



Child Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures

POLICY CATEGORY: CHILD SAFETY

PUBLIC POLICY

STATUS: APPROVED, March 2025

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

Woodleigh School is committed to providing a caring, supportive and safe environment where every student has a place, a voice and their story is known. Woodleigh is committed to providing safe and supportive environments where all children and young people entrusted to our care are affirmed in their dignity and worth as a person.

If you are a non-English speaker who needs help to understand this policy, please contact the relevant Head of Campus.

This policy and these procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to Woodleigh School.

To report a child in immediate risk or danger of a sexual offence, please call Triple Zero (000).

Woodleigh School fosters a culture that encourages staff, contractors, volunteers, students, parents and our School community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, misconduct or child abuse to occur and remain hidden.

The objective of this policy is to ensure that processes for child abuse complaints and concerns are child focused and that if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse, all school staff and volunteers follow our child safety responding and reporting obligations and procedures.

This policy is publicly available on the Woodleigh Website www.woodleigh.vic.edu.au. This policy should be read together with the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

For complaints or concerns about Woodleigh School or the behaviour of any person within the School not relating to child abuse, please refer to our Complaints Policy, which is publicly available on the Woodleigh Website www.woodleigh.vic.edu.au

1.1. Purpose of this policy and procedures

The purpose of this policy and the procedures is to have clear child-focused, culturally safe and easily understood processes and procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse that:

- cover all forms of child abuse
- are sensitive to the diversity and characteristics of our School community and pay particular attention to the needs of:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
 - students with disability
 - students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - students who are unable to live at home
 - international students
 - lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
- are publicly available
- are accessible to children, students, school staff, volunteers and the School community
- apply to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other persons while connected to the School environment
- identify the roles and responsibilities of school staff and leadership to act and report on complaints and concerns relating to child abuse, including:
 1. ensuring that the complaint or concern is taken seriously
 2. promptly and thoroughly managing Woodleigh School's response
 3. responding appropriately to a child or student who raises or is affected by the complaint or concern
 4. monitoring Woodleigh School's overall compliance with the procedures
 5. managing an alternative procedure where a person allocated responsibility cannot perform their role
- do not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person, in fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in these procedures, reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse

- clearly describe the actions Woodleigh School will take to respond to a complaint or concern relating to child abuse, including actions to:
 1. report allegations, suspicions or disclosures to relevant authorities, regardless of whether there is a legal obligation to report and co-operate with law enforcement
 2. protect any child or student connected to the complaint or concern relating to child abuse until the complaint or concern is resolved
 3. make, secure and retain records of the complaint or concern and Woodleigh's response.
- ensure all record keeping, reporting, private and employment law obligations are met when responding to child abuse complaints and concerns
- ensure that all school staff understand:
 1. mandatory reporting under the *Children and Young Persons Act 2005*
 2. the failure to disclose offence under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
 3. the failure to protect offence under the *Crimes Act* (Vic - Introduced 2015)
 4. the grooming offence under the *Crimes Act 1958*
- ensure that all school staff and volunteers engaged in child-connected work understand and training is provided to school staff annually and to volunteers as is appropriate to the nature and responsibilities of their role:
 1. the procedures for responding to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse
 2. recognising indicators of child harm, including harm caused by other children, students, or adults (including family violence)
 3. responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- ensure that all newly appointed school staff, Woodleigh Board members and volunteers engaged in child-connected work receive information appropriate to their roles that includes the procedures for managing child abuse complaints and concerns in an induction
- ensure students have access to age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention programs and relevant, related information
- ensure that Woodleigh School is compliant with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child safety and protection in Victoria, including Ministerial Order 1359, which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.¹
- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- ensure that everyone within the School community is alert to signs and evidence of abuse and neglect, understand that it is not acceptable and be aware of their reporting responsibilities
- ensure that action is taken to protect students from risks and immediate action is taken to ensure the safety of students
- ensure that all mandatory reporters are trained with respect to what must be reported and relevant procedures, with refresher training to be completed annually
- ensure all reports on reasonable grounds are reported to the relevant authorities
- ensure that ongoing support and assistance is provided to students who have been abused and their confidentiality respected with case details and the identity of the student only discussed with those managing the situation
- ensure that staff are provided with clear expectations for appropriate behavior.

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or other persons while connected to the school environment
- physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided for a student's use (for example, sport activities and programs, excursions, camps, interstate and overseas travel) and those provided through third-party providers.
- persons who are bound by this policy and required to report concerns about, or incidents of child abuse or neglect.

¹ *Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*, Ministerial Order No. 1359 made pursuant to the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) operative from 1 July 2022. The *Child Safe Standards* are as gazetted by the Minister for Child Protection pursuant to the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic).

NOTE: Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in this policy and 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.

