

# Mandatory Reporting in Australia

The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. All jurisdictions possess mandatory reporting requirements of some description, however, the people mandated to report and the abuse types for which it is mandatory to report vary across Australian states and territories.

<b>Who</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Government Agency</b>
<p><b>ACT</b></p> <p>Doctors; dentists; nurses; enrolled nurses; midwives; teachers; a person providing education to a child or young person who is registered for home education; police; counsellors of children; works at child care centres; coordinators or monitors of home-based family day care; public servants who, works with, children and young people or families; the public advocate; an official visitor; a person who, in the course of the person's employment, has contact with or provides services to children, and is prescribed by regulation</p>	<p>A belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person has experienced or is experiencing <b>sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury</b>; and the belief arises from information obtained by the person DURING THE COURSE OF, OR BECAUSE OF, THE PERSON'S WORK (WHETHER PAID OR UNPAID)</p>	<p>Care and protection services Mandatory reporting phone: 1300 556 728 Fax: 02 6205 0641 <a href="http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocfyfs">www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocfyfs</a></p>
<p><b>NSW</b></p> <p>A person who, in the course of his or her professional work or other paid employment delivers health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services or law enforcement, wholly or partly, to children; and a person who holds a management position in an organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services or law enforcement, wholly or partly, to children. From 24 January 2010 mandatory reporters are encouraged to use this Online Mandatory Reporter Guide, to guide decision making, about whether or not a report to the Child Protection Helpline.</p>	<p>Reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of <b>significant</b> of harm; and those grounds arise during the course of or from the person's work. Physical abuse Sexual abuse Emotional/psychological abuse Neglect Exposure to family violence Failure to provide education NB: New legislation 2010</p>	<p>Child Protection Helpline Mandatory Reporters Hotline: If you are a mandatory reporter, you can call Child Protection Helpline on 13 3627 Fax: 02 9633 7666</p> <p>For more information on changes to NSW reporting 2010 and for access to the new important <b>Mandatory Reporter Guide</b>, visit <a href="http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au">www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au</a></p>
<p><b>NT</b></p> <p>Any person with reasonable grounds</p>	<p>A belief on reasonable grounds: that a child has been or is likely to be a victim of: physical abuse, sexual abuse emotional/psychological abuse neglect, exposure to physical violence (e.g., a child witnessing violence between parents at home)</p>	<p>Children, Youth and Families—Department of Health and Families Phone: 24 hour Centralised Intake Service by using the free-call phone number 1800 700 250 <a href="http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Children_Youth_and_Families">www.health.nt.gov.au/Children_Youth_and_Families</a></p>
<p><b>QLD</b></p> <p>An authorised officer, employee of the Department of Child Safety, a person employed in a departmental care service or licensed care service.  A doctor or registered nurse  The Commissioner for Children and Young People</p>	<p>Awareness or reasonable suspicion: - of harm caused to a child placed in the care of an entity conducting a departmental care service or a licensee - during the practice of his or her profession of harm or risk of harm  A child who is in need of protection under s10 of the Child Protection Act.</p>	<p>Department of Child Safety Phone: During normal business hours - contact local child safety service centre or freecall 1800 811 810. After hours and on weekends - contact Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on (07) 3235 9999 or freecall 1800 177 135. <a href="http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au">www.childsafety.qld.gov.au</a></p>
<p><b>VIC</b></p> <p>Registered medical practitioners, registered nurses, a person registered as a teacher under the Education, Training and Reform Act 2006 or teachers granted permission to teach under that Act, principals of government or non-government schools, and members of the police force</p>	<p>Belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection on a ground referred to in Section 162(c) or 162(d), formed in the course of practising his or her office, position or employment Physical abuse Sexual abuse</p>	<p>Child Protection and Family Services Metro 1300 360 391 Eastern 1300 655 795 Southern 1300 369 536 Northern &amp; Western 1800 075 599 Barwon South Western 1800 020 202 Gippsland 1800 000 551 Grampians 1800 650 227 Hume 1800 650 227 Loddon Mallee 1800 675 598 After hours - 13 1278 <a href="http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/child-protection-family-services">www.cyf.vic.gov.au/child-protection-family-services</a></p>

