

Educators are required by law to report child protection concerns to Child Safety when they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse, and there is not a parent/guardian willing and able to protect the child from harm.

The C&K Child Protection Policy requires C&K board members, employees, educators and visiting students, volunteers and external contractors to report all types of child harm to Child Safety.

A notifier is protected under the *Child Protection Act (1999)* and is not liable for civil, criminal or administrative actions and cannot be held to have breached ethical codes or codes of conduct by making a report, providing they acted honestly and in good faith, even if the information provided is later shown to be inaccurate.

Immediate actions

❶ If you believe the child is at immediate risk of harm call 000.

❷ Immediately complete the Online Child Protection Guide*

(Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women's) to determine what action is required:

- Make a Child Safety report, and / or
- Referral to support agency (e.g. Family and Child Connect), and/or
- Ongoing monitoring and observation of child.

❸ Document concerns

- Document concerns as soon as practical via a Child Concern Form.
- Be as objective and factual as possible. Avoid emotive comments. If applicable, document physical and behavioural observations and word-for-word disclosure details.
- Attach the 'Online Child Protection Guide' decision to the completed Child Concern Form.

❹ If applicable, make a report to Child Safety

- Contact Child Safety:
 - During normal business hours, phone Regional Intake Services OR
 - After business hours and weekends, phone Child Safety After Hours Service Centre (1800 177 135) OR
 - Complete an Online Child Safety Report Form.
- Refer to the completed Child Concern Form and the child's Enrolment Booklet when providing information.
- Making a report to Child Safety can be distressing. If needed, seek support of your C&K Early Childhood Pedagogy Advisor or C&K Early Childhood Education Manager/Consultant (ECEM/C). When possible, make the report with a supportive colleague and if required seek the support from the Employee Assistance Program.

Is the child protection concern happening at a C&K centre?

If yes, go to and follow Reporting allegations of child harm occurring within a C&K centre Procedure

*Please note:

The Online Child Protection Guide is intended to compliment rather than replace an individual's critical thinking and does not prohibit the course of action believed appropriate. Even if others do not support you or agree, educators are required by law and C&K policy to immediately make a child safety report.

Informing parents/guardians

- There is no obligation to inform parents/guardians that a Child Safety report regarding their child has been made. Before sharing any information with the child's parents/guardians, consider:
 - Contacting Family and Child Connect for advice.
 - *Will the communication place the child, staff or others at risk of harm? If you feel your safety or the safety of others may be at risk, call 000.*
 - *Will the information sharing result in the child withdrawing from the centre, jeopardising future opportunities for the child to be protected from harm?*
 - *Are the child's parents/guardians aware their child is being harmed? Or responsible for the alleged or suspected harm?*
 - *Will information sharing strengthen the relationship with the family and enable continued support for the child and family?*
- C&K's commitment to children's safety and wellbeing is clarified via:
 - C&K Family and Employee Handbooks
 - C&K website (including mandatory reporting requirements for early childhood educators)
 - Enrolment/orientation processes, centre newsletters and displays.
- Regular communication ensures transparency and may have a positive effect on a parent/guardian reaction if a report has been made regarding their child.

NQS2 Children's health and safety

Procedure

Responding to and reporting a child protection concern (external to centre)

Follow-up

Teachers and educators

- Branch Directors (or Responsible Person In-Charge) – Promptly notify your ECEM/C of the concern and actions taken. **Do not** email the completed child protection concern form to your ECEM/C.
- Branch centres - Scan both documents and upload on Kidsoft under the child as a Child Concern Form. Tick the document as confidential. Confidentially destroy paper records.

Maintain confidentiality by only discussing and sharing relevant information with others who are responsible for the support, care and protection of the child.

Completed *Child Concern Forms* are **very sensitive** and **must remain strictly confidential**.

- Report new or ongoing suspicions of significant child harm to Child Safety.
- When appropriate, seek advice and information from Family and Child Connect. For direction refer to Family and Child Connect Procedure.

C&K Early Childhood team

- The Early Childhood Education Manager/Consultant will inform their Regional Manager and provide relevant support and resources to centre teachers and educators.

Acknowledgements and references

- *Child Protection Act 1999*
- *Child Safety Services Reporting Child Abuse. QLD Government*
- *The Department of Communities Queensland Child Protection Guide. QLD Government*