1.3. Definitions

The following terms in this policy and the procedures have specific definitions (and are consistent with Victorian law where indicated):

Child	<p>Child means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.</p> <p>Source: <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic)</p>
Child Safety Incident or Concern	<p>Means an incident of or a concern about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> “child abuse” as defined in Ministerial Order 1359 and the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (CWS Act). These define “child abuse” as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> any act committed against a child involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a sexual offence against a child the criminal offence of grooming (which includes grooming of a child or of a person with care, supervision or responsibility for the child with the intention of facilitating the child being engaged or involved in the commission of a sexual offence) the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or “serious” emotional or psychological harm* the “serious” neglect of a child, including exposure to family violence and its effects* a child being “in need of protection” as defined in the Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYF Act). This includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> abandonment of the child by their 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 no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child “significant” harm as a result of physical injury, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child* “significant” harm as a result of sexual abuse (including likely future sexual abuse as a result of grooming), from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child* “significant” emotional or psychological harm, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child* “significant” neglect by the child’s parents* “reportable conduct” as defined in the CWS Act. Reportable conduct is conduct by an employee (whether in the course of their employment or not) involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a sexual offence committed against or in the presence of a child sexual misconduct committed against or in the presence of a child physical violence committed against or in the presence of a child any behaviour that causes “significant” emotional or psychological harm to a child* “significant” neglect of a child* a criminal offence against a child, or a student aged 18 or over, as set out in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic). These include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> sexual penetration or sexual assault of, or sexual activity in the presence of, a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender grooming a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender grooming an adult who has a child under their care, supervision or authority encouraging a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the offender’s care, supervision or authority to be involved in sexual activity image-based sexual offences a practice to change or suppress a child’s sexual orientation or gender identity, which is prohibited under the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic)

	<p>6. a breach of our Child Safety Code of Conduct, such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a teacher engaging in undisclosed private meetings with a student who is not their own child a Volunteer sports coach engaging in inappropriate online personal communications with a student a Contractor music tutor publishing online photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent. <p>“Serious” emotional or psychological harm and “serious” neglect involve harm that has a lasting permanent effect. “Significant” emotional or psychological harm and “significant” neglect involve harm that is more than trivial or insignificant, but need not be as high as “serious” and need not have a lasting permanent effect.</p>
Child abuse	<p>Child abuse includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> any act committed against a child involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a sexual offence grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 the infliction, on a child, of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> physical violence serious emotional or psychological harm the serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects. <p>Source: <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p>
Child-connected work	<p>Child-connected work means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present; or for the purposes of a school boarding premises, work authorised by the provider of school boarding premises in a school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present. <p>Source: <i>Ministerial Order 1359</i></p>
Child-related work	<p>Child-related work means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> work at or for a service, body or place, or that involves a specified activity; and that usually involves direct contact with a child. <p>Educational institutions are specified for the purpose of a).</p> <p>Source: <i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i></p>
Child safety	<p>Child safety includes matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.</p> <p>Source: <i>Ministerial Order 1359</i></p>
Direct contact	<p>Direct contact in relation to child-related work, means any contact between a person and a child that involves-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> physical contact; or face to face contact; or contact by post or other written communication; or contact by telephone or other oral communication; or contact by email or other electronic communication. <p>Source: <i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i></p>
Grooming	<p>Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity at a later time.</p>

	<p>Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.</p> <p>Source: Child Safe Standards Definitions (https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-definitions)</p>
Mandatory reporters	<p>Mandatory reporters are certain classes of professionals who are legally required to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities.</p> <p>In Victorian schools, this includes registered teachers, school principals, early childhood workers, nurses, registered psychologists, school counsellors and all people in religious ministry.</p> <p>Source: Child Safe Standards Definitions (https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-definitions)</p>
Mandatory reporting	<p>Mandatory reporting is the legal requirement for certain professional groups to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities.</p> <p>In Victoria, under the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i>, mandatory reporters must make a report to child protection, if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the course of practising their profession or carrying out duties of their office, position or employment • they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. <p>Source: Child Safe Standards Definitions (https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-definitions)</p>
School environment	<p>School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A campus of the school b) Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services) c) Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. camps 2. approved homestay accommodation; 3. delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or 4. sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events. <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
School governing authority	<p>School governing authority means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; b) the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the <i>Education Training and Reform Act 2006</i> (Vic); or c) the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the <i>Education Training and Reform Act 2006</i> (Vic). <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
School staff	<p>School staff means:</p> <p>in a non-Government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority 2. a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work 3. a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school. <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Student	<p>Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends the school or a student at the school boarding premises.</p> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>

Volunteer	<p>Volunteer means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school or school boarding premises in the school environment or school boarding premises environment.</p> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Vulnerable students	<p>Vulnerable students may include but are not limited to those who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) are deemed vulnerable by a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, or assessed as requiring education and care outside the family home b) are identified as vulnerable as a result of a referral from a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, homeless or youth justice service; or mental health or other health service c) self-identify or are identified by school staff or school boarding premises staff as a member of a vulnerable cohort. <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>

2. CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse can take many forms. The perpetrator may be a parent, carer, school staff member, volunteer, another adult or even another child. The nature of child abuse is complex. The abuse may occur over time and potential risk indicators are often difficult to detect. Under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), child abuse includes:

- sexual offences
- grooming
- physical violence
- serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect, including exposure to family violence and its effects.

