

## CHILD PROTECTION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Division / Section	Organisational	Version	2.0
Process Owner	Kate Crawford	Date of issue	01/02/2017
Document Author	Rhonda Pilgrim	Scheduled review date	01/02/2018

### 1. Scope

This document applies to all WCS workers and volunteers who provide services to children and young people under the age of 18 years.

### 2. Purpose / Policy Statement

WCS seeks to create a safe and supportive environment for all children and their families who attend our Services, in compliance with the Children and Young People Act 2008(ACT) and the Family Law Act 1975 (Cth). This procedure provides workers with the process required to exercise their duty of care under the Act, to identify harm or suspected harm to a child and provide a risk-based lawful, professional, immediate, appropriate and ongoing response. The Policy is in keeping with the ACT Government guide: *"Keeping Children & Young People Safe – a shared responsibility"* (November 2014) and includes requirements for both mandatory reporting (for Children's Services educators) and non-mandatory reporting (for CYF, One-Link and other services).

### 3. Procedure

#### 3.1 Risk Identification

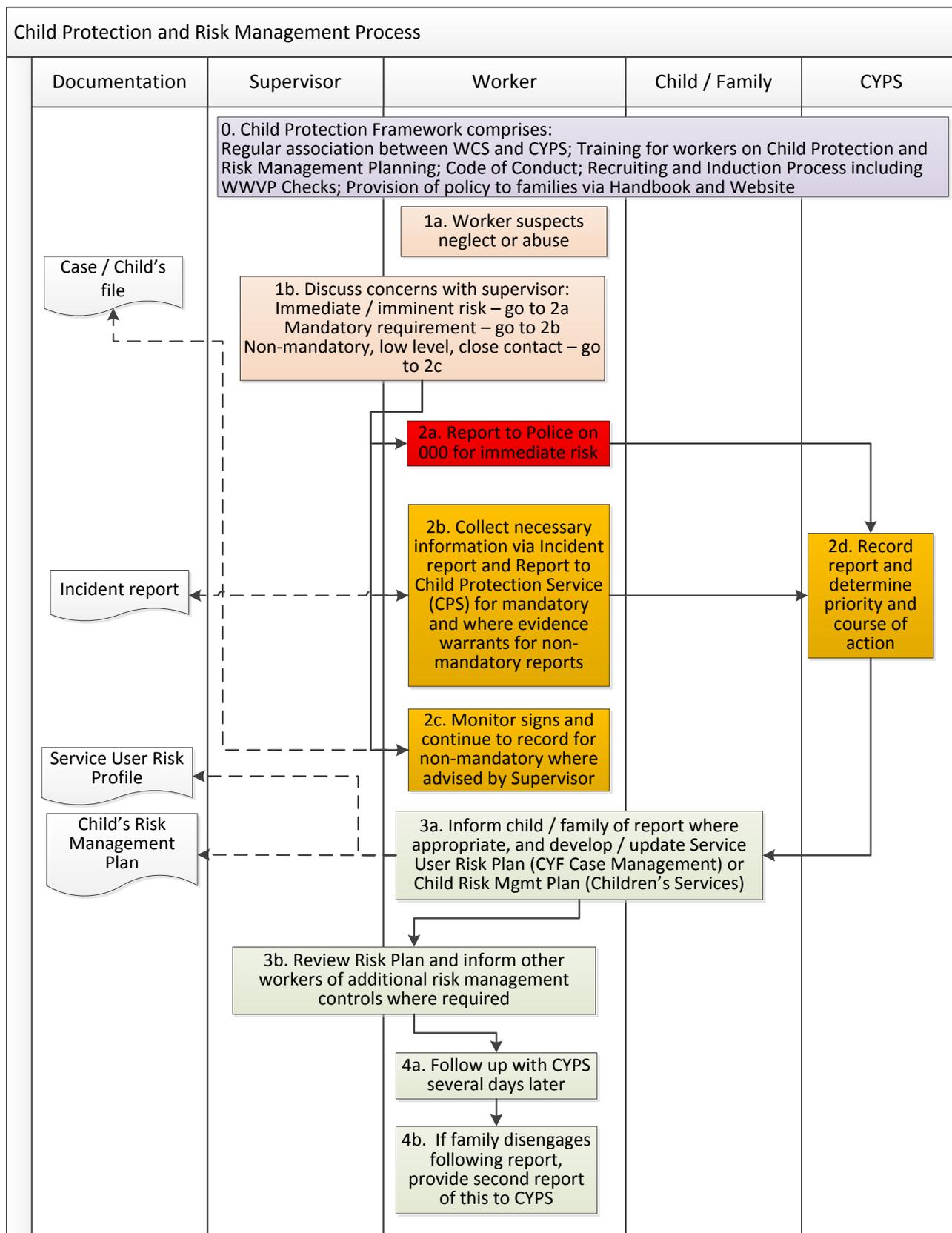
Child abuse and neglect consists of an act commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health, safety, wellbeing and development. Abuse can be a single incident or a pattern of behaviour over time and may be intentional or unintentional. Educators and other workers may encounter a child they suspect has experienced harm or neglect. They may also suspect a child has been harmed by a person at the Service.

