

Child Abduction Response Plan

Postal Address: PO Box 252 Cloverdale Western Australia 6985
Tel: (618) 9362 5340 Email: info@aic.wa.edu.au Website: www.aic.wa.edu.au

Thornlie College: 17 Tonbridge Way, Thornlie Tel: 9493-2718
Dianella College: 81 Cleveland St, Dianella Tel: 9375-9770
Kewdale College: 139 President St, Kewdale Tel: 9362-2100

CHILD ABDUCTION RESPONSE PLAN GUIDELINES

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This plan has been adopted from the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia Policies Guidelines.

1. Introduction

Police Definition:

“Child Abduction is the act of carrying off or detaining a child against his or her will by unlawful force.”

AISWA in collaboration with the Department of Education (DoE), Catholic Education WA (CEOWA) and the Western Australian Police (WAPOL) have developed actions for Schools in response to attempted abductions of children or suspicious adults approaching students near or on school sites which Australian Islamic College has adopted.

The Child Abduction Response Plan is an initiative of the Western Australian Police (Sexual Assault Squad) and will determine the actions that need to be taken by the police in the event of an attempted or successful abduction.

2. Process

Typically this plan would be initiated by a child reporting an incident to his or her teacher or parent. The following would be the typical flow of information.

Child makes a report. Reports may be of an attempted abduction, suspicious activity, attempted assault or actual assault, stalking behaviour (with or without a camera), or behaviour of a sexual nature such as an adult exposing him or herself to the child/children.

Teacher - The teacher who receives the report should immediately inform the Principal, passing on all information reported by the child/children. The information would include what actually happened and descriptions of any persons involved. Please refer to Appendix A – ‘Eyes on the Street Incident Report’. Teachers who believe that a matter is sexual in nature may also need to submit a formal Mandatory Report. AISWA recommends that teachers be requested to not speak with the Media or with any people not directly associated with the issue.

Principal - the Principal, or delegate, should as soon as is practicable, call the police (131 444 or 000 if it is an emergency) to lodge a formal report. When an incident is reported to the Police, please ensure that an Incident Report Number or CAD Reference Number is given and noted. This will ensure that any police staff can locate the incident details.

Principals should also ask the attending police officers if they believe that the incident should be reported to other schools.

Please refer to Appendix A – ‘Eyes on the Street Incident Report’. The School would then contact the parents if they have not already been informed. The Chair of the School Board should also be advised of the situation. If the School deems this to be a ‘critical incident’ then the Department of Education Services (DES) must also be informed as per the Registration Standards 2013.

So that other schools can be informed, schools are requested to send brief details of the incident to Niki Preston the Personal Assistant to the Executive Director of AISWA, her email is npreston@ais.wa.edu.au.

Schools may wish to involve their School Chaplain, School Psychologist or the Non-Government School’s Psychology Service to assist the child/children and families concerned. The principal may also need to advise the School Community of the incident by letter. A suggested letter is attached as Appendix B.

Police Media have suggested the following areas that require specific attention by the Police with possible assistance from schools (if requested) in the event of an attempted abduction:

- a. Verify the attempted abduction through independent corroboration (witnesses, consistent injuries, video surveillance):
- b. Organise for the child to attend the Child Assessment and Interview Unit as soon as practicable for the formal interview process;
- c. Organise for the child to attend Forensic Imaging Unit to provide a composite image of the offender;
- d. Revisit the child and verify the story through retelling. If discrepancies arise, consider and investigate the possibility of a false report;
- e. Advise Police Media Unit who will liaise with the Police Education Liaison Officer (and Education Department Media) about the incident if it involves a school aged child or travel to and from school.

AISWA - AISWA will contact the principals of other AISWA schools in the area, the Catholic Education Office and both regional offices of the Department of Education. The Department of Education will advise Police Media. AISWA will assist with any calls to the Association by the media or will, if requested, provide assistance to the School. A sample email that may be sent to schools by AISWA is noted below:

Subject: Child Protection Incident near <Location>

A sentence or two with a brief description of the event and/or the person/s involved. Police Media have requested that the description de-identifies the alleged perpetrator.

Please consider this information in the context of your school community and whether you determine a communication to your parents is needed. You may wish to consult the WA Police Facebook Page or with your local police to determine the level of threat and if the report is credible before deciding whether to proceed with a

communication. When a communication is sent, then a standard template should be used with a brief description of the alleged incident.