2.1 Grooming

Grooming refers to behaviours that manipulate and control a child with the intent of gaining access to the child, obtaining the child's compliance, maintain the child's silence and avoiding discovery of the sexual abuse.

Grooming by an adult for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 is a crime under section 49M of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)- see below under **LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**.

2.2 Family violence

Family violence is defined under the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic) to include behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness, or be exposed to the effects of family violence such as abusive, threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour. While family violence does not form part of the official definition of 'child abuse' in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), the impact of family violence on a child can be a form of child abuse; for example, where it causes serious emotional or psychological harm to a child.

2.3 Serious harm and/or neglect

Child abuse can have a significant effect on a child's physical or emotional health, development and wellbeing. The younger a child is, the more vulnerable they are to abuse and the more serious the consequences are likely to be.

There can be physical or behavioural indicators of child abuse and neglect, or a combination of both. While the presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not necessarily prove that abuse or neglect has occurred, the repeated occurrence of either a physical or behavioural indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert School staff to the possibility of child abuse or neglect.

2.4 Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is more commonly perpetrated by someone who is known to and trusted by the child, and is often someone highly trusted within their families, communities, schools and/or other institutions.

3. INDICATORS OF CHILD HARM

Understanding and recognising indicators of child harm, including harm caused by other children, students or adults (including family violence), is important to reduce child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment. Guidance on child harm indicators is included as part of the training and information provided to school staff (annually) and to volunteers engaged in child-connected work (as is appropriate to the nature and responsibilities of their role).

Examples of indicators of child harm and possible child abuse include, but are not limited to:

3.1 Physical abuse

Physical indicators could include bruises, burns, fractures (broken bones), cuts and grazes to the face and multiple injuries including internal injuries. Behavioural indicators could include disclosure of an injury inflicted by someone else, wearing unusual clothes to hide injuries, wariness or fear of a parent, reluctance to go home, habitual absences from school without explanation, regressive behaviour, and alcohol or drug misuse.

3.2 Sexual abuse

Physical indicators could include injury to the genital area, discomfort in toileting, the presence of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, bruising to breasts, buttocks and thighs, and anxiety related illnesses (anorexia/bulimia). Behavioural indicators could include disclosure of sexual abuse, age-inappropriate sexual activity or behaviour, drawings that are sexually explicit, writing stories that are sexually explicit, regressive behaviour, truancy, depression, delinquent or aggressive behaviour, and sudden decline in academic performance.

3.3 Emotional abuse

Physical indicators could include speech disorders, delays in physical development and failure to thrive. Behavioural indicators could include being overly compliant, passive and undemanding behaviour, attention-seeking behaviour, poor self-image, and age inappropriate behaviour, fear of failure, setting overly high standards, excessive neatness, and depression.

3.4 Serious neglect and medical neglect

Physical indicators could include consistently being unwashed, inappropriate dressing for weather conditions, consistent hunger and tiredness, and unattended health problems. Behavioural indicators could include begging or stealing food, gorging food, alienation from peers, withdrawal, aggressive behaviour, appearing miserable and irritable, and poor attendance at school.

4. WHAT CONCERNS SHOULD BE REPORTED?

Concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children can range from an uncomfortable feeling through to a direct observation of child abuse. School staff, volunteers, students and families are encouraged to speak to a Woodleigh Child Safety Officer or their Head of Campus if they have concerns and to be pro-active.

Examples of child safety concerns include:

- inappropriate or special relationships developing between school staff or volunteers or contractors and students
- inadequate staff–student supervision ratios
- breaches of the Code of Conduct, particularly if they are persistent
- feelings of discomfort about interactions between a school staff member or volunteer and a student
- suspicions or beliefs that students are at risk of harm
- observations of concerning changes in behaviour
- observations or concerns on grooming behaviours

- concerns about a physical environment that may pose a risk to a student (this includes health and hygiene issues)
- students' disclosures of abuse or harm, which must be reported to the police, DHHF, the CCYP and, where appropriate, any other regulator.

5. DUTY OF CARE

All Woodleigh school staff and volunteers must understand their role to keep children safe. School staff and volunteers have an obligation to avoid acts or omissions (failures) that could be reasonably foreseen to injure or harm students. Suspected child abuse must be reported to relevant authorities, the Principal and the Board of Directors.

6. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Criminal Offences

The *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) includes the following as criminal offences reportable to Victoria Police:

Grooming:

Grooming is an offence under section 49M of the *Crimes Act 1958*. The Department of Justice and Community Services explains that:

- The offence of grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time.
- The offence applies where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.
- Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity – for example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.
- The sexual conduct must constitute an indictable sexual offence. This includes offences such as sexual penetration of a child, indecent assault and indecent act in the presence of a child. It does not include summary offences, such as upskirting and indecent behaviour in public.
- The offence can be committed by any person aged 18 years or over. It does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.
- The offence applies to communication with children under 16 years, but not communication with 16 and 17 year old children. This distinction between children aged below 16 and those aged 16 or 17 reflects the general age of consent (16 years) recognised by the criminal law in relation to sexual offences.
- The maximum penalty is 10 years imprisonment.²

Failure to disclose:

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. Under section 327 of the *Crimes Act* all adults who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 in Victoria have an obligation to report this information to the police as soon as practicable to do so, unless they have a reasonable excuse for not doing so or are exempt from the offence. The maximum penalty is 3 years imprisonment.

