



NOTRE DAME COLLEGE

CHILD SAFE:

IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO ALL FORMS OF ABUSE

POLICY & PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The dignity of the human person, who is created in the image and likeness of God, is the foundation of Catholic Social Teaching. All children have the right to feel safe and be safe, all of the time.

Notre Dame College is committed to the creation of a safe, just and respectful environment that supports wellness for all members of the College community. In this, there is a moral obligation and shared responsibility to protect the most vulnerable members of the community.

Notre Dame College believes that, while protecting children and young people against sexual abuse is a community wide responsibility, the College has a particular moral and legal obligation to protect any child under our care and supervision from reasonably foreseeable harm. As school staff members, we play an especially critical role in protecting children (including identifying, responding and reporting child abuse) and must meet a range of legal obligations to do so.

The easiest way to comply with your legal and moral obligations is to remember that you must respond to and report any reasonable suspicion or belief that a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused by following the Four Critical Actions. This includes abuse that has, or is suspected to have, taken place within or outside of school grounds and hours.

AIM

This policy has been designed to support you to take action if you suspect, receive a disclosure, or are witness to any form of child abuse. As a professional who works with children, you play a vital and legislated role in protecting children from abuse by responding to and reporting any incidents, disclosures or suspicions. You are often best placed to identify signs and behaviours that may indicate that a child* has been subject to abuse, or that a school community member or a school staff member may be a perpetrator of abuse.

*This policy uses the term 'child' to refer to any person under the age of 18.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

The Leadership Executive is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Four Critical Actions: Responding to an emergency, reporting to authorities, contacting parents/carers and providing ongoing support (as outlined in the Four Critical Actions for Schools see Appendix 2)

Child FIRST: Child FIRST is an easily accessible, community-based point of entry for children, young people and families needing support.

Orange Door: The Orange Door is the new access point for women, children and young people who are experiencing family violence or families who need assistance with the care and wellbeing of children to access the services they need to be safe and supported (<https://orangedoor.vic.gov.au/>).

PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

1. UNDERSTANDING YOUR OBLIGATIONS

All staff working with students or in schools have a moral and legal obligation and a duty of care to protect any child under their care from reasonably foreseeable harm (not just staff who are classified as mandatory reporters). As a school staff member, you must respond to any reasonable suspicion or belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, following the Four Critical Actions. Failure to report some forms of child abuse can constitute a criminal offence in Victoria, including where:

- an adult forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by another adult against a child under the age of 16 years.
- it is known that a person associated with their organisation poses a substantial risk of sexually abusing children.

The easiest way to comply with your legal and moral obligations is to remember that you must respond to and report any reasonable suspicion or belief that a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused by following the Four Critical Actions. This includes abuse that has, or is suspected to have, taken place within or outside of school grounds and hours.

1.1. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL REGISTRATION

All of the child safety obligations described in this Policy are conditions of school registration through Schedule 4, Clause 12 of the Regulations, which state that a registered school must ensure that:

- the care, safety and welfare of all students attending the school is in accordance with any applicable State and Commonwealth laws; and
- all staff employed at the school are advised of their obligations under those laws.

1.2. DUTY OF CARE OBLIGATIONS

As a school staff member you have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children under your care and supervision from harm that is reasonably foreseeable (this applies to ALL school staff).

The question of what constitutes “reasonable steps” will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. You may breach your duty of care towards a student if you fail to act in the way a reasonable or diligent professional would have acted in the same situation.

Your duty of care also extends to students who are:

- **aged 17 years and over** in circumstances where you suspect that they are subject to abuse you should still follow the Four Critical Actions
- **involved in student sexual behaviour.** You have a duty of care towards all students involved in student sexual behaviour, including students exhibiting concerning/ harmful behaviours, students impacted by such behaviours and any other students in the school who may have witnessed and/or been affected by the sexual behaviour.

1.3. MANDATORY REPORTING

There are certain classes of professionals who are classified as “mandatory reporters”. Within a school mandatory reporters include all:

- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers, including principals
- staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT
- registered doctors and nurses.