NB Offenders and potential offenders are extremely mobile across the metropolitan area – please continue your professional vigilance in protecting your children at entry and exit times and where they are on excursions in the community at other times.

3. Media

If schools would like assistance with dealing with the media they should contact the Executive Director through her PA, Niki Preston on 94411611 or npreston@ais.wa.edu.au

AISWA recommends that Schools do not make the first contact with the media.

4. Contacting Parents

AISWA recommends that a letter (see Appendix B Sample Letter) is sent to all children's homes in the event of the attempted or successful abduction of a child. The letter could be sent home to all families by e-mail or with the children at the end of the school day. It is not considered appropriate to use SMS text messaging or other brief communication tools.

The letter has been designed by the Western Australian Police, in consultation with DoE, CEOWA and AISWA. The letter contains protective behaviour messages.

Whilst the police want parents and students to be vigilant, they do not want a letter to cause unnecessary alarm. In particular the introduction must be sensitive to the effect it will have on parents and children in the School.

The police have stressed that principals ensure that they only use known facts. For example, a child reporting that they were approached by a stranger does not necessarily mean there was an attempted abduction. This interpretation may be incorrect and cause unnecessary alarm and fear amongst the community.

The decision to send a letter, following an attempted abduction event, is considered to be good practice by WAPOL as it keeps parents and caregivers informed. However, it is a school decision as to whether or not their community requires notice of an event.

Principals may not wish to send a letter home if recent events have been such that the letter would serve no real benefit and perhaps cause unnecessary fear in the school community. For example, if other similar letters have been sent home in the recent past a second letter may not only cause unnecessary fear but also the reporting by students of all "strangers" and slowly moving vehicles as attempted abductions (even vehicles travelling at the required 40km/h near a school).

It is recommended that principals liaise with the investigating police, once they have spoken to the child/children, before sending a letter to the school community. This may assist them in assessing the risk to others and the advice they give to parents. Note that when giving details of an event to parents in a letter that vehicle registration details must not be passed on. These details should only be given to the police.

Finally, when a parent receives a letter about the possibility of a person approaching children, it can cause great anxiety and ongoing fear- particularly if a report is unsubstantiated. Principals may wish to follow up with the relevant police officer to find out the outcome of the investigation and then it may be appropriate to send parents a brief letter to provide closure about the matter. Please refer to Appendix C.

5. Record Keeping

Along with all notes taken by the teacher and Principal (Appendix A – ‘Eyes on the Street Incident Report’), it is essential that schools record the name/s, contact number and Incident Report Number given when the Police attend.

Please also note that, in the event of a successful abduction, unless a child is taken directly from a school, the Police will not advise the school until parents and all other relevant authorities and agencies have been contacted.

6. Eyes on the Street

Appendix A – ‘Eyes on the Street Incident Report’ is a document that AISWA would encourage Schools to use. The document is self explanatory as it allows the witnesses to an event to record their recollection of both the event and the person or persons involved. The Principal would be responsible for sending the Incident Report/s to Crime Stoppers. The Principal, or delegate, should still contact the Police if the School believes that the matter requires Police intervention. Please note that training in the use of the ‘Eyes on the Street Incident Report’ is required and schools may contact WAPOL as per the contact details below.

7. Contacts

Queries regarding these guidelines may be directed to:

Senior Sergeant Mark Fleskens, State Coordinator Community Engagement Division
mark.fleskens@police.wa.gov.au 9222 1063

Sergeant Garry Corker, Police Education Liaison Officer, Community Engagement Division
garry.corker@police.wa.gov.au - Garry.Corker@education.wa.edu.au 9264 4531

APPENDIX A

‘Eyes on the Street’



Government of Western Australia
Office of Crime Prevention



EYES ON THE STREET



Fax: 9263 2571 Email: crime.stoppers@police.wa.gov.au

INCIDENT REPORT

If this incident has been previously reported to police, no further report is required.
You can also report this incident at the Crime Stoppers website: www.wa.crimestoppers.com.au

Organisation	Submitted by	Suburb of Incident
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Time	Day	Date
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INCIDENT SUMMARY

What has happened and how, why, when, where, who

	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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If space here is insufficient, please continue on the reverse of this sheet or submit a further additional sheet