The Department of Justice and Community Services explains that:

- You only need to report to police when you have seen or heard something that has led you to form a 'reasonable belief' that an adult has sexually abused a child.
- You have a 'reasonable belief' if a reasonable person in the same circumstances as you would believe that an adult had sexually abused a child, for the same reasons you believed it. For example, you might form a reasonable belief that a child has been sexually abused if:
 - the child tells you they have been sexually abused
 - the child tells you they know someone who has been sexually abused (which may be a way of talking about themselves)
 - someone who knows the child tells you the child has been sexually abused

² See: https://files.justice.vic.gov.au/2021-06/grooming_betrayal_of_trust_factsheet_2017.pdf

- you observe signs of sexual abuse in the child
- you are a qualified professional who observes the child's behaviour or development, which leads you to believe the child has been sexually abused.
- You do not need to report rumours or unfounded suspicions.
- You may have a 'reasonable excuse' for not reporting information about child sexual abuse to police if, for example:
 - you fear for your safety, or the safety of another person, or
 - you believe the information has already been reported to the police.
- You will not be guilty of an offence if you have a reasonable excuse for not reporting. You have an excuse for not reporting to police if:
 - you reasonably fear for your safety or the safety of another person, except the person you believe committed, or was involved in, the sexual offence, and
 - your failure to report is a reasonable response in the circumstances.
- The fear must be reasonable from the perspective of that person in those circumstances. This recognises that this person is best placed to judge whether their safety, or the safety of another person, is endangered.
- You have an excuse for not reporting to police if:
 - you believe on reasonable grounds that another person has already disclosed the information to police, and
 - you have no further information to add.
- For example, you may have this belief if you have disclosed the information in a 'mandatory report' under the *Child Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic).
- You do not have a reasonable excuse for failing to disclose information if you are only concerned about the 'perceived interests' of:
 - the person you believe committed, or was involved in, the sexual offence, or
 - any organisation.
- 'Perceived interests' includes reputation, legal liability and financial status. For example, a religious minister's concern for the reputation of a church where an adult sexually abused a child is not a reasonable excuse for not reporting to police. This ensures that a child's best interests are placed first.
- You may be exempt from the offence if:
 - a victim aged 16 or over has provided the information and requests confidentiality
 - you were a child when you received the information
 - the information would be privileged
 - the information is a 'confidential communication'
 - the information is in the public domain
 - you are a police officer acting in the course of your duty.³

Failure to protect:

Under section 490 of the *Crimes Act*, people in authority at Woodleigh School (as a 'relevant organisation') will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse by an adult and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so. The maximum penalty is 5 years imprisonment.

The Department of Justice and Community Services explains that:

- The offence applies to people in authority within a *relevant organisation*. A relevant organisation is one that exercises care, supervision or authority over children, whether as part of its primary function or otherwise.
- A person in authority is someone whose position within a relevant organisation means that they have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 years, who is under their care, supervision or authority, may become the victim of sexual abuse committed by an adult associated with the organisation.
- Whether someone is considered to be a person in authority will depend on the degree of supervision, power or responsibility the person has to remove or reduce the substantial risk posed by an adult associated with the organisation. People in authority will usually have the ability to make management level decisions, such as assigning and directing work, ensuring compliance with the organisation's volunteer policy and other operational arrangements.
- The offence relates to risk of sexual abuse by adults. Children under the age of 18 who pose a risk of sexually abusing other children are not covered by this offence.

³ See <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/failure-to-disclose-offence>

- The offence requires a person in authority to reduce or remove a known ‘substantial’ risk that an adult associated with the organisation may commit a sexual offence against a relevant child. It does not make it a criminal offence to fail to address every possible risk that a sexual offence may be committed against a child.
- There are a number of 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
 - any other relevant fact which may indicate a substantial risk of a sexual offence being committed against a child.
- This offence requires a person in authority to act if they *know* that there is a substantial risk that a child may become the victim of a sexual offence. A person is generally taken to know that there is a risk if he or she is aware that it exists or will exist in the ordinary course of events. This is more than merely holding a tentative belief or suspicion.
- However, it is expected that a person in authority will take steps to follow up on a suspicion or belief that children in their organisation were at risk of harm.
- Under the offence, a person is taken to have *negligently failed* to reduce or remove a substantial risk if that failure involves a great falling short of the standard of care that a reasonable person would exercise in the same circumstances. The offence does not require a person in authority to eliminate all possible risks of child sexual abuse.
- This offence is in addition to existing mandatory reporting obligations for specified staff under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*. It applies to any person in authority within a relevant organisation, not just mandatory reporters.

<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/failure-to-protect-a-new-criminal-offence-to>

6.2 Mandatory Reporting

All mandatory reporters must comply with their mandatory reporting obligations under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic). At Woodleigh School, mandatory reporters include, but are not limited to, teachers, the principal, nurses and school counsellors.