**Who SA**

Doctors; pharmacists; registered or enrolled nurses; dentists; psychologists; police officers; community corrections officers; social workers; teachers; family day care providers; employees/volunteers in a government department, agency or instrumentality, or a local government or non-government agency that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children; ministers of religion (with the exception of disclosures made in the confessional); employees or volunteers in a religious or spiritual organisations

**TAS**

Registered medical practitioners; nurses; dentists, dental therapists or dental hygienists; registered psychologists; police officers; probation officers; principals and teachers in any educational institution; persons who provide child care or a child care service for fee or reward; persons concerned in the management of a child care service licensed under the Child Care Act 2001; any other person who is employed or engaged as an employee for, of, or in, or who is a volunteer in, a government agency that provides health, welfare, education, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children, and an organisation that receives any funding from the Crown for the provision of such services; and any other person of a class determined by the Minister by notice in the Gazette to be prescribed persons

**WA**

Court personnel; family counsellors; family dispute resolution practitioners, arbitrators or legal practitioners representing the child’s interests

Licensed providers of child care or outside-school-hours care services

Doctors; nurses and midwives; teachers; and police officers

**What**

Reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected; and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person’s work (whether paid or voluntary) or carrying out official duties  
Physical abuse  
Sexual abuse  
Emotional/psychological abuse  
Neglect

A belief, suspicion, reasonable grounds or knowledge that:  
a child has been or is being abused or neglected or is an affected child within the meaning of the Family Violence Act 2004; or  
there is a reasonable likelihood of a child being killed or abused or neglected by a person with whom the child resides  
Physical abuse  
Sexual abuse  
Emotional/psychological abuse  
Neglect  
Exposure to family violence

Reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child has been: abused, or is at risk of being abused; ill treated, or is at risk of being ill treated; or exposed or subjected to behaviour that psychologically harms the child.

Allegations of abuse, neglect or assault, including sexual assault, of an enrolled child during a care session

Belief on reasonable grounds that child sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring

**Government Agency**

Families SA—Department of Families and Communities  
  
[www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/Default.aspx?tabid=257](http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/Default.aspx?tabid=257)

Child Protection—Department of Health and Human Services  
CPAARS is a central statewide service for Tasmania that does most of its work via the telephone or email. The telephone number is: 1300 737 639 and fax number: (03) 6230 7821.  
  
[www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/health\\_and\\_wellbeing/children\\_and\\_families/related\\_topics/child\\_protection](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/children_and_families/related_topics/child_protection)

Department for Child Protection  
  
Phone: LOCAL area contacts, see website  
  
[www.community.wa.gov.au/DCP](http://www.community.wa.gov.au/DCP)

**POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO PROTECTING CHILDREN**

Certain community attitudes may contribute to on-going child abuse by creating barriers to protecting children. These include:

- Cultural acceptance of extreme physical punishment of children & the use of violence
- Acceptance of parents “ownership” of children and their right to treat children as they see fit
- The notion that the child deserved the treatment received as a result of behaviour
- Lack of desire to “get involved” in others people’s business
- Fears of retaliation should a notifier’s name be made known to an abuser
- Concerns about the break-up of a family unit, should the abuse be exposed
- Not being prepared to expose a person of high standing in the community
- Concern by an abused person, that by exposing an abuser, they will be publicly shamed

There are also a number of organisational risk factors that may contribute to creating barriers to protecting children. These may include: staff alone with children, abuse of positional power – people in authority taking advantage of the position of power, culture of bullying, lack of leader and staff accountability, inadequate resources, lack of experience, awareness and training, internal investigations as opposed to external investigations, isolated venues (Understanding Organisational Risk Factors for Child Maltreatment: A Review of Literature, Lorraine R. Beyer, Daryl J. Higgins and Leah M. Bromfield, 2005, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies)

*Reflection: Are there any community attitudes or organisational risk factors that may be a hindrance to protecting children in your ministry?*