

POLICY

TITLE:	Mandatory Reporting Policy (Child Protection)		
ADOPTED BY:	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)		
DATE OF ADOPTION:	29 Nov 2024	DATE OF REVIEW:	29 Nov 2026
POLICY NUMBER:	211		
LEGISLATIVE REF:	<i>Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 - Section 26</i> <i>Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007 - Section 124A</i>		

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

To provide guidance on the mandatory reporting obligations under Section 26 of the *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007* and Section 124A of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007*.

1.2. Scope

All Barkly Regional Council (BCR) staff and visitors to Council facilities that engage youth.

1.3. Responsibilities

All persons within scope of this Policy are required to adhere to this Policy and its associated procedures.

The CEO is accountable for the overall management of this Policy.

1.4. Policy Objectives

- 1) Provide a framework for Mandatory Reporting for any youth or visitors to Council facilities and programs.
- 2) Promotion of safe spaces for youth within the BRC and in particular, Council facilities, programs and staff.
- 3) Set out a policy and procedure on how BRC employees are to deal with concerns of child abuse or neglect.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Section 26 of the *Care and Protection Children Act* sets out the reporting obligations that apply to all persons in the Northern Territory who have concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person. Section 124A of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act* sets out the reporting obligations that apply to adults in the Northern Territory who have concerns about a person in a domestic relationship who may be the victim of serious physical harm caused by their partner. The reporting obligations are commonly referred to as 'mandatory reporting' and it may be required when:

1. A disclosure has been made by a child or young person;
2. Allegations by a third party, such as a report by one child or young person in relation to another child or young person;
3. Indicators such as physical injuries or expressions of fear;
4. Observation of age-inappropriate behaviours, including sexualised behaviour or talk;
5. Delays in emotional or mental development; or
6. Chronic school non-attendance.

If a child makes a disclosure, you must avoid jeopardising any subsequent investigation. This means that it is important that you do not undertake any investigation or question the child to gather more information.

All investigations will be conducted by Child Protection Officers from Territory Families and/or Northern Territory Police.

A report must be made as soon as possible after forming a belief that a child or young person is at risk of harm or exploitation. Failure to do so may constitute an offence under Section 26 of the *Care and Protection of Children Act*.

The person who has formed a reasonable belief that a child is being harmed or exploited is obligated under the law to make a report. This is to ensure that the most accurate and reliable information is being reported. There are certain circumstances where you can have a legitimate reason not to make a report, for example you believe that a report has already been made. If in doubt, it is best to contact the child report hotline to discuss the issue.

3. MAKING A REPORT

Contact Territory Families Child Protection Hotline on **1800 700 444**. The following information will be requested when making a report:

- The child's name, age, address and present location
- The nature of the suspected abuse or neglect
- What has been heard or observed
- Information about any immediate danger to the child
- Any other information that may help e.g. whether any other agencies are involved with the family
- The report's contact details and preferred contact time. If you don't have all of this information you should still make the report and provide the information that you do have

4. RELEVANT POLICIES

Policies to be read in conjunction with this policy are:

- 1) Youth Supervision Policy
- 2) Risk Management Policy
- 3) Delegations Manual

5. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

5.1. Implementation

Relevant personnel will be made aware of this Policy. It is not a requirement of the Act for this Policy to be published on the Barkly Regional Council website.

5.2. Review

This policy will be reviewed on or before **date**.

6. VARIATIONS, REVOCATIONS AND/OR CHANGES

Barkly Regional Council reserves the right to revoke and/or amend this policy from time to time as is considered necessary to better manage its business and/or to comply with any legislative requirements.

7. APPROVAL

This policy is approved.

Chris Kelly
Chief Executive Officer


Signature

29 Nov 2024
Dated

END