

	<h1>PROCEDURE</h1>
<h2>5.1</h2>	<h2>Child Protection</h2>
<h3>A Procedure under the Child Protection Policy 5.</h3>	

Identifying Possible Abuse or Neglect

REMEMBER: *Signs of abuse do not necessarily prove that a child has been abused.*

Our approach to identifying abuse or neglect is guided by the following principles:

- Every situation is different and it's important to consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, etc
- When a staff member or volunteer is concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect talk to the WestREAP Chief Executive or their delegated authority – we shouldn't act alone.
- Signs that abuse may have occurred and that a child may require help or protection. While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is to consider overall wellbeing and the risk of harm to the child. It is not so important to be able to categorise the type of abuse or neglect.
- It is normal to feel uncertain, however, the important thing is to recognise when something is wrong, especially if there is a pattern forming or several signs that make us concerned.
- A table of signs of abuse is attached as appendix 3.

Child Protection Guidelines:

- 1. Responding to disclosures by children:**
 - Ensure the child is safe from immediate harm. (Call the Police if the child is in immediate danger).
 - Attend to any physical or emotional distress in the child.
 - Listen to the child.
 - Remain calm yet confident
 - Do not question.
 - Write down what the child says, in their words and record using the template provide in Appendix 2.
- 2. Responding to suspected abuse or neglect:**
 - Record your concerns. Record all information immediately, using the template provided in Appendix 2. Keep to the facts, be concise and sign and date the report.
- 3. DO NOT ACT ALONE**
 Contact the WestREAP Chief Executive (or their delegated authority) immediately and provide information as recorded.
If you believe the child to be in danger or immediate risk ACT NOW call 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459 or Police 111)
- 4. Refer to Appendix 1 Child abuse reporting process flowchart.**

Managing Allegations Against Staff:

Any allegation that a member of staff has behaved in an inappropriate or unsafe way must be taken seriously and handled in an appropriate manner that ensures the child's safety.

Record it and refer it – do not discuss.

When there are suspicions of abuse by a staff member, children's rights are to be attended to, with the safety of the child our first concern. WestREAP's Complaints and Disciplinary procedures must be followed and also guided by the staff member's employment agreement. The staff member may be advised to seek legal and professional advice.

Preventative Practices

No staff or volunteer should be alone with a child at any WestREAP activity.

Training of Staff

All staff and volunteers will read and have a copy of the Child Protection Policy. Reference to the Child Protection Policy will be made on a regular basis in staff meetings and training sessions, so that staff remain familiar with and up to date with the policy statements and procedures. All staff members and volunteers are provided with the necessary training and information to maintain and increase awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The Privacy Act 1993 and the Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep children safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Note that under sections 15 and 16 of the CYPF Act, any person who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Child, Youth and Family or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.

Review Cycle:	After one year, thereafter Biennially
Reviewed By:	Chief Executive
Date Reviewed:	Ratified 27/7/16

Appendix 1

Reporting Process for Child Abuse

You see a child being abused, OR you observe signs of abuse in a child
OR a child reports being abused.

Respond to the Child's Needs

- Ensure the child is safe from immediate harm.
Call the Police if the child is in immediate danger
- Attend to any physical or emotional distress in the child
- Listen to the child



Call the
Police if the
child is in
immediate
danger

Document the facts (use template in Appendix 2)
All documentation relevant to the case must be given to
the WestREAP Chief Executive for secure file storage

Immediately notify the Chief Executive

A joint decision will be made to notify Child, Youth and
Family 0508 326 459

Finally – get support for yourself!

Appendix 2

Record of Concern		
Child's name		
Address		
Date of Birth		
Date and Time		
Brief outline of problem:		
Observations from staff member:		
Other relevant information:		
Any other adults present:		
Name:	Signed:	Date:
Position:		
Discussed with Chief Executive		Date:
Actions:		

Appendix 3

Type of Abuse:	Some signs to look out for:
<p>Physical Abuse Physical abuse is a non-accidental act on a child that results in physical harm. This includes, but is not limited to, beating, hitting, shaking, burning, drowning, suffocating, biting, poisoning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse may also result from excessive or inappropriate discipline or violence within the family.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises and welts • Cuts and abrasions • Scalds and burns • Fractures or sprains • Abdominal or head injuries • Unexplained injuries or explanations that don't fit • Injuries in unusual places • Aggression, destructive nature • Mistrust of adults • Anxious and jittery • Relationship difficulties
<p>Emotional Abuse Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the child's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child. It may also include age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It also includes the seeing or hearing the ill treatment of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep problems like bed-wetting or soiling • Frequent physical complaints • Signs of anxiety • Lack of self esteem • Extreme attention seeking behaviours • Overly compliant • Obsessive behaviours • Nightmares • Parent/caregiver calling the child names or treating the child differently to other children
<p>Sexual Abuse Sexual abuse describes a range of acts or behaviours where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a child for a sexual purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual or excessive itching in the genital or anal area • Torn, stained or bloody underclothing • Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area • Age inappropriate sexual play or interests • Sexually explicit drawings, descriptions and talk about sex. • Exposure to or involvement in pornography or prostitution
<p>Neglect Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of a child's basic or emotional needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to thrive • Malnourished • Left unattended frequently or for longer periods of time than is normally acceptable • Severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders or rashes resulting from improper or lack of hygiene • Child left in the care of an inappropriate caregiver • Dirty or no understanding of basic hygiene • Unattended health problems

These definitions are sourced from How Can I Tell? (Published by Child Matters)