



Policy	Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Abuse	Date approved	13 June 2024
Policy Owner	Principal	Date of next review	13 June 2026
Approved by	School Council	Version	2

Introduction

Trinity Grammar School, Kew has no tolerance for child abuse and is committed to providing an environment where children and young people are safe and are treated with dignity and respect.

All members of the School community have a responsibility to support the safety and wellbeing of students and are expected to uphold the School's commitment to child safety.

The School has policies, programs and procedures in place that aim to provide the highest levels of protection and support to all students, and to identify children whose wellbeing may be at risk, including:

- periodic student support meetings conducted by wellbeing staff, which enable the early detection of children whose physical and/or emotional wellbeing may be at risk;
- counselling, pastoral care and other support provided to all students, including children at risk and their families;
- professional advice for staff on how to respond to, and report, suspected child abuse;
- procedures for reporting child abuse to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Child Protection service (Child Protection), Victoria Police and other authorities if necessary;
- the referral of staff for counselling as needed, including support for staff who may have experienced traumatic situations relating to child safety; and
- education and training for all staff on how to detect, respond to, and report child abuse, and their reporting obligations.

This policy and the procedures within it should be read together with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Purpose

This policy and procedures are designed to ensure that all members of the School Community:

- know how to respond appropriately to suspicions, allegations or disclosures of child abuse; and
- understand their reporting obligations in relation to the safety and protection of children.

Scope

These procedures apply to all School staff and volunteers (including School Council members and contractors) in relation to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse connected to the school environment or the school boarding environment.

Members of the School Community including students and parents, carers or guardians can also raise



suspicious, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse connected to the school environment or the school boarding environment as set out in this policy and procedures.

Definitions

Term	Definition
CCYP	Commission for Children and Young People, which is the agency responsible for administering the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
child abuse	Child abuse is defined in the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005) (Vic)</i> as including: (a) any act committed against a child involving: i. a sexual offence; or ii. grooming; and (b) the infliction, on a child, of: i. physical violence; or ii. serious emotional or psychological harm; (c) serious neglect of a child.
DFFH/Child Protection	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, which is the department responsible for Child Protection.
School boarding environment	Any physical, online or virtual space made available or authorised by the School Council for a child enrolled as a boarding student at the Dadirri Boarding House at 49 Wellington Street, Kew, to use at any time, including: (a) online or virtual school boarding environments (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); (b) other locations provided by School or through a third-party provider for a child enrolled as a boarding student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• camps;• approved homestay accommodation;• delivery of education and training such as RTOs, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school (e.g. Ruyton Girls' School); or sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.
School Community	All students, staff (permanent, fixed term and casual), volunteers, contractors, members of the School Council, parents/guardians, visitors, external education providers, pre-service teachers on placement at the School, approved homestay providers and local support persons for overseas students.
School environment	Any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours: (a) The School's campuses/sites, including <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Kew campus;• the Marles Playing Fields at Bulleen;• the Outdoor Education sites at Lake Nillahcootie and Licola; (b) online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by School Council for use by a child, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• email;• myTGS;• software applications, collaboration tools and online services; and



	<p>(c) other school locations or locations through a third provider for a child including, but not limited to, locations used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• camps;• approved homestay accommodation;• delivery of education and training such as RTOs, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or other schools (e.g. Ruyton Girls' School); and• sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events
--	--

Further definitions are set out in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Reporting Obligations

The following is an overview of key reporting obligations in relation to child safety. Further detail is provided in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

In implementing the procedures set out in this Policy, the School is committed to the following principles:

- School staff will not be prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to an external authority;
- it is not a victim's responsibility to inform authorities of allegations of child abuse;
- School staff are not required to make a judgment about the truth of an allegation of child abuse;
- School staff must make records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse – and will not be discouraged from doing so.

Mandatory Reporting

'Mandated' staff must make a report to DFFH Child Protection if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form a reasonable belief that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents or caregivers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child.

