



## Practice Update: WA Mandatory Reporters

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Information for Teachers, early Childhood Workers, Ministers, School Counsellors in Western Australia

Who have a reasonable belief that a child has been or will be sexually abused

### WA Mandatory Reporters

- Guidelines on when and how to make a report

Optional reporting of concerns by community members on sexual abuse or other forms of abuse

- Guidelines on when and how to make a report

Duty of Care to a child or young person to provide ongoing support

## Information for School Teachers, early Childhood Workers, Ministers, School Counsellors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

In Western Australia

If one of the above conditions apply to you then please note;

A. Recent changes to legislation mean that you are now a Mandatory Reporter

Mandatory Reporting = we keep children safe by reporting to stop people from harming them

This means you will need to understand both when and how to report.

[<When to Report>](#)

[<How to Report>](#)

### Further Information

### Reporting Obligations

[<Useful links>](#)

[<Reporting summary>](#)

B. **Optional reporting** is available for any other community members who have concerns the about the sexual abuse of a child or young person. It is also available for mandatory reporter to report other forms of abuse

[<Optional Reporting -- further info>](#)

C. Ongoing support for children and young persons at risk of harm or neglect

The ongoing care of children at risk is a community responsibility not just a problem that can be transferred to government agencies. A church community has a duty of care to a child at risk of harm or neglect. For further information on how the Seventh-day Adventist church will provide ongoing support for these children see [Ongoing Support](#)

## Mandatory Reporting

Under recent amendments to the **Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)** (The Act), the following church workers are now Mandatory Reporters:

1. Ministers of Religion
2. Early Childhood Workers
3. School Counsellors

This is in addition to the original Mandatory Reporters in church work of:

4. School Teachers
5. Boarding Supervisors

### When to report

A mandatory reporter must report when they have a **belief** based on **reasonable grounds** that **child sexual abuse** has occurred or is occurring:

- this belief must be reported as soon as practicable
- the penalty for not reporting is a fine of \$6 000
- the abuse is to a child (0 – 17 years)

For further information on Indicators of abuse or neglect see **Indicators**

### Sexual Abuse

The legislation defines Child Sexual Abuse as sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence; or
- the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
- there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour. (s124A)

## Optional Reporting of other abuses

While not mandated Western Australia encourages the reporting of other form of abuse of a child. It is a church policy for all forms of child abuse to be reported whether the person holding the concern is a Mandatory Reporter or not. This can be reported to the Adsafe Responsible Officer in your church or church entity or directly with the Department of Communities.

## How to report

Mandatory Reporters **may first report** sexual abuse **by phone** by calling the Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support's (CPFS):

**Mandatory Reporting Service: 1800 708 704**

Mandatory Reporters **must also lodge** a **written report**. This can be done by either:

1. Using the Online Mandatory Reporting Web System (MRWeb) [<external link>](#)

or

2. Downloading and completing the template PDF form Mandatory Report Form

Once completed return by:

email: [mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au](mailto:mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au)

Post: PO Box 8146, Perth BC 6849 WA

FAX: +61 8 9223 1190

## Reporting concerns of other forms of abuse or neglect

- Other forms of abuse may include Physical, Emotional and Psychological abuse and neglect.

Reports can be made to:

Metropolitan area

Phone: 1800 273 889

email: [cpduty@cpfs.wa.gov.au](mailto:cpduty@cpfs.wa.gov.au)

Country Areas

Through a local District Office

## Optional Reporting

Any member of the public who has reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected is encouraged to report this suspicion to the CPFS.

You may seek advice from your local church ARO or Adsafe about your concern and how to make a report.

[<How to Report>](#)

## Ongoing care and support for victims of abuse

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a duty of care to the children and young persons in its community who are at risk of harm or neglect.

A person making a report in conjunction with the church leaders should consider how the community can continue to respond to the needs of the child and their family. While it is a requirement for Mandatory Notifiers to report suspected abuse to the appropriate government agency appropriately reporting this risk within the Church's child protection network would allow for coordinated community support for the child and their family. The wellbeing of each child in the church community is a responsibility that the community shares with the responsible government agencies.

To this end the Seventh-day Adventist Church has established a **protection team** that consists of the Adsafe Responsible Officer(ARO), the Adsafe Compliance Assistance at the **local church level** an Adsafe Responsible Officer at the **Local Conference** and a team of Case Workers at the Sydney offices of Adsafe.

Persons appointed to roles in the church who have concerns and need to make a report to the Department of Communities are encouraged to:

1. Appropriately seek advice from the leaders of the local church or
2. Appropriately seek advice from Adsafe.
3. Once the report has been made ensure that the protection team has been informed. This will allow early intervention support to be arranged for the child in conjunction and with the approval of the relevant child protection agency.

## Where to get help or further information

### Adsafe

Adsafe has been set-up as a child and vulnerable person protection resource for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its entities. Adsafe is here to provide advice to you if you have any concerns around these matters. Adsafe can be contacted using one of the following means:

Phone:           Australia   1800 220 468  
                  New Zealand   0800 442 458  
  
                  Internet    Adsafe.org.au  
  
                  email     info@adsafe.org.au

### Mandatory Reporting

Department of Communities	<a href="#">&lt;website&gt;</a>
Mandatory Reporting Service	1800 708 704
Online Reporting	<a href="#">&lt;MRWeb&gt;</a>
Downloadable pdf form	<a href="#">&lt;Pdf form&gt;</a>
Mandatory Reporters	<a href="#">&lt;About mandatory reporting legislation&gt;</a> <a href="#">&lt;Making a mandatory report&gt;</a> <a href="#">&lt;What information is needed in a report?&gt;</a> <a href="#">&lt;What happens after the report is made?&gt;</a> <a href="#">&lt;Responding to a child who makes a disclosure&gt;</a> <a href="#">&lt;Confidentiality issues and Mandatory Reporting&gt;</a> <a href="#">&lt;Indicators of child sexual abuse&gt;</a>

# Overview of Mandatory Reporting Requirements in Western Australia

<p><b>Mandatory Reporting</b></p>
<p>The belief based on reasonable grounds that Child sexual abuse have occurred or is occurring This is about a child or young person being sexually abused by an individual</p>
<p><b>Legislation</b> Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA) Agency: Department for Communities (DC)</p>
<p><b>Reporting What?</b> Child Sexual Abuse</p>
<p><b>Relates to a suspicion that harm is or may be caused to a child (0-17 years)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person reports because they have reasonable grounds to suspect Sexual Abuse</li> <li>• suspicion is formed about a child in the course of their engagement with the Child.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Essentially</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may seek advice from your ARO or Adsafe about your concern.</li> <li>• You may ring the <b>Mandatory Reporting Service: 1800 708 704</b> to verbally report the abuse</li> <li>• You must provide a written report using either <b>MRWeb</b> or download the pdf form complete and submit</li> <li>• If reported to DC, also notify the ARO or Adsafe to co-ordinate ongoing support if needed</li> <li>• DC will assess and may choose to intervene</li> <li>• DC have authority to intervene</li> </ul>