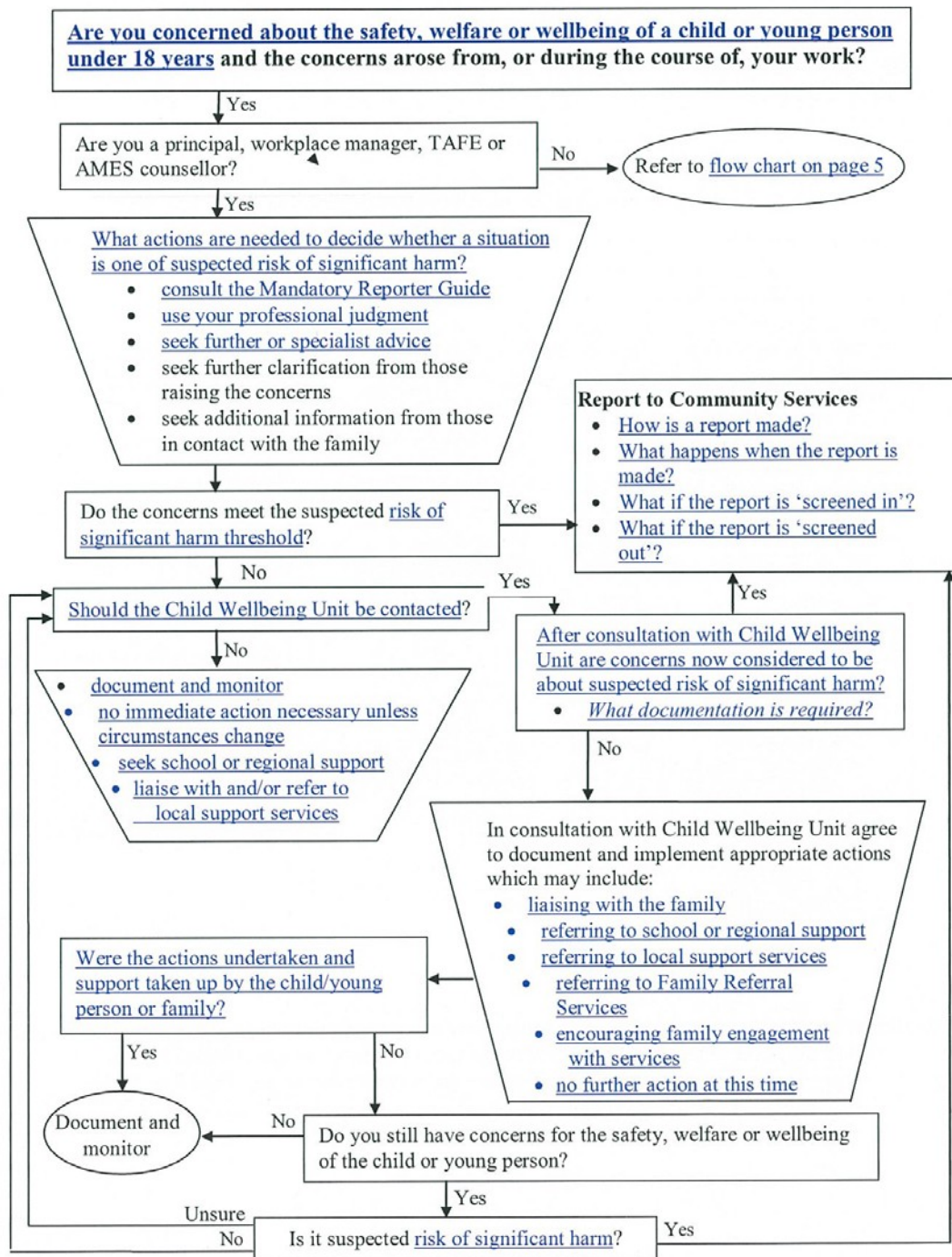
### **Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements**

- Principals and workplace managers must maintain a workplace register of staff participation in annual updates and of inductions of new staff, or they must sight individual records of staff inductions. This applies to all staff including non-teaching staff, part-time, temporary and casual staff.
- Principal or nominated representative will ensure 'Working with Children Checks' and 'National Criminal Record Checks' are conducted according to current 'Working With Children Check Policy' guidelines (<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/working-with-children-check-policy>)
- A record is to be kept on Sentral of reports to Family and Community Services as confirmation that mandatory reporting requirements have been met. The report reference number should be recorded.
- The record and related papers are to be retained by principals or workplace managers in secure storage and kept confidential. These records are to be provided to any successor.
- Where a reference number has been provided by the Child Wellbeing Unit it must be recorded and kept on Sentral.
- If serious safety issues remain after a report has been made to, and accepted by, Family and Community Services, principals or workplace managers will refer the matter to the departmental regional officer responsible for student services so the case can be taken up at a senior level within Family and Community Services.