The following School staff at the school are 'mandated' staff:

- teachers who are registered to teach, or have been granted permission to teach, under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006;
- the Principal;
- the School Nurses;
- the School Counsellors;
- chaplaincy staff; and
- ELC staff.

Mandated staff are required by law to make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming their belief, and after each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief. A failure to comply with the mandatory reporting obligation may amount to a criminal offence.



Forming a belief on reasonable grounds

A belief is 'on reasonable grounds' if a reasonable person, practising their profession or carrying out their duties, would have formed the belief on those grounds.

Circumstances in which mandated staff may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection include where:

- a child says that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- a child says that they know someone who has been abused (as the child may be referring to him or herself);
- someone associated with the child says that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- there are physical or behavioural indicators of physical or sexual abuse; and
- there are physical signs or indicators of abuse, such as bruises or cuts.

A 'reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof but must be based on more than rumour or speculation.

Voluntary reporting where a child is in need of protection

Any person may make a report to DFFH Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, including where:

- the child has been abandoned by his or her parents and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child;
- the child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person willing and able to care for the child;
- the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child;
- the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm that is likely to cause significant damage to the child's emotional or intellectual development, and the parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child; or
- the child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be, significantly harmed, and the parents have not provided or are unlikely to provide basic care or effective medical, surgical or other remedial care.

Any member of the School Community may make a report to Child Protection in such circumstances and is encouraged to notify the School and follow the procedures set out in this policy.

Failure to disclose

Any person of or over the age of 18 who has information that leads the person to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under the age of 16 must report that information to the police as soon as it is practicable to do so. A failure to disclose the information may amount to a criminal offence.

The information must be reported to police as soon as possible, unless the person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so, or the person is exempt from the offence. An example of a reasonable excuse for not reporting the information about child sexual abuse to police is if the person fears for their safety or the safety of another person (such as the potential victim, but not the alleged perpetrator or an organisation).



This obligation applies to all adults, including students of or over the age of 18, who form a reasonable belief that another adult may have committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 years of age and fail to report this information to Victoria Police.

It should be noted that:

- sexual offences include rape, sexual assault, assault with intent to commit a sexual offence, sexual activity in the presence of a child and threats to commit a sexual offence
- the criminal offence of grooming a child could occur “in Victoria” if a person who is in Victoria grooms a child who is located elsewhere, or if a child who is in Victoria is groomed by a perpetrator who is located elsewhere
- a sexual offence against a child could occur in Victoria, but an adult could form a reasonable belief about it when they are themselves located elsewhere (for example, by receiving a disclosure while they are on an interstate camp or excursion).

Grooming

Grooming refers to predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming behaviour commonly involves a graduation from attention-giving and non-sexual touching to increasingly more intimate and intrusive behaviour. It occurs where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child, with the intention of facilitating the child’s engagement in or involvement in sexual conduct, either with the adult or another adult. Grooming is a criminal offence.

There is no one set of actions or behaviours that are used to groom a child. Grooming behaviours include: persuading a child/young person or group of children/young people that they have a special relationship, inappropriately showing special favours to one child/young person but not other children/young people, inappropriately allowing the child to over step the rules, testing boundaries, for example, by undressing in front of the child/young person.

Grooming occurs both before the offence in order to access the child, and after the offence to maintain that access for future abuse and ensure the child’s silence.

Grooming is a sexual offence and may trigger the ‘failure to disclose’ obligation (above).

Failure to protect

Any person in a position of authority at the School who becomes aware that an adult of or over the age of 18 associated with the School poses a substantial risk of committing a sexual offence against a child under the care, supervision or authority of the School, must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove that risk.

It is a criminal offence for the person in a position of authority to negligently fail to reduce or remove that risk.

This criminal offence only applies when there is a substantial risk of a sexual offence being committed. Nevertheless, any person who identifies a substantial risk of any harm occurring towards children in the school environment is strongly encouraged to raise this with the Principal by contacting principal@trinity.vic.edu.au.

What is a ‘substantial risk’?