All mandatory reporters **must** make a report to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse, and
- the child’s parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

It is a criminal offence not to report in these circumstances. Mandatory reporters **must** also follow the Four Critical Actions to ensure they fulfil all their legal obligations.

1.4. CRIMINAL OFFENCES

1.4.1. Failure to disclose

This offence applies to all adults (not just professionals who work with children) 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.

A person will not be guilty of the offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information. A reasonable excuse includes:

- a reasonable fear for their own or another person's safety
Failing to disclose a sexual offence based on concerns for the interests of the perpetrator or organisation (e.g. concerns about reputation, legal liability or financial status) will not be regarded as a reasonable excuse.
- a reasonable belief that the information has already been disclosed to Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection and the person has no new information to add to the disclosure.

Additional exemptions apply where:

- the victim is aged 16 years or over and requests confidentiality
- the person is a child when they formed a reasonable belief
- the information would be privileged
- the information is a confidential communication disclosed to a counsellor or a registered medical practitioner (e.g. in a school context, this exemption may apply to a psychologist or a social worker who engages in a counselling relationship with the victim of a sexual offence)
- the information is in the public domain
- police officers are acting in the course of their duty.

1.4.2. Failure to protect

This offence applies to a person in a position of authority within an organisation who:

- knows of a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16, under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the organisation (e.g. employee, contractor, volunteer, visitor); AND
- has the power or responsibility to remove that risk; AND
- negligently fails to remove or reduce the risk of harm.
Within a school setting, a position of authority includes principals and assistant principals and staff in institutional management positions (for example in government schools this includes Regional Directors and other senior managers).

1.5. MINISTERIAL ORDER No. 870 – CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

All Victorian schools must comply with **Ministerial Order No. 870 - Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools** in order to be registered, and remain registered with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The Order came into effect on 1 August 2016 and specifies how every Victorian school must:

- embed a culture of 'no tolerance' for child abuse
- comply with the prescribed seven minimum Child Safe Standards.

In meeting the requirements of the Order, schools must be inclusive of the needs of all children, particularly students who are vulnerable due to age, family circumstances, abilities, or indigenous, cultural or linguistic background.

1.6. REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is a child protection scheme that requires Victorian education providers to notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) if there is an allegation of 'reportable conduct' made against one of its employees (including a principal, teacher, corporate staff member or school council employee), contractors, volunteers, or allied health staff members.

There is an allegation of 'reportable conduct' where a person has a 'reasonable belief' that there has been:

- a sexual offence, sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child; OR
- behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; OR
- significant neglect of a child; OR
- misconduct involving any of the above.

The scope of 'reportable conduct' is wide, and includes:

- information about something that is alleged to have occurred outside the course of the person's employment or engagement with the school
- sexual offences, sexual misconduct or physical violence committed in the presence of a child (which may include family violence committed by a school staff member in front of their own child).

However, student-to-student abuse is not covered by the Scheme.

1.6.1.How do I respond to a reportable conduct allegation?

To ensure you fulfil all of your legal obligations, principals or other school staff should follow the Four Critical Actions. These actions will support you to follow the notification steps required by the Reportable Conduct Scheme

1.6.2.Interaction with mandatory reporting and other reporting obligations

The Reportable Conduct Scheme does not change a person's mandatory reporting or other reporting obligations. For example, school staff **must** still contact Victoria Police if they suspect a criminal offence involving a child has occurred, in addition to following the notification steps required by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

1.7. ORGANISATIONAL DUTY OF CARE

The organisational duty of care requires all organisations that exercise care, supervision or authority over children in Victoria, including schools, to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child (sexual or physical abuse) by an individual associated with the organisation while the child is under their supervision or authority. This duty of care ensures that organisations that work with children have a well-defined and clear legal duty to prevent child abuse.

2. IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

As a school staff member:

- it is critical to be able to recognise the physical or behavioural signs of child abuse (in many circumstances they may be the only indication that a child is subject to abuse)
- you may be the best-placed or only adult in a position to identify and respond to suspected abuse.

If indicators lead you to form a reasonable belief that a child is being abused, you must follow the Four Critical Actions. These actions will support you to immediately report your suspicion to DHHS Child Protection, and/or to Victoria Police.