Under section 184 of the *Children, Youth and Families Act*, mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department for Families, Fairness and Housing Child Protection service (**Child Protection**) if:

- in the course of practising their profession or carrying out duties of their office, position or employment
- they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

The report must be made as soon as practicable after the reasonable belief is formed and after each occasion that the mandatory reporter becomes aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

In addition, if you are a Mandatory Reporter and have formed the required belief, you must make a Mandatory Report even if you have discussed the matter with the Principal, a Child Safety Officer or the Head of the Campus and they do not share your belief that a report must be made. In particular, you have a personal legal obligation to make a Mandatory Report even if the Principal or other person you reported to internally at the School tells you not to report.

As a Mandatory Reporter, you must also make a Mandatory Report on each occasion that you form the required belief, even if you have made a report about the same child or young person in the past.

A maximum fine of 10 penalty units applies for non-compliance. A penalty unit is an amount of money set by parliament on 1 July each year. Currently, one penalty is over \$180.

7. RELEVANT AUTHORITIES

7.1 Department for Families, Fairness and Housing Child Protection service (Child Protection)

The DFFH has a responsibility to provide child protection services for all children and young people under the age of 17 years, or where a protection order is in place, for children under the age of 18.

The main functions of (DFFH) Child Protection are to:

- receive reports from people who believe that a child is in need of protection or have significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child
- provide consultation and advice to people making reports
- investigate matters where it is believed that a child is at risk of significant harm
- refer children and families to services that assist in providing for the ongoing safety and wellbeing of children.

7.2 The Orange Door (Previously Child FIRST)

The Orange Door is an easily accessible, community-based point of entry for children, young people and families needing support.

The Orange Door ensures that vulnerable children, young people and their families are linked effectively to relevant services.

The Orange Door is staffed by family services practitioners who are experienced in assessing the needs of vulnerable children and their families.

7.3 Victoria Police

Both DFFH and Victoria Police have statutory responsibilities under the CYFA in relation to the protection of children. DFFH Child Protection is the lead agency responsible for the care and protection of children, while Victoria Police is responsible for criminal investigations into alleged child abuse.

Protocols between DFFH Child Protection and Victoria Police require that all reports received by DFFH Child Protection relating to physical abuse, sexual abuse or serious neglect must be reported to Victoria Police, as these reports may also constitute reports of criminal offences.

All allegations of sexual offences or child abuse should be reported to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police for investigation. Under no circumstances should school staff investigate an allegation themselves. School staff should only enquire sufficiently to form a reasonable belief that a child may be in need of protection.

7.4 Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)

The CCYP is an independent statutory body that promotes improvement in policies and practices affecting the safety and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people.

CCYP is responsible for administering the Reportable Conduct Scheme, which includes:

- Supporting and guiding organisations that receive allegations in order to promote fair, effective, timely and appropriate responses
- Independently overseeing, monitoring and, where appropriate, making recommendations to improve the responses of those organisations.

7.5 Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)

The VIT is an independent statutory authority for the teaching profession, whose primary function is to regulate members of the teaching profession.

The School must 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 Working with Children Checks (WWCC) or
- Has been given a negative notice in relation to the WWCC.

8. MANDATORY REPORTING

The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) (CYFA) (section 184) requires Mandatory Reporters to make a report to the DFFH Child Protection when they believe that a child (aged under 17) is in need of protection from significant harm from physical injury or sexual abuse.

8.1 Who are Mandatory Reporters ?

Mandatory reporters are defined by the CYFA and include:

- Teachers
- The Principal
- Nurses
- School Counsellors
- Persons in religious ministry; and
- Medical practitioners

All School staff who have concerns that a student may be in need of protection or may have been the victim of a sexual offence, should notify a School Child Safety Officer or a member of the School Leadership Team as soon as possible to discuss their concerns.

A Mandatory Reporter must make a report even if the Child Safety Officer does not share their belief that a report must be made.

8.2 What Constitutes a Mandatory Report ?

A mandatory report must be made when you form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection where the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of:

- physical injury; or
- sexual abuse; and
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

8.3 What is Reasonable Grounds?

The concept of 'reasonable grounds' requires you to consider whether another person, when faced with similar information, would also draw the same conclusion. It does not mean reporters are required to be certain, but rather reporters should ensure their concerns are well founded and based on information from a reliable source.

The following may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

- A student states they have been physically or sexually abused
- A student states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused
- Someone who knows the student states that the student has been physically or sexually abused
- A student shows signs of being physically or sexually abused
- The staff member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on a student's safety, stability or development

- The staff member observes signs of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision; or
- A student's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the student.

8.4 Making a Mandatory Report

All School staff and volunteers must adhere to:

- Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse. As referred to in the Protect template as attached.

9. REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme seeks to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers. The scheme was established by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (the Act).

The Chair of Board is the Head of Entity for the School under the Scheme. The Head of Entity is responsible for fulfilling all legal obligations under the Scheme and is ultimately responsible for Board Victorian schools' compliance with the Scheme. The Chair of the Board authorises the School Principal to assist them in meeting their obligations under the Scheme.