A risk will be a substantial risk if a reasonable person would have judged the risk of a sexual offence being committed against the student as being substantial. It is not necessary to prove that a sexual offence was



committed in order for the substantial risk to exist. A person in a position of authority should not wait for a student to be harmed before acting.

There are several factors that may assist in determining whether a risk is a substantial risk. These include:

- the likelihood or probability that the child will become the victim of a sexual offence;
- the nature of the relationship between a child and the adult who may pose a risk to the child;
- the background of the adult who may pose a risk to the child, including any past or alleged misconduct;
- any vulnerabilities particular to a child which may increase the likelihood that they may become the victim of a sexual offence v. any other relevant fact which may indicate a substantial risk of a sexual offence being committed against a child.

Who does this obligation apply to at the school?

The Principal and members of the School Leadership Team would always have the necessary degree of supervision, power and authority to remove or reduce a risk posed by another adult working at the School. Examples of other people in authority may include the Chair and members of the School Council, School Chaplains, and teaching staff by virtue of their responsibilities. It may also apply to people with less formal involvement at the School, such as sport coaches responsible for the supervision of a sport team, or parent volunteers.

Reducing or removing a substantial risk

Where any School staff member or Volunteer becomes aware of a risk of a sexual offence against a student or students under their care, they should immediately:

- take reasonable steps which would remove or reduce the risk to the student or students, which may include:
 - immediately removing the person from contact with the student or students;
 - if the adult concerned is a staff member, standing the person down;
 - ensuring that parent who is known to pose a risk of sexual abuse to children is not permitted to act as a volunteer at the School; and
- report the matter to a Child Safety Leader, and the Principal, as soon as practicable.
- make an appropriate report to external authorities

Upon receipt of this report, the Principal/Child Safety Leader will:

- conduct an investigation into the circumstances and implement appropriate risk controls
- support the staff member to make the appropriate report to authorities (DFFH, police, CCYP).

Reportable Conduct

Reportable conduct is defined in section 3 of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* to mean:

- a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded;
- a broader range of inappropriate behaviours of a sexual nature, with or in the presence of, a child (for example, sexting, voyeurism, inappropriate conversations);
- physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child;
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or
- significant neglect of a child;



by School staff or volunteers (including contractors and Council members). However, reportable allegations in relation to sub-contractors of contractors are not covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The School will ensure it meets its obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Refer to the Reportable Conduct Policy for information about how the School meets these obligations.

Student sexual offending

All staff, Volunteers, Contractors and External Education Providers must take action if they suspect, or are witness to, student sexual offending.

Student sexual offending refers to sexual behaviour by a student at the School, over 10 years of age, which amounts to a sexual offence. Sexual offences are defined in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) and include:

- rape
- sexual assault
- indecent acts
- other unwanted sexualised touching.

The Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending (**Appendix 2**) must be applied in any circumstance where there is an incident, allegation, or you form a suspicion that, a student is victim to a student sexual offence and/or a student has committed a sexual offence. This includes suspected sexual offending that may have taken place outside of School grounds and hours.

Conduct that is reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teaching

Under section 2.6.57 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), registered teachers must notify the VIT, and include in any application for registration or renewal of their registration, if they are committed for trial or have been convicted or found guilty of certain criminal offences that accord with those relevant to WWC Checks. Registered teachers must also notify Working with Children Check Victoria (WWCCV) of all organisations in which they engage in child-related work (other than teaching).

The School must notify the VIT if the School has taken any action against a registered teacher in response to allegations:

- of serious incompetence
- of serious misconduct
- the teacher is unfit to be a teacher
- that the teacher's ability to practice as a teacher is seriously detrimentally affected or likely to be seriously affected because of an impairment; or
- any other actions against a registered teacher that may be relevant to their fitness to teach.

The School must also immediately notify the VIT if it becomes aware that a teacher has been charged with, or convicted or found guilty of, certain criminal offences that accord with those relevant to WWC Checks. The School is also required to dismiss or remove from its employment or engagement any teacher who has either been convicted or found guilty of certain criminal offences that accord with those relevant to WWC Checks or been given a WWC exclusion notice.



Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Abuse

The School is committed to assisting and supporting any member of the School community who wishes to raise a concern about child abuse. All allegations of child abuse will be taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

Child abuse situations can be very complex, not only from the perspective of ascertaining whether abuse has occurred but also in understanding what steps to take to protect a child. It is always important to remember that the safety and welfare of the child are paramount. If you have a concern that a child may be experiencing abuse, whether or not you have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that the abuse has occurred, you should immediately raise your concerns with one of the School's Child Safety Leaders. Our Child Safety Leaders will be able to assist you in clarifying your concerns and managing the next steps.

As part of this commitment, the School will not:

- prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to an external authority;
- state or imply that it is a victim's responsibility to inform authorities of an allegation;
- require staff to make a judgment about the truth of an allegation of child abuse;
- prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

'Mandated' reporters are required to make a report to DFFH Child Protection even if the Principal does not share their belief.

The procedures set out below are intended to assist staff and other members of the School community to raise any concerns about child abuse, to respond appropriately and to understand and fulfil any reporting obligations that may arise.

The procedures should be followed after each occasion on which a person becomes aware of matters which lead to a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection, or that a sexual offence has been committed against a child.

Step 1: Listen and reassure the child

If a child discloses abuse to you, reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you. Listen to the child and try to obtain any relevant facts. Be careful not to 'lead' the child when asking questions. Do not make any promises to the child that you will withhold the information they have disclosed from others.

Step 2: Assess for immediate danger

If the child is in immediate danger, ensure they remain in a safe, supervised space. The safety of the child is always paramount. Call the police on 000, await their advice and then proceed to the next steps. Inform the Principal.

If there is no immediate danger to the child, ensure you are aware of the child's plans for the day and that they are returning to a safe, supervised place.



Step 3: Document your concerns

Clearly document your concerns/observations on the Child Safety Incident Report Form. Note any statements made to you, recording the specific words used. Try to make a record of Who, What, Where, Why, How. This helps you record observed facts. Try to avoid opinions.

Step 4: Inform a Child Safety Leader

You must contact a Child Safety Leader to discuss your concerns. The Child Safety Leaders have received additional training in managing child abuse and can assist you with:

- documenting your concerns accurately (as per Step 3), and ensuring that records are retained securely
- ensuring the matter is handled confidentially (to the greatest extent possible)
- helping you to understand any reporting obligations you may have
- taking steps to remove any further risks of harm to the child
- notifying school leaders (Step 5)
- promptly co-ordinating the School's response to the matter; and
- providing you with additional support, as required.

Step 5: Notify School Leaders

After consulting with a Child Safety Leader, you should inform the appropriate Head of School and the Principal.

These school leaders, who are also Child Safety Leaders, are responsible for:

- promptly managing the School's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously;
- responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse; and
- monitoring overall compliance with these procedures.

The School's response to a concern about child abuse will, where appropriate, include:

- protecting the child connected to the alleged abuse until the concerns or allegations are resolved;
- conducting an investigation into allegations (subject to any guidance from external authorities); and
- making, securing and retaining records of the allegations and the School's response; and
- informing relevant authorities about allegations.

Should any member of staff who has been allocated responsibility under these procedures be unable to perform their role, the Principal will be responsible for managing an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse. Should the Principal be unable to perform this role, the Chair of School Council will be responsible for managing an alternative procedure.

It is important to note that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse. For example, if you are a mandated reporter, merely informing a Child Safety Leader of your concerns does not discharge your legal obligation to make a report to DFFH Child Protection if you have formed a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection (on the grounds set out earlier). You must still proceed to Step 6, unless you are satisfied that all of the grounds for your belief have already been the subject of a report made to Child Protection by another person.

