

## POLICY

<b>TITLE:</b>	Mandatory Reporting		
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	Corporate Services		
<b>ADOPTED BY:</b>	Council Resolution: OM-23/173		
<b>DATE OF ADOPTION:</b>	December 2023	<b>DATE OF REVIEW:</b>	December 2025
<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>			
<b>LEGISLATIVE REF:</b>	Care and Protection of Children Act; Section 26 Domestic and Family Violence Act: Section 124A		

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Purpose

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

#### 1.2. Scope

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

#### 1.3. 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 Barkly and in particular, Council facilities, programs and staff.
- 3) Set out a policy and procedure on how Barkly Regional Council employees are to deal with concerns of child abuse or neglect.

### 2. POLICY STATEMENT

#### 2.1 Policy

Section 26 of the Care and Protection of 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'.

- 1) A disclosure 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.

**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; and
- The reporter'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.

**3. RELEVANT POLICIES**

Policies and procedures to be read in conjunction with this policy are:

- 1) Youth Supervision Policy

**4. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

**4.1. Implementation**

All staff will be trained in this policy and it will be published on the Barkly Regional Council website at <https://www.barkly.nt.gov.au/council-documents/policies>.

**4.2. Review**

This policy will be reviewed on or before December 2025

**5. VARIATIONS, REVOCATIONS AND/OR CHANGES**

Barkly Regional Council's 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. Employees will be given sufficient notice of any such revocations, amendments, or changes.

**6. APPROVAL**

This policy is approved.

Ian Bodill  
**Chief Executive Officer**

*Ian Bodill*

Signature

21.12.2023

Dated

**END**