The Principal is authorised to:

- notify and update the Commission of reportable allegations concerning the school's 'employees' as defined under the Scheme, which includes staff members, volunteers, contractors, office holders and ministers of religion;
- ensure investigations are undertaken into all reportable allegations made against 'employees'; and
- comply with all obligations of the head of organisation under the Scheme.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme imposes obligations on the School's Principal and the Senior Leadership Team. This includes requirements to:

- have in place systems to prevent child abuse and, if child abuse is alleged, to ensure allegations can be brought to the attention of appropriate persons for investigation and response
- ensure that the Commission is notified and given updates on the organisation's response to an allegation.
- The School Principal and the Senior Leadership Team need to adhere the following requirements:
 - Notify the Commission within 3 business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation.
 - Investigate an allegation – subject to police clearance on criminal matters or matters involving family violence. You must advise the Commission who is undertaking the investigation. You must manage the risks to children.
 - Within 30 calendar days must provide the Commission detailed information about the reportable allegation and any action you have taken.
 - Notify the Commission of the investigation findings and any disciplinary action the head of entity has taken (or the reasons no action was taken).
- when the Principal becomes aware of a reportable allegation about a Direct Contact Contractor employed or engaged by a third party to provide services to the school, they should notify the third party of the allegation.

10. ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Where allegations involve the Principal or the Director of Business and School Operations, the concerns must be immediately escalated to the Chair of the Board as the Head of Entity.

11. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. At Woodleigh School, the School Board, staff and volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children.

Specific roles and responsibilities relating to protection and reporting include:

11.1 Board

The School Board of Directors is Woodleigh School's governing authority. The Board is responsible for endorsing this policy and ensuring it is reviewed and updated as needed.

11.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for reviewing the School's compliance with this policy and child safety obligations.

11.3 Child Safety Champion

The Child Safety Champion is responsible for:

- being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community
- ensuring that other Child Safety Officers understand and comply with their key responsibilities
- ensuring that all Child Safety Officers undergo appropriate annual training in the School's child safety policies and procedures, their legal responsibilities, and how to appropriately respond to child safety concerns and incidents
- coordinating the School's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Principal and the Heads of Campus
- developing an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse if a Child Safety Officer is not able to perform the role, for example if they are absent from the School or have a conflict of interest
- ensuring that the School's child safety policies and procedures are effectively implemented and communicated to all relevant stakeholders

11.4 Child Safety Officers

The School has appointed Child Safety Officers across all of our campuses. They are provided annually with specialised training on child safety issues, mandatory reporting and their legal obligations. In working with all school staff and volunteers, they are known within our School as Child Safety Officers (CSO) to raise the importance, profile and facilitate the embedding of a culture of child safety. Our Child Safety Officers are often the first point of contact for all staff, students, parents and carers to raise child safety or child abuse concerns. They work collaboratively with the Child Safety Champion to ensure all concerns of child safety and child abuse are escalated, reported and responded.

Our Child Safety Officers can be contacted at any time to discuss your concerns and their name and contact details are provided regularly in our communications.

Child Safety Champion	Dan Lukies
Minimbah Campus	Rod Davies Kate Bird Liane Clements Lisa Coxon Jo Jillett Angela Loo
Penbank Campus	Rod Davies Andrea Khoza

	Alison Behrend Lisa Coxon Kate Kiernan
Senior Campus	David Baker Nat McLennan Daniel Lukies Haydn Flanagan Alison Behrend Angela Loo

11.5 Staff, School Board members, External Education Providers, Contractors, Volunteers

Staff includes teaching, non-teaching, casual and emergency relief teaches, sporting coaches, tutors and instrumental music teachers. All staff, school Board members, external education providers, contractors and volunteers are required to be familiar with the content of this Policy and Procedures and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the Child Safety Officers.

12. SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Key principles that we must apply in the design of policy, procedure, interventions, support and reporting in our child safety program are to ensure we:

- promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and young people
- promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promote the safety of children with any form of disability

13. STUDENT AWARENESS

The School is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse. It is important all our students are educated on how to raise any concerns and we raise their awareness of child safety concerns and concerning behaviours to report. We have designed and are implementing a comprehensive child safety program curriculum with age appropriate education and awareness programs. This curriculum is further supported by our actions and processes to empower our students to have a voice and to take action for their own care.

14. POLICY BREACH

All Woodleigh School Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and any other member of the school community who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

This includes (but is not limited to) the following actions depending on the nature of the relationship and the breach:

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- restriction of duties
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of the employment, contract or engagement.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct may also result in a report being made to an external body as required by relevant laws and regulations.

In instances where a 'reportable allegation' has been made in accordance with the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), the matter will be managed in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal and the Chair of the Child Safety Committee.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Principal, contact the Chair of the Board.

