

**SWiCh Inc Child Care Centre
Monash Student Association Clayton**

Policy: **Child Protection and Abuse**

Reviewed **November 2008**

Policy Statement: Children have the right to be physically and emotionally safe at all times. The responsibility for making sure that children are safe and that their needs are met is shared between the family, the community and the state. Child abuse damages children physically and emotionally. Early identification and effective intervention can lessen the initial and long term effects of child abuse and promote recovery of the children and families concerned.

Identifying Child Abuse

Child abuse is an act by a person which endangers a child's or young persons physical or emotional health or development. Child abuse is not usually a single incident but takes place over time. In Victoria, a child or a young person is a person under eighteen years of age.

Child abuse includes:

- **Physical injury** which results from abuse or neglect.

Physical abuse refers to a situation in which a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child's parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment, or physically aggressive treatment of a child. Physical injury and significant harm to a child may also result from neglect by a parent or caregiver. The failure of a parent or caregiver to adequately ensure the safety of a child may expose the child to extremely life threatening situations which result in physical injury and significant harm to the child.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse refers to a situation in which a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity. Physical force is sometimes involved.

- **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse refers to a situation in which a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name calling, put downs or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.

- **Neglect**

Neglect refers to a situation in which a child's parent or caregiver fails to provide the child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

Reporting Procedure

When you have a concern that a child in care is being maltreated:

- Raise the matter in confidence with the centre director.
- The director and the early childhood educator will observe the child and make confidential notes of their observations.
- If maltreatment is suspected the director will inform Human Services Eastern Region / 883 Whitehorse Rd Box Hill / 9843 6113

When a parent comes to staff with concerns:

- Refer to the grievance policy and follow the procedure

Where staff have concerns regarding another staff member's behaviour:

- Child maltreatment warrants instant dismissal of the employee. If these actions are witnessed by any staff member they must immediately be reported to the director. The director will then arrange to interview the employee concerned.
- If you have suspicions of another staff member but have not witnessed any abuse then the following should occur:
 - a) Raise the matter in confidence with the director who will observe the staff member making confidential notes of observations.
 - b) The director and the staff member who raised the concerns meet and discuss their observations.
 - c) If it is believed maltreatment is occurring the director will speak to the staff concerned. The director is required to report the matter to the Human Services department.
 - d) Parent will be notified in writing about the investigation.

Source: Practical Policies and Procedures for Child Care services
In – Service Mandatory Reporting
Children’s Services