It should also be noted that merely informing a Child Safety Leader does not discharge your legal obligation to



make a report to Victoria Police if you have formed a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child. You must still proceed to Step 6, unless you have a reasonable excuse for not doing so.

Any person who is unsure about their reporting obligations should seek advice from a Child Safety Leader.

Step 6: Report to authorities

Mandated staff

If, after completing Step 4 and Step 6, you conclude you have a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from physical violence or sexual abuse (on the specific grounds set out earlier in this policy under mandatory reporting), you must make a report to Child Protection.

Non-mandated staff/other persons and reports on other grounds

Any other person who forms a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from any form of harm (on any of the broader grounds set out earlier in this policy) may make a report to Child Protection.

Reports in relation to sexual offences

If you form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child, you must report that belief to Victoria Police unless you have a reasonable excuse for not doing so. Local Police should be contacted by calling the Box Hill Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams on PH: (03) 8892 3292 or in the case of an emergency dial 000).

Reportable Conduct

The Principal will notify the CCYP of reportable allegations in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Refer to the Reportable Conduct Policy for information about how the School responds to allegations of reportable conduct.

Conduct reportable to the VIT

The School will notify the VIT if it has taken any action against a registered teacher in response to allegations of teacher misconduct or other forms of conduct as set out earlier in this policy.

Step 7: follow up

Any person who has followed these procedures is encouraged to debrief with a Child Safety Leader or other school leader. Staff may access confidential counselling services through the Employee Assistance Program.

Allegations of child abuse against a staff member, contractor or volunteer

All allegations of suspected child abuse involving school staff, a contractor or volunteer will be taken extremely seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly. They must be reported internally in accordance with these procedures. The School will ensure that its obligation to report to external authorities are met.



The School will deal with allegations against a staff member in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Policy, its procedures for complaint resolution and disciplinary measures, and in consultation with the police and other authorities.

The staff member concerned will be treated in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Any member of the School community who is involved in the matter will be treated with dignity and respect, and will have their rights met. The person making the allegation will be given access to confidential support and advice from the Counselling team.

In addition to following the procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse, the School will respond by taking any action necessary to protect the child concerned. This may include removing the child from any contact with the staff member against whom the allegation has been made, and/or suspending the staff member until the allegation is properly investigated and an outcome reached. In addition, the child will be provided with counselling, pastoral and other support as appropriate. The School will provide support to students impacted by abuse. This may include development of an individual safety plan; acting as a support person for the student; counselling; attending Child Protection case planning meetings; observing and monitoring the student's behaviour; and liaising with appropriate professionals.

Record-keeping

The School must ensure all reports of suspected child abuse are documented, secured and retained in accordance with the Record Keeping Policy.

The following steps will be taken:

- the School's Child Safety Leaders are responsible for assisting any person who raises a child safety concern or complaint to complete a Child Safety Incident Report Form, and for ensuring the School's response to the concern or complaint is properly documented
- the Principal is responsible for maintaining a confidential register of child safety concerns/complaints that is stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by the Principal, Deputy Principal and the Director of Business.

Breach of Policy

Any breach of this policy/procedures will be regarded most seriously and, in the case of School staff and volunteers, may result in disciplinary action (which may include the termination of employment or engagement).

Communication

These procedures will be made available to staff on Policy Connect and published on the School website. A simplified version will be available for students on myTGS.



Related Policies

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Child Safety Code of Conduct
Child Safety Code of Conduct – Boarding Staff
Reportable Conduct Policy

References

Ministerial Order No. 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and Boarding Premises
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
Crimes Act 1958
Education & Training Reform Act 2006



APPENDIX 1

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member, you play a critical role in protecting children in your care.

- You must act by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief* that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
You must act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
It is strongly recommended that you use the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template to keep clear and comprehensive notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

*A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to Action 2.

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:
separating alleged victims and others involved
administering first aid
calling 000 for urgent medical and/ or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.
Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE
You must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.
You must also report internally to:
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
School principal and/or leadership team
Employee Conduct Branch
DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
School principal and/or leadership team
Diocesan education office.
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
School principal and/or school chairperson
Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 782 978.