## Protecting and supporting children and young people procedures - Flowchart

For use by principals, workplace managers, TAFE and AMES counsellors

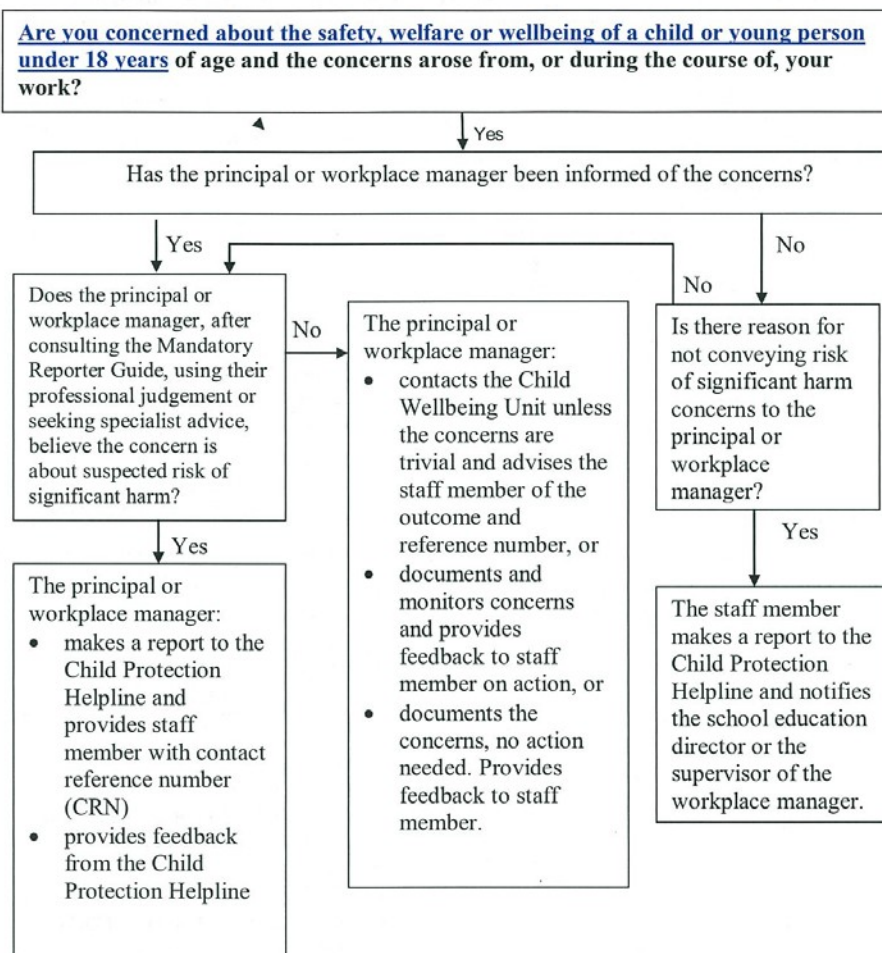


Protecting and supporting children and young people: Revised procedures



## Protecting and supporting children and young people procedures - Flowchart for staff members

For use by all staff, other than principals, workplace managers, TAFE counsellors or AMES counsellors



**Note:** If a staff member has reasonable doubt that the report about suspected risk of significant harm has been made within the required reporting time to the Child Protection Helpline, the staff member then makes the report to the Child Protection Helpline and notifies the director public schools or the supervisor of the workplace manager.

*Protecting and supporting children and young people: Revised procedures*

# Finding e-Mental Health Resources for Young People

Young people concerned about mental health are increasingly turning to the internet for help. Allied health professionals can provide important guidance to help young people find safe, credible e-Mental Health resources.

e-MH resources can help young people identify problems, work out which interventions might suit them and tackle the uncertainty, fear and stigma that can hinder help-seeking.

e-MH intervention programs can teach young people how to tackle symptoms of anxiety and depression and improve resilience and coping skills. These programs draw on evidenced-based therapies such as cognitive behaviour therapy, and can be self-help and/or therapist-assisted.

The e-MH services and programs described here are free unless otherwise stated. Many can be used anonymously and many are 24/7. e-MH is flexible and can be used before, during and after other forms of treatment.

## Find online crisis support

**KidsHelpline** Online, email and phone counselling for young people with a website tailored for kids (5-12) and teens (13-25). Online 'chat' counselling open 7 days a week.

1800 55 1800 (24/7)  
kidshelpline.com.au

**Suicide Call Back Service** provides free nationwide 24/7 professional telephone and online counselling for anyone affected by suicide.