15. FURTHER INFORMATION

Staff, students, parents and carers, external education providers, contractors, volunteers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact the Child Safety Officers who are named and contact information is provided on our website: <https://www.woodleigh.vic.edu.au>

16. SUPPORT FOR AFFECTED STUDENTS

Ensuring a student feels safe and supported following an incident is of critical importance to our School. The School will work closely with the student, parents, carers, and our wellbeing team to provide all additional support services that are available. Each matter will be a case-by-case basis and an individual may be supported with:

- Referral to our School counselling team.
- Referral to external specialist agencies.
- Family counselling.
- Academic support

17. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This policy is to be reviewed, approved and endorsed annually or when there is a change in circumstances.

18. RELEVANT POLICY AND REFERENCES

This policy provides the overarching foundation for our Child Safety Program.

Key relevant policies to support our program include:

- Woodleigh School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Woodleigh School Child Safety Code of Conduct

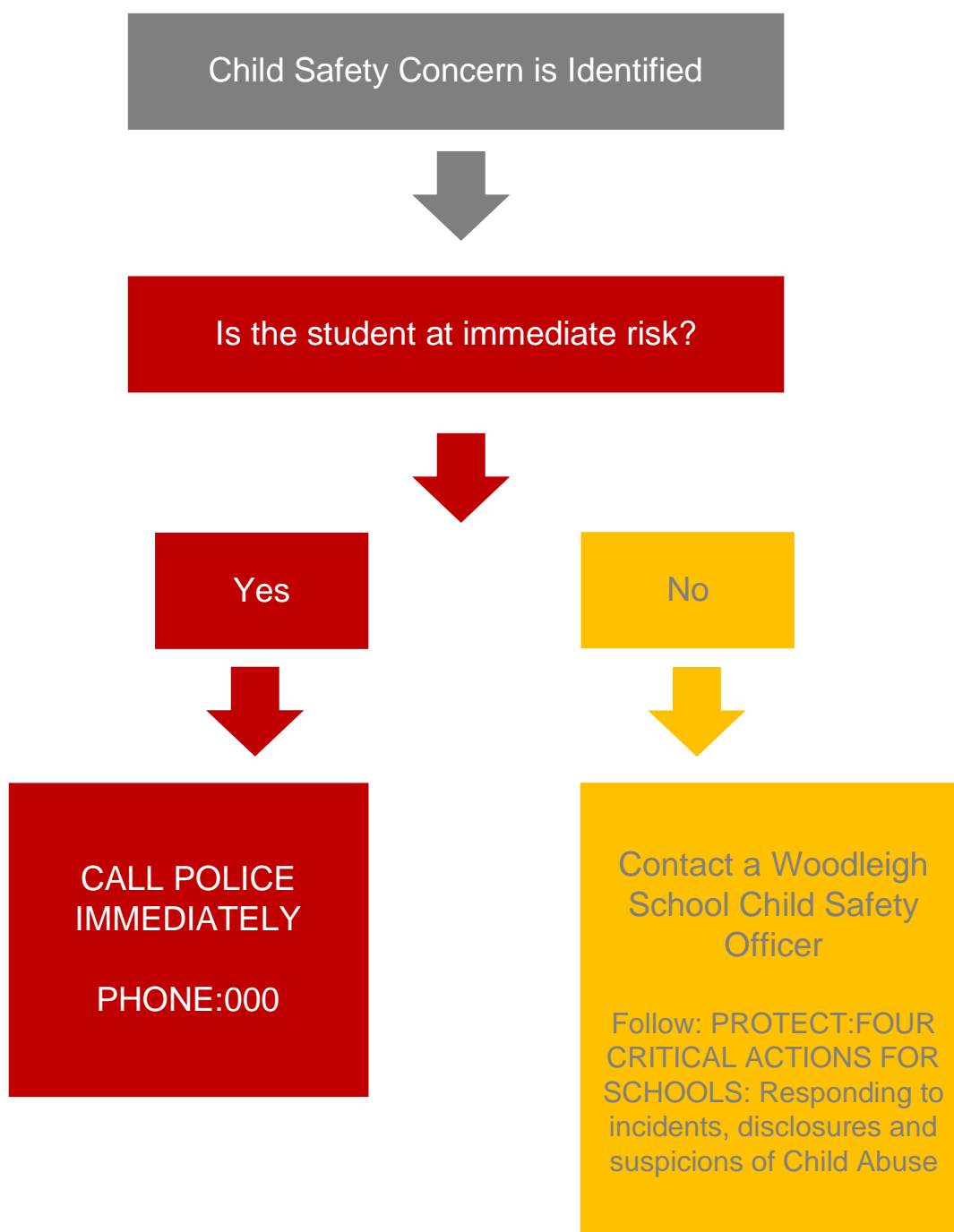
Related Legislative Instruments

The following legislation, standards and regulations apply and this policy aligns with these mandated requirements:

- Ministerial Order 1359; Child Safe Standards
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic);
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic);

19.FLOWCHART - MANDATORY REPORTING PROCESS

The following flowchart supports our implementation of this policy.



20.HOW TO MAKE A REPORT

All staff must adhere to and follow:

- FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse (As attached)
- PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/PROTECT_Responding_TemplateSchools.pdf
- This policy: Child Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be called on 000.