In the ACT, legislation requires educators over the age of 18 to report suspected harm to a child who attends the Service. It is an offense to not make a report if the mandated person is an adult and believes on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has experienced, or is experiencing sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury. The mandated reporter is not required to prove that abuse has occurred. Although reporting is not mandatory for other workers, WCS applies similar reporting processes to ensure a consistent approach across its services.

This procedure manages both the physical risk to the child, and the legislative risk to WCS of not reporting suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect.

If any educator suspects or believes on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is experiencing abuse or neglect, or wishes to discuss concerns about a child or young person, they should speak to the Supervisor at the Service and must telephone Child and Youth Protection Services Centralised Intake as soon as possible on 1300 556 728 (Mandated Persons line).

### 3.2 Process Steps



Task No	Task Step Details	Responsible Person
0	<p><b>Framework</b></p> <p>WCS maintains a regular dialogue with the ACT Child and Youth Protection Service (CYPS) team through its Children Youth and Families Service. This association enables the provision of regular tailored professional training programs for WCS workers. Records are maintained of all training and study conducted. The topic is also discussed in regular team meetings.</p> <p>WCS Service has clear procedures for recruiting, selecting and screening suitably qualified and experienced staff. A current Working With Vulnerable People Card (WWVP) must be produced prior to commencing work or volunteering in WCS Services (or evidence that an application for the card is currently being processed for a family member – Family Day Care only). WCS maintains HR records which indicate the expiry dates of WWVP Cards for all educators, workers, students and volunteers. WCS management informs its mandatory reporting workforce within Children's services that it is an offence not to notify the Service of any change in the criminal history or police information they have previously provided to the Office of Regulatory Services in obtaining their card.</p> <p>The Service has a Code of Conduct for interactions with children. The Code applies to workers, work experience students and volunteers. This Code is explained to workers, students and volunteers before they commence at the Service. At that time, they are given the opportunity to ask any questions needed to clarify their understanding. Mandatory reporters are then asked to sign the Fit &amp; Proper Person declaration.</p> <p>WCS provides copies of all policies and procedures to families via its website. Excerpts from the procedure, including the requirement for mandatory reporting, are provided in the Service User Handbooks for each service.</p> <p>In the Children's Services team, educators intentionally teach children Protective Behaviours, with the exception of Family Day Care educators. Educators are instructed to avoid being alone with a child, with the exception of Family Day Care.</p>	
1 1a 1b	<p><b>Identification of abuse or neglect</b></p> <p>When determining potential neglect, workers may refer to the ACT Government document 'Keeping Children and Young People Safe, A shared community responsibility', which provides clear examples of indicators in children and their parents on child abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.</p> <p>A worker who identifies potential abuse or neglect must immediately discuss it with their supervisor or manager to determine the appropriate path.</p>	<p><b>Worker</b></p> <p><b>Supervisor / Manager</b></p>
2 2a 2b	<p><b>Reporting Process</b></p> <p>a. For imminent threats to safety, contact 000 Police.</p> <p>b. For serious and justified concerns, contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o 1300 556 728 for Mandatory Reporters (Children's Services only)</li> <li>o 1300 556 729 for Voluntary Reporters (All other services)</li> </ul> <p>You will be asked for information by the CYPS Intake officer, so it is best to have this ready. Preparation can be done by completing the WCS Incident Report form, which should facilitate collection of the required information, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name, date of birth and home address of child/ren / young person(s)</li> <li>• Current whereabouts of child/ren / young person(s)</li> <li>• Name of parents/guardians/aliases and contact details</li> <li>• Name of known siblings</li> </ul>	<p><b>Worker</b></p> <p><b>Worker / Supervisor (only 1 report required)</b></p>