1300 659 467 (24/7)  
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

**Lifeline** online crisis support chat with a trained crisis supporter available every night. Phone available 24/7.

13 11 14 (24/7)  
lifeline.org.au/Get-Help



## Find online counselling

### Youth services (from 12 yrs)

**CanTeen** Online, email and phone counselling and forums for people aged 12-24 yrs living with the impact of cancer.

1800 835 932  
canteen.org.au

**eheadspace** Online 'chat', email and phone counselling with a qualified youth mental health professional for young people aged 12-25 as well as parents/carers concerned about a young person.

1800 650 890  
ehheadspace.org.au

**Youth beyond blue** Information, online and phone counselling for young people (12-25 yrs) with trained mental health professionals 7 days a week.

1300 224 636 (24/7)  
youthbeyondblue.com



### Other counselling services

**Counselling Online** Online 'chat' and phone counselling 24/7 for people concerned about their own or another person's drug or alcohol use.

1800 888 236  
counsellingonline.org.au

**QLife** Online 'chat' and phone counselling for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people (LGBTI).

1800 184 527  
qlife.org.au

**The Butterfly Foundation** Online and phone counselling, information, and online support groups for people concerned about eating disorders, disordered eating, body image problems.

1800 334 673  
thebutterflyfoundation.org.au



**1800RESPECT** Information, phone and online counselling provided by the National Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling Service for people seeking help for themselves or someone else. Also for professionals wanting support for referrals or vicarious trauma problems.

1800 737 732 (24/7)  
1800respect.org.au



## Find information and peer support

**BITE BACK** Promotes wellbeing and resilience in young people (12-18 yrs) through psycho-education, positive psychology and related approaches.

biteback.org.au



**ReachOut** Provides practical tools and support to help young people aged 14-25 yrs get through everything from everyday issues to tough times. Includes information on mental health, peer support forums, and apps. **ReachOut Next Step** service for 18-25 yrs recommends support options. **ReachOut Parents** provides information and support to "help parents help teens".

reachout.com



**The Toolbox on ReachOut.com** recommends mental health and wellbeing apps endorsed by mental health professionals and young people aged 13-25 yrs. Includes links to apps, reviews and information.

au.reachout.com/sites/thetoolbox



## Intervention programs for under 18 yrs

**The BRAVE Program** BRAVE is a free online self-help program for prevention, early intervention and treatment of anxiety in young people. It has child (8-12 yrs), teen (12-17 yrs), and parent components.

brave4you.psy.uq.edu.au



**MoodGYM** Online program that teaches skills from CBT to help prevent and manage symptoms of depression for 15+ yrs. Also useful for anxiety.

moodgym.anu.edu.au



**OCD? Not Me!** Online program for people aged 12-18 yrs with OCD. It has eight stages and provides information, as well as support for parents and caregivers.

ocdnottme.com.au



**Smiling Mind** Online and app based program to improve wellbeing of young people through mindfulness meditation. Provides age-specific content for 7-11, 12-15, and 16-22 yrs.

smilingmind.com.au



**OnTrack (Get Real! Early Psychosis Program)** OnTrack offers the Get Real! program for managing unusual experiences/early psychosis for 14+ yrs. Program consists of self-guided modules and interactive tools.

ontrack.org.au



**Stay Strong** A mental health and substance misuse intervention in an iPad app (available on iTunes for a small fee) for 10+ yrs. The app guides users and therapists through a structured, evidence-based intervention that is culturally appropriate for Indigenous clients.

menzies.edu.au/page/Resources/Stay\_Strong\_iPad\_App/



## Intervention programs for 18+ yrs

**Mental Health Online** Information, automated assessment (optional) and online self-guided treatment programs for anxiety, panic, OCD, PTSD, and mixed anxiety/depression for 18+ yrs. Courses available as self-help for free or with therapist support for a small client fee.

mentalhealthonline.org.au



**Mood Mechanic Program (MindSpot Clinic)** Mood Mechanic Program is an online therapist-supported program for 18-25 yr olds with anxiety and/or depression. Other treatment courses for OCD and PTSD for 18+ yrs. Self-referral or online health professional referral.

mindsport.org.au



**OnTrack** OnTrack offers a suite of self-guided modules and interactive tools for 18+ yrs including alcohol use, depression, alcohol/ depression, flood and storm recovery, diabetes, and for carers, as well as a program for unusual experiences/early psychosis for 14+ yrs.

ontrack.org.au



**THIS WAY UP™** Therapist-assisted or self-help courses for depression, anxiety (GAD, panic, social phobia, OCD) and mixed depression/anxiety for 18+ yrs. Teen programs in development (contact TWU for release date). Requires a small client fee. Also has free self-help course for stress.

thiswayup.org.au



This brochure is intended for information purposes only. Whilst many of the services listed are government-funded and endorsed, health practitioners should independently investigate and verify the credentials of any service before choosing to use the service or refer a user.