SUSPECT DESCRIPTION/ PERSON OF INTEREST

If unsure, leave blank

<p>1. Description - tick box as appropriate</p> <p>GENDER <input type="checkbox"/> Adult M <input type="checkbox"/> Adult F <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile M <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile F</p> <p>APPEARANCE Describe:</p> <p>AGE <input type="checkbox"/> <10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50-60 <input type="checkbox"/> 60+</p> <p>HEIGHT (cm) <input type="checkbox"/> <150 <input type="checkbox"/> 150-160 <input type="checkbox"/> 161-170 <input type="checkbox"/> 171-180 <input type="checkbox"/> 181-190 <input type="checkbox"/> 190+</p> <p>HAIR COLOUR <input type="checkbox"/> Blonde <input type="checkbox"/> Brown <input type="checkbox"/> Black <input type="checkbox"/> Grey <input type="checkbox"/> Red <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>HAIR LENGTH <input type="checkbox"/> Bald <input type="checkbox"/> Short <input type="checkbox"/> Collar <input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder <input type="checkbox"/> Long <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>HAIR TYPE <input type="checkbox"/> Straight <input type="checkbox"/> Curly <input type="checkbox"/> Wavy <input type="checkbox"/> Tied back <input type="checkbox"/> Mullet <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>BUILD <input type="checkbox"/> Slim <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Solid <input type="checkbox"/> Obese <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>COMPLEXION <input type="checkbox"/> Dark <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Olive <input type="checkbox"/> Ruddy <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>EYE COLOUR <input type="checkbox"/> Blue <input type="checkbox"/> Brown <input type="checkbox"/> Green <input type="checkbox"/> Hazel <input type="checkbox"/> Grey <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>Facial HAIR <input type="checkbox"/> Beard <input type="checkbox"/> Goatee <input type="checkbox"/> Moustache <input type="checkbox"/> Sideburns <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>FEATURES <input type="checkbox"/> Scars <input type="checkbox"/> Tattoos <input type="checkbox"/> Birthmarks <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>CLOTHING Describe:</p>	<p>If other please explain:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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If space here is insufficient, please continue on the reverse of this sheet or submit a further additional sheet

2. Person of Interest - supply details if known

Surname	Given names	Estimated age	DOB
Address			

LOCATION ADDRESS DETAILS

Please further describe the premises or location - brick/tile/weatherboard, 1/2 storey, house/unit, colours, nearest cross street, other distinguishing features?

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VEHICLE DETAILS

Reg. Number	Make	Model	Colour
Distinguishing features (damaged panels/roo bar/identifiable features)			

Note: Please treat this information as private and confidential. Strictly for the use of the office of Crime Prevention and WA police.

APPENDIX B Sample Letter One

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to inform parents and carers about a reported incident in the nearby community.

Edit the following paragraph as needed:

A student from our school / OR another local school [name the school] reported that on the way to school on [day date] / OR on the way home from school on [day date] a male person / female person was acting suspiciously in the area of [street name/area]. The matter has been reported to police.

[Principals to note – do not include specific details of the incident such as number plates and identifying details of individuals unless you are specifically asked to do so by WA Police. Otherwise, police investigations and cases may be compromised.]

In light of this reported incident I urge all children to take care when going to and from school, and to report anything suspicious to their parents, the school and the police.

You can call **13 14 44** to report an incident to WA Police (only use 000 in an emergency) or **1800 333 000** to reach Crime Stoppers.

Here are some suggestions to help your children stay safe:

- always travel in a group
- walk on the right hand side of the road to face oncoming traffic
- wherever possible, leave space between you and the roadway
- stay in areas that are well lit
- stay in view – avoid going into areas that are hidden (such as parkland bush or behind shopping centres)
- be alert – earphones and headphones can reduce your awareness considerably
- if you have a mobile phone, have it turned on and ready to dial an emergency number
- if a passing car stops nearby, never get too close
- run from a situation if you feel at risk
- give this advice to your brothers and sisters, especially if they are younger
- report suspicious behaviour to your parents, school and the police
- if you can get it safely, try to photograph or remember the number plate of the car
- report numbers plates of cars and the clothing or distinguishing features of individuals to police.

To get the latest community safety information from police, visit WA Police on Facebook www.facebook.com/WA.Police or online at www.police.wa.gov.au.

If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact me at school. Yours sincerely

NAME

PRINCIPAL

APPENDIX C Sample Letter Two

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am writing to give you further information following the recent letter/report of a student/s being approached by a person/vehicle near our school on <date> and in <location>.

As you know, we take all reports like this very seriously in the first instance and notify parents and, if necessary, the Police.