Task No	Task Step Details	Responsible Person
<p>2c</p> <p>2d</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature of abuse or neglect</li> <li>• When and where alleged abuse / neglect is said to have occurred</li> <li>• When and how you became aware of the information</li> <li>• Names of others who may have witnessed the abuse or neglect</li> <li>• Details of any disclosure made to you by others</li> <li>• Description of any injuries seen</li> <li>• Description of the behaviour of the child/ren / young person(s)</li> <li>• Attitude of carers of the child/ren / young person(s) to injury / incident</li> <li>• Known supports to the child/ren / young person(s)</li> </ul> <p>If some of this information is unknown, it does not preclude a worker from making a report.</p> <p>Where concerns relate to potential neglect of a child as a result of suicide ideation by the parent / guardian, call the CATT team at Canberra Hospital in addition to CYPS.</p> <p>c. For non-mandatory reporting services, discuss concerns with the supervisor to determine potential risk to the child / young person. When assessing the risk, the Act requires that the decision maker take into consideration whether the parents have expressed that they are 'willing and able' to keep the child safe, and 'must regard the best interests of the child or young person as the paramount consideration'. If it is determined that a report is required, then follow the reporting process in 2b above. Where the supervisor does not feel that a report is warranted immediately, a note will be placed on the case file and the worker advised to monitor the child / young person closely. If there is any uncertainty regarding the need to make a report, call the CYPS voluntary reporters' line and discuss the circumstances with the CYPS intake worker to help determine risk.</p> <p>d. The CYPS Intake Officer will make a determination regarding the course of action required to ensure the safety of the child. This course of action may range from immediate response and removal, through visit, to no action at this time.</p> <p>The course of action is likely to be affected by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The severity of the injury or neglect</li> <li>• The number of previous reports that have been made</li> <li>• The regularity of contact of WCS with the family (e.g. for CYF Case management team, CYPS is likely to allow CYF to manage the situation with minimal intervention, while a first contact from a Childcare service may elicit an immediate response).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Worker</b></p> <p><b>CYPS Intake Officer</b></p>
<p>3</p> <p>3a</p>	<p><b>Internal Risk Management</b></p> <p>As WCS has a duty of care to the child regardless of the actions of CYPS, an internal risk management process is conducted to provide WCS workers with potential controls to protect the child / young person.</p> <p>Where possible, when reporting to CYPS, the child will be informed that we are going to tell someone else who can help them, and the parents / guardians will be told that we are making a report.</p> <p>The CYF Case Management program and Mental Health programs include preparation of a Service User Risk Profile and Management Plan for each family / participant. Following an incident or report, this plan will be updated with the</p>	<p><b>Worker</b></p>

Task No	Task Step Details	Responsible Person
	<p>family / participant to include further strategies to protect the child. These will include increased contact and home visits.</p> <p>In Children's Services, Risk Management Plans are generally developed for children with medical, behavioural or other issues that require management and communication with workers. A risk management plan can be prepared where required, to alert workers to the need to monitor and treat possible abuse and neglect issues in the absence of direct and immediate action by CYPS.</p>	
4	<b>Follow up and further reporting</b>	
4a	Voluntary reports to CYPS when workers are supporting a family are to be followed up with a phone call several days after the initial report to establish the CYPS team's response to the report, and to incorporate any actions into the child / young person's risk management plan.	<b>Worker</b>
4b	In cases where the family disengages from support following a report, where the CYPS team have an expectation of support being provided by WCS (particularly CYF Case management team) a further report must be made alerting CYPS of the disengagement.	<b>CYF Case worker</b>

### 3.3 Procedure Monitoring

This procedure will be monitored through regular review of reporting to CYPS for all programs.

## 4 References

Child Safety Australia. (n.d.). *Child abuse and neglect*.

<http://www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au/community/childabuse/childabuse.htm>  
accessed 12 March 2012

Department of Communities - Child Safety Services. (2012). *Child safety services services*. <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/contact-us/child-safety-service-services> accessed 12 March 2012

## 5 Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Definition

## 6 Enablers

## 7 Document control

Version	Author	Description of changes	Approved by/date
2.0	R Pilgrim	First issue of content in new organisational template	K. Crawford 01/02/2017