More details of the signs of child abuse can be found in Appendix 1 and in the [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) document.

When identifying child abuse, it is critical to remember that:

- some instances of child abuse will fall across multiple categories (i.e. family violence may involve physical, sexual and/or emotional child abuse)
- the trauma associated with child abuse can significantly impact upon the wellbeing and development of a child
- all concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child, or the conduct of a staff member, contractor or volunteer **must** be acted upon as soon as possible.

If physical and/or behavioural indicators lead you to suspect that a child has or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, regardless of the type of abuse, you **must** respond as soon as practicable by following the Four Critical Actions.

3. FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS: RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURES AND SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

The Four Critical Actions can be seen in visual format at Appendix 2.

- As a school staff member, you **must** act as soon as you witness an incident or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, including exposure to family violence.
- You **must** act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief that abuse has occurred or is at risk of occurring, 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).
- You should make sufficient enquiries to form a reasonable belief and to determine a child's immediate needs. However, once a reasonable belief has been formed, it is not your role to investigate. This is the role of DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.
- Child abuse includes any instance of physical or sexual abuse (including grooming), emotional or psychological harm, serious or significant neglect and family violence involving a child.
- If you hold significant concerns for a child's wellbeing which do not appear to be a result of child abuse you **must** still act.

3.1. THE IMPERATIVE TO ACT

3.1.1.Witnessing an incident

If you witness an incident where you believe a child has been subject to or may be at risk of abuse, including exposure to family violence, you must take immediate action to protect the safety of children involved. Go straight to:

Action 1: Responding to an Emergency if there is an immediate risk to health and safety

Action 2: Reporting to Authorities if there is no immediate risk to health and safety.

3.1.2. Forming a suspicion/reasonable belief

All suspicions that a child has been, or may be in danger of being abused **must** be taken seriously. This includes abuse that is suspected to have occurred outside of school grounds and hours. If you form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or may be at risk of being abused, you **must** act, even if you have not directly witnessed the child abuse.

If you witness, suspect, or receive a disclosure of child abuse including exposure to family violence, you will need to determine whether you have formed a 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' that a child has been or is being abused or is at risk of being abused.

A **reasonable belief** is a deliberately low threshold:

- so that people are encouraged to report suspected abuse to the relevant authorities and agencies, enabling authorities to investigate the allegations and take further action to prevent or stop any further abuse
- which does not require proof, but does require something more than a mere rumour or speculation
- and is met if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

Forming a belief on reasonable grounds may include:

- a child stating that they have been abused
- any person telling you they believe someone has been abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- physical indicators of abuse such as non-accidental or unexplained injuries; persistent neglect, or inadequate care and supervision lead you to believe that the child has been abused (see Identifying Signs of Child Abuse (Appendix 1))
- behavioural indicators of abuse lead you to believe that the child has been abused (see Identifying Signs of Child Abuse (Appendix 1))
- other signs such as family violence, parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on the child's safety, stability or development.

3.1.3. Receiving a disclosure (current student)

If a child discloses that they have been, are being, or are in danger of being abused, you **must** treat the disclosure seriously and take immediate action by following the Four Critical Actions.

If another child or adult discloses that they believe another child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused, you **must** also treat these disclosures seriously and take immediate action by following the Four Critical Actions.

3.1.4. Receiving a disclosure (former student)

If you receive a disclosure from a former student of your school about historical abuse you **must** act. If the former student is currently of school age and attending a Victorian school you **must** follow the Four Critical Actions. If the former student is no longer of school age or attending a Victorian school you **must** still act.

3.1.5. Strategies for managing a disclosure

When managing a disclosure of abuse, it is important that you respond in an appropriate and supportive manner. All disclosures of abuse **must** be taken seriously and addressed immediately by following the Four Critical Actions.

3.1.5.1. Disclosures from a student

It is the role of school staff members to listen and respond appropriately to a child's concerns. When a disclosure of abuse is made and/or you are concerned that a child has been abused or is at risk of being abused, you **must** help the child to understand that you need to seek assistance for them and cannot keep the discussion and/or their disclosure confidential between you and the student.