In this case, the Police have investigated the report/s and I am happy to say that they have advised me there is no information about this matter that suggests there is an ongoing threat to the children/students in our school.

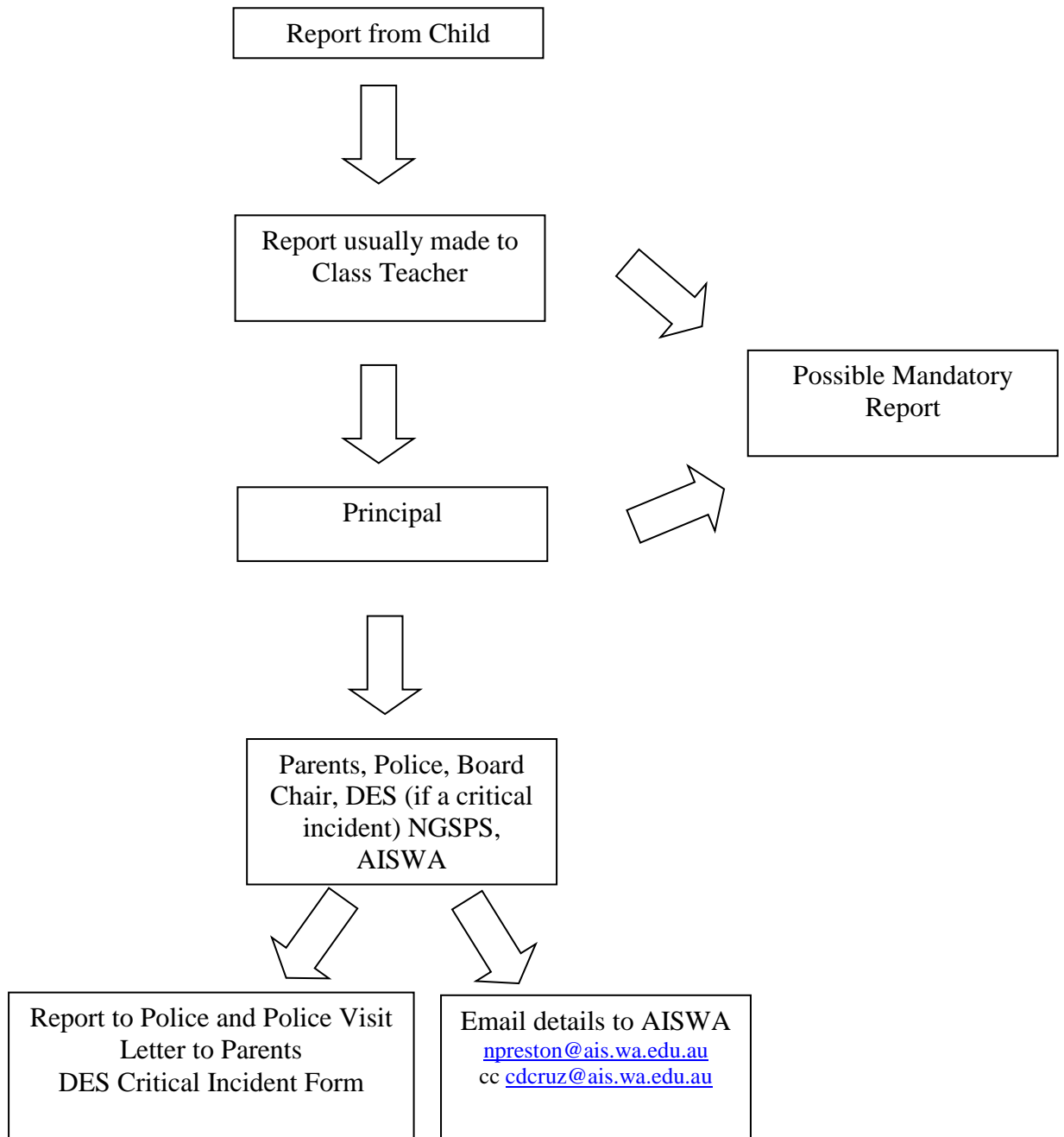
If you have any queries regarding this matter, do not hesitate to contact the School or discuss your concerns with your child's teacher.

Yours faithfully

Principal

APPENDIX D Sample Flow Chart

This is a very simplified flow chart. A school's flow chart should be designed to make it easy for any staff member or student to follow the process.



Implementation date: [February 2017]

Approved by: [Executive Principal]

Next review: [February 2018]