All allegations of 'reportable conduct' must be reported as soon as possible to:
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
Employee Conduct Branch
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Diocesan education office
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 782 978.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
You must report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:
in need of protection from child abuse
at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.
VICTORIA POLICE
You must also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.
You must also report internally to:
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
School principal and/or leadership team
DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
School principal and/or leadership team
Diocesan education office.
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
School principal and/or chairperson.

For suspected student sexual assault, please follow the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending.

OTHER CONCERNS

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from:
Child FIRST/The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support)
DHHS Child Protection
Victoria Police.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your principal must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:
not to contact the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
to contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
how to communicate with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You must follow the Four Critical Actions every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.



CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA
North Division 1300 864 977
South Division 1300 855 755
East Division 1300 360 391
West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599
West Division (Metro) 1300 864 977
AFTER HOURS
After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78
CHILD FIRST
https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams
ORANGE DOOR
https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence/the-orange-door.html

VICTORIA POLICE 000 or your local police station
DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE 1800 126 126
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT 1800 126 126
EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH (03) 9637 2595
DIOCESAN OFFICE Melbourne (03) 9267 0228 Ballarat (03) 5337 7155 Sale (03) 5622 6600 Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA (03) 9825 7200
THE LOOKOUT
The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: https://www.lookout.org.au
Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to 1800 Respect for counselling, information and a referral service: 1800 737 732.





APPENDIX 2

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Student Sexual Offending

PROTECT



YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member, you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

- You **must** act by following the 4 critical actions as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion that a student is a victim of a student sexual offending and/or a student has engaged in sexual offending
- You **must** act even if you are unsure and have not directly observed student sexual offending (e.g. if a victim, or another person tells you about the offence)
- You **must** use the *Responding to Student Sexual Offending template* to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

1 IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you **must** ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling **000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report incidents, suspicions and disclosures of student sexual offending as soon as possible:

VICTORIA POLICE
All instances on **000**

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
If you believe that:

- the victim's parent/carers are unable or unwilling to protect the child
- the student who is alleged to have engaged in the student sexual offending is:
 - aged over 10 and under 15 years and may be in need of therapeutic treatment to address these behaviours
 - may be displaying physical and behavioural indicators of being the victim of child abuse*.

INTERNALLY
ALSO report internally to:

- School Principal and/or leadership team (all instances)
- Government Schools: DET Security Services Unit
- Catholic Schools: Diocesan education office

You must identify a contact person at the school for future liaison with Victoria Police and/or Child Protection and seek advice about contacting parents/carers (see **Action 3**).

*See the *Four Critical Steps for Schools: Responding Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse* for further guidance in these circumstances.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your Principal **must** consult with **Victoria Police** or **DHHS Child Protection** to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers of all impacted students. They may advise:

- not to contact the parents/carers** (e.g. in circumstances where contacting the parents/carers is likely to adversely affect a **Victoria Police** investigation or where the student is a mature minor and has requested that their parent/carer not be notified)
- to contact the parents/carers** and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for students who are victim to a student sexual offence AND students who have engaged in a sexual offence. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. This support should include the development of a **Student Support Plan** in consultation with wellbeing professionals, outlining support strategies. Strategies may include the development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.



CONTACT		
<p>DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA</p> <p>North Division 1300 864 977 South Division 1300 855 795 East Division 1300 360 391 West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599 West Division (Metro) 1300 864 977</p> <p>AFTER HOURS After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78</p>	<p>CHILD FIRST www.dhs.vic.gov.au</p> <p>VICTORIA POLICE 000 or contact your local police station</p> <p>DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT (03) 9589 6266</p> <p>STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT (03) 9651 3622</p>	<p>EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH (03) 9637 2595</p> <p>DIOCESAN OFFICE Melbourne (03) 9267 0228 Ballarat (03) 5337 7135 Sale (03) 5622 6600 Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377</p> <p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA (03) 9625 7200</p>