This should be done in language appropriate to the student's age and stage of development. For example:

- To a younger student: 'I need some help to support you and am not going to be able to keep what you have told me between you and me, I will need to tell ...[who you will tell].....to work out what to do to support you'
- To an older student: 'The information you have given me has made me very concerned for your welfare and I will need to share this information with ...[who you will tell].....to identify how we may be able to support you. I may also need to talk to people who work in the child safety area, to help keep you safe.'

In instances where the abuse involves a family member (i.e. family violence) it may be appropriate to reassure the child that sharing this information is an important part of making their family safer and that you will be talking with other professionals who will help identify the next steps.

When managing a disclosure, staff should:	When managing a disclosure staff should AVOID:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen to the student and allow them to speak • stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child) • be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout • highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened • assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred • do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?" • be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words • do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times • reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do • use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open ended way ("what happened next?") • tell the child in age appropriate language that you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying "I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you"). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displaying expressions of panic or shock • asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the child feel uncomfortable and may cause the child to withdraw) • going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority) • making any comments that would lead the student to believe that what has happened is their fault • making promises to the child about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each child depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).

3.1.5.2. Disclosures from a parent

There may be circumstances where a student's sibling or parent/carer discloses abuse. For example a student's parent or carer may disclose family violence (noting that if a child's parent or carer is experiencing family violence it is highly likely that the child is experiencing abuse).

In this circumstance it is important to draw on the same strategies that you would for a student (i.e. listen, be non-judgemental, patient and do not apply pressure). In relation to experiences of family violence, it is particularly critical to remain non-judgemental, avoid apportioning blame to the victim/s and highlight that everyone has the right to feel safe.

This can be done by focusing questions to determine what the risk of harm may be and what (if any) supports and interventions are in place to protect the wellbeing of the child and avoiding statements like "why don't you leave". For

example, you could use questions to explore the victim's view about their level of risk and risk to their child, such as 'Do you think the violence will continue? Is the violence getting worse?'

It is also important to remember that many victims of family violence experience fear for their safety (and the safety of their children) in disclosing their experiences. They may have been threatened by the perpetrator of violence, or threats made about their children's lives.

3.1.6.Documenting your actions

As a school staff member, you **must** keep clear and comprehensive notes relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse. You **must** keep such notes whether or not you decide to make a report.

To do this, you **must** use the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template (Appendix 3 – also available on the Staff Intranet). When using the template, you should aim to provide as much information within the template as possible. These records will be helpful in making a report of the abuse to the relevant authorities. Note that you only need to complete the relevant sections of the template. Even if you decide not to make a report, you must still document the incident, disclosure or allegation and the reasons for your decision using this Template. This information may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of court proceedings. These notes may also later assist you if you are required to provide evidence to support your decisions.

Due to the nature of mandatory reporting and other child abuse reporting records, we ensure that the records are kept securely. All hard copy files, are kept in a locked cabinet. Access to all electronic records, is restricted to only those staff who need the information. Where files are required to be emailed they are first password protected. All mandatory reporting and other child abuse reporting documents are kept securely as paper and/or electronic archives.

3.2. ACTION 1: RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If a child has just been abused, or is at immediate risk of harm you **must** take reasonable steps to protect them. These may include:

- separating the alleged victim and others involved, ensuring both parties are supervised by a school staff member
- arranging and providing urgent medical assistance where necessary by:
 - administering first aid assistance
 - calling 000 for an ambulance and following any instructions from emergency service officers/paramedics
- calling 000 for urgent police assistance if the person who is alleged to have engaged in the abuse poses an immediate risk to the health and safety of any person (you should also identify a contact person at the school for future liaison with police).

Take reasonable steps to preserve the environment, the clothing, other items, and potential witnesses until the police or other relevant authorities arrive on the premises. Reasonable precautions **must** be taken to prevent discussion of the incident between those involved in the alleged incident (including any other children who may have witnessed the incident). More detail is available in the [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) document.

3.3. ACTION 2: REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

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.

3.3.1.Within the school

If the source of suspected abuse comes from a person within the school (this includes any forms of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer, allied health practitioner, officer or office holder, whether or not the conduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person's employment or engagement with the school) you **must**:

- contact Victoria Police (via your local police station)
- ALSO report as soon as possible internally to: School principal/leadership team
- ALSO report to the Diocesan education office.

3.3.2.Within the family or community

If the source of suspected abuse comes from within the family or community you must:

- report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:
 - in need of protection due to child abuse ; or
 - 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; and
 - the child's parents/carers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from the harm.
- ALSO report suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police
- ALSO report internally to: College principal and/or leadership team
- ALSO report to Diocesan education office

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

3.3.3. 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.

3.3.4. How to proceed if the principal/leadership team advises you not to report

In some circumstances the principal and/or leadership team may advise you not to proceed with reporting suspected abuse. Regardless of this advice, if you hold a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused you **must** still make a report to DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police. This report may be critical in protecting a child from abuse.

If you fail to report you may not discharge your duty of care and in some circumstances you may be subject to criminal charges.

If you decide not to report, it is strongly recommended that this decision should be documented within the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template (Appendix 3 – also available on the Staff Intranet).

3.3.5. Making additional reports

3.3.5.1. Reporting further reasonable grounds for belief

You must make a new report in any circumstance where you become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief. Every report is critical to protecting a child by building evidence and enabling authorities to gain a clearer understanding of the risks. This means that you must make a report to protect a child even if: DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police were previously involved or are already involved with the child and/or their family staff are aware that another party, such as a family member, has already raised concerns with the relevant authorities.

3.3.5.2. What if another person already made a report?

Once you form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, your obligation to report is separate from the obligations or actions of other people. In addition, it is important to consider that other people may not have access to the specific detail you have. The information you provide through your report may assist the relevant authority to take further action to protect the child.

However, there may be times when two or more school staff members, for example a teacher and a principal, have formed a belief about the same child on the same occasion and based on the same information. In this situation it is sufficient that only one of the staff members make a report. The other person should ensure that the report has been made and that all the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other person. In instances where two staff members form different views about whether or not to make a report, if one staff member continues to hold a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection, then they should make a report.

3.4. ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

In many cases where it is suspected that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, it is extremely important that parents/carers are notified as soon as possible, but not if this may impact an investigation or place a child or their parent (victim of violence) at risk.

However, **AFTER** you have formed a suspicion/reasonable belief that a child is subject to abuse and **BEFORE** contacting parents/carers, principals **must** seek advice from DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police (depending on who the report was made to).

This is critical to ensure the safety of the child and not to compromise any investigation being conducted by the relevant authorities or agencies.

Where DHHS Child Protection and Victoria Police have advised that it is appropriate, schools should make sensitive and professional contact with parents/carers as soon as possible on the day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion.

Please note in cases of family violence you:

- **MUST** take care not to inadvertently alert the alleged perpetrator that there is a suspicion or disclosure of abuse (this could increase the risk of harm to the child, other family members and possibly to staff members at the school)
- may already be in communication with a parent/carer who is experiencing family violence
- can seek advice from DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST/Orange Door about safe strategies for communicating with a parent/carer who is experiencing family violence and for advice on recommended family violence support services.

For further information about contacting parents/carers please refer to the [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) document.

3.5. ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

In addition to reporting suspected abuse, as a school staff member you have a critical role in supporting students impacted by abuse and have a duty of care to ensure that the students feel safe and are supported at school. Support can include direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and community services and should involve the development of a Student Support Plan.

Principals are responsible for ensuring students are supported during interviews at school conducted by Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection and you may be required to respond to subpoenas to attend court.

Support is provided to any impacted staff members in the form of our Wellbeing Team and Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

In the context of student-to-student offending school staff have a duty of care to support all students who are impacted by the abuse – this will include the students who were subjected to the abuse, the students who perpetrated the abuse, and any students who witnessed or were otherwise impacted by the abuse.

3.5.1. Responding to complaints or concerns

There may be concerns or complaints about the school staff's management of an incident, in particular by parents/carers. This is a very stressful time for parents/carers, and concerns that they have not been dealt with fairly may quickly escalate.

As a first step school staff **must** consider whether the complaint raises any concerns about unreported abuse and/or risk of abuse. You **must** follow the Four Critical Actions if any new information comes to light which leads you to believe that a child may be subject to, or at risk of any unreported abuse.

Staff should refer to the College External Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure in responding to any concerns or complaints.

3.6. RESPONDING TO OTHER CONCERNS ABOUT THE WELLBEING OF A CHILD

Regardless of the suspected cause, all concerns about the wellbeing of a child (or unborn child) should be taken seriously and acted upon. This includes concerns about the wellbeing of a child which do not appear to be the result of abuse.

You should make a referral to Child FIRST/ Orange Door if:

- you have a significant concern for a child's wellbeing
- your concerns have a low-to-moderate impact on the child
- the child's immediate safety is not compromised
- you believe that the child and/or family will act on the referral and be supportive of it.

You **must** contact Victoria Police if:

- there is any concern for a child's immediate safety and/or
- a child is partaking in any risk taking activity that is illegal and extreme in nature or poses a high risk to the child or any other person.

You should contact DHHS Child Protection if:

- after consideration of all of available information you form a view that the child is in need of protection
- you believe that the child's parent/carers will not be open to support from family services to address their child's wellbeing.

If you are unsure whether to take action or what action to take, you should discuss this with your leadership team and make contact with authorities for further advice.

3.7. PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SHARING

As a school staff member you are permitted to share certain information about a child who has been impacted (or is suspected to have been impacted) by abuse with:

- parents/carers, subject to certain exceptions
- other staff members in order to enable staff to best support and protect that child
- an officer from DHHS Child Protection, if the information requested may be of assistance to DHHS Child Protection in their investigation of protective concerns
- Victoria Police if the information may assist in the investigation of potential criminal offences, or may aid in the immediate protection and safety of the child.

For further information please refer to the [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) document.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy applies to the whole College community in supporting safe environments for all children and young people.

- It applies to all adults in the College community to ensure they understand this responsibility in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- This policy and its requirements will be communicated annually to all staff and the wider College community
- This policy and its requirements will be communicated to new staff during induction
- Senior students will be educated of their obligations to disclose once they are over eighteen years of age
- College staff will be trained in personal safety and the identification of possible sexual abuse
- Prompt and full responses to any allegations will be undertaken promptly, with well documented records retained securely and confidentially

ASSOCIATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AGREEMENTS, GUIDELINES & LEGISLATION

- The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Victoria 2018 "Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools. <http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/ebe135a4-d1b3-48a0-81fe-50d4fc451bcd/Identifying-and-Responding-to-All-Forms-of-Abuse.aspx>
- Notre Dame College Child Safe Policy and Procedure
- Notre Dame College Child Safe: Code of Conduct for Behaviour with Students
- Notre Dame College Child Safe: Child Protection – Working With Children Checks
- Notre Dame College Child Safe: Child Protection – Grooming

REVIEW TIMELINE

This policy is to be reviewed at least every three years.

Initially Ratified: July 2016

This Version Ratified: May 2019

Next Review to be completed by: May 2022

Identifying Signs of Child Abuse

The table below provides a summary of signs of child abuse as described in PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools (more detail can be found in the document itself). These are also referred to as warning signs as they can signal to professionals that they need to take notice of what might be causing these physical or behavioral signs. Child sexual abuse is difficult to detect because of the secrecy that surrounds it. The most common way sexual abuse is identified in the older child, is through self disclosure.

Trigger warning This section includes explicit descriptions of abuse and may be distressing to engage with for some staff members. If you need to talk to someone it is recommended that you speak to your school leadership team about arranging appropriate support. You can also talk to your GP or another allied health professional.

Catholic Education Sandhurst staff can also contact our Employee Assistance Program on 1800 81 87 28.

Summary of the Indicators of Harm

	Critical Information	Physical Indicators include (but are not limited to)	Behavioral Indicators include (but are not limited to)
Physical Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical child abuse is any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. If you suspect that a child has been or is being physically abused, or is at risk of physical abuse, you must respond by following the Four Critical Actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bruises or welts on facial areas and other areas of the body, e.g. back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs bruises or welts in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury, e.g. fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth burns from boiling water, oil or flames or burns that show the shape of the object used to make them, e.g. iron, grill, cigarette fractures of the skull, jaw, nose and limbs (especially those not consistent with the explanation offered, or the type of injury possible at the child's age of development) cuts and grazes to the mouth, lips, gums, eye area, ears and external genitalia bald patches where hair has been pulled out multiple injuries, old and new effects of poisoning internal injuries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent absenteeism/prolonged school refusal Wary of physical contact with adults Frightened of parent/guardian Expresses little or no emotion when hurt Unduly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive, uncommunicative Attaches too readily to strangers Offers unlikely explanation for injuries Reports injury by parents/guardian Nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive Afraid to go home

Sexual Abuse	<p>Child sexual abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity • can include a wide range of sexual activity and can include exposing a child to pornography • does not always involve physical contact or force. <p>You must follow the Four Critical Actions if you suspect that a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child has been or is being sexually abused, or is at risk of sexual abuse • school staff member, contractor or volunteer may be engaging, or are at risk of engaging in sexual behaviour with a child/children. <p>Unwanted sexual behaviour toward a student by a child 10 years or over can constitute a sexual offence and is referred to as student-to-student sexual offending. All incidents, suspicions and disclosures of student sexual offending must be responded to by following the Four Critical Actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • injury to the genital or rectal area, e.g. • bruising, bleeding, discharge, inflammation • or infection • injury to areas of the body such as breasts, buttocks or upper thighs • discomfort in urinating or defecating • presence of foreign bodies in the vagina and/ • or rectum • sexually-transmitted diseases • frequent urinary tract infections • pregnancy, especially in very young adolescents • anxiety-related illnesses, e.g. anorexia • or bulimia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disclosure of sexual abuse, either directly (from the alleged victim) or indirectly (by a third person or allusion) • persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity, e.g. excessive masturbation or rubbing genitals against adults • drawings or descriptions in stories that are sexually explicit and not age-appropriate • fear of home, specific places or particular adults • poor/deteriorating relationships with adults and peers • poor self-care or personal hygiene • complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without physiological basis • sleeping difficulties • regressive behaviour, e.g. bed-wetting or speech loss • depression, self-harm, drug or alcohol abuse, or attempted suicide • sudden decline in academic performance, poor memory and concentration • engaging in sex work and/or sexual risk-taking behaviour • wearing layers of clothing to hide injuries and bruises.
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<p style="text-align: center;">Grooming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual abuse at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer. If you suspect that a child is being groomed, you must follow the Four Critical Actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing an unusually close connection with an older person displaying mood changes (hyperactive, secretive, hostile, aggressive, impatient, resentful, anxious, withdrawn, depressed) using street/different language; copying the way the new 'friend' may speak; talking about the new 'friend' who does not belong to his/her normal social circle possessing jewellery, clothing or expensive items given by the 'friend' possessing large amounts of money which he/she cannot account for using a new mobile phone (given by the 'friend') excessively to make calls, videos or send text messages being excessively secretive about their use of communications technologies, including social media frequently staying out overnight, especially if the relationship is with an older person being dishonest about where they've been and whom they've been with using drugs; physical evidence includes spoons, silver foil, 'tabs', 'rocks' assuming a new name; being in possession of a false ID, stolen passport or driver's license provided by the 'friend' to avoid detection being picked up in a car by the 'friend' from home/school or 'down the street'.
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Family Violence

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family violence can include physical violence or threats, verbal abuse, emotional and physical abuse, sexual abuse and financial and social abuse. • If you suspect that a child is exposed to family violence (including witnessing family violence), or is at risk of family violence you must follow the Four Critical Actions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speech disorders • delays in physical development • failure to thrive (without an organic cause) • bruises, cuts or welts on facial areas, and other parts of the body including back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs • any bruises or welts (old or new) in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury (such as fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth) • fractured bones, especially in an infant where a fracture is unlikely to have occurred accidentally • poisoning • internal injuries