Woodleigh School has appointed Child Safety Officers as a point of immediate contact for all staff in the School. Each Child Safety Officer is available to answer any questions with respect to our Child Safety Policies and Child Safety Program.

Child Safety Officers are selected based on a number of considerations, namely:

- their personal attitudes, experiences and beliefs, for example, a person who is non-judgmental, calm, resilient and demonstrates a high degree of integrity and respect for confidentiality
- their role within the School, experience working with complex student and family issues at the School and someone who is readily accessible and available to all members of the School community

Child Safety Officers or the Head of Campus or our Child Safety Champion can be the first point of contact for reporting child safety issues within the School.

If you have any concern that a child may be experiencing any form of abuse, whether or not you have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that the abuse has occurred, you should immediately raise your concerns with the Principal or your Head of Campus or our Child Safety Champion, or one of the Child Safety Officers. If the concern relates to the Principal, report to the Chair of the Board on chair@woodleigh.vic.edu.au

Please be aware that consulting with a Child Safety Officer does not change any obligation you have under legislation to report to an external authority.

The School has a duty of care to support any community member who is involved in any child protection matter. This includes extra considerations required for vulnerable or at risk students and staff. Support may consist of counselling, extra training, documents translated, documents and training made age appropriate or in the case of reporting allowing a support person to attend any interviews. No community member will be disadvantaged in being able to report a child protection matter.

21. COMMUNITY AWARENESS

To ensure that the School Community is aware of our position on child protection and reporting:

This Child Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse is published via:

- School website
- Student SEQTA Splash Page
- Parent App
- Staff Policy Hub and;
- Available by request.

Training will also be provided to staff on the commencement of their employment then annually or when there is a change in policy or procedures.

All teaching and student support staff complete the Department of Education and Training – Protecting Children Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations online module annually. Students' curriculum delivers age appropriate training to students on the PROTECT processes. Child Safety Officers are available to respond to questions or concerns.

22. DOCUMENTATION

Staff, volunteers, and community members must keep clear and comprehensive notes and use the PROTECT templates to report all information relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse. This information may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of court proceedings. Your notes may also assist you later if you're required to provide evidence to support your decisions regarding the handling of child protection incidents.

When an incident of suspected child abuse occurs, consider all of the following:

- environment: do not clean up the area and preserve the sites where the alleged incident occurred
- clothing: take steps to ensure that the person who has allegedly committed the abuse and the child who has allegedly been abused remain in their clothing. If this is not possible, ensure the clothes are not washed, handled as little as possible and stored in a sealed bag.
- other physical items: ensure that items such as weapons, bedding and condoms are untouched
- potential witnesses: reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent discussion of the incident between those involved in the alleged incident

23. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Anyone who has access to information regarding a case of suspected child abuse must keep such information confidential and secure and must only disclose or discuss this information with those involved in managing the situation.

Reports or referrals made to DHHF Child Protection or The Orange Door are confidential and the reporter's identity is generally protected by law. Exceptions include if:

- the reporter chooses to inform the child or family of the report
- the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child
- a court or tribunal decides the reporter is required to attend court to provide evidence.

The identity of the person who makes a report to the Police, including reports under section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence), will remain confidential unless:

- the person themselves discloses their identity or they consent in writing to their identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary in the interests of justice for the person's identity to be disclosed. A person who makes a Mandatory Report in accordance with the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), or a report under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (Reportable Conduct Scheme) will not be held liable for the eventual outcome of any investigation.

If a report is made in good faith, it does not constitute a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter and the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

Personal information is information, or an opinion, about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable whether the information, or opinion, is true or not or is recorded in a material form or not.

The Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) only applies to personal information that is captured in a record.

The School securely stores documentation associated with an allegation of abuse or neglect of a student or young person by having:

- hard-copy documentation stored in a locked filing cabinet (or similar); and
- electronic documentation stored in a password-protected folder (or similar).

Effective child protection record keeping is one of the School's key strategies in the management of its child protection obligations, including the fulfilment of our duty of care. It is through such record keeping that the School can ensure that, should there ever be a need for evidence of our child safe culture or precautions and preventative measures taken in response to the risk of child abuse, our experience is well documented and available.

24. THE PROTECT TEMPLATE

The protect template is attached here or found on the DET Website at the following address:

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf

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.

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 664 977**
South Division **1300 655 795**
East Division **1300 360 391**
West Division (Rural) **1800 075 599**
West Division (Metro) **1300 664 977**

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/familyviolence/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 7135**
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: <http://www.lookout.org.au>.

Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to **1800 Respect** for counselling, information and a referral service: **1800 737 732**.



PROTECT

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA
State Government

Education and Training

CECV
catholic education commission of victoria inc

Independent Schools Victoria

PROCEDURE APPROVAL STATUS

REVIEW CYCLE	POLICY CODE	OWNER	APPROVED BY
Annual	CS-04	PRINCIPAL	BOARD
VERSION	LOCATION	DATE APPROVED	NEXT REVIEW DATE
Version 3-5	WS Policy and Procedure TEAM > Policies > Child Safety	UNDER REVIEW	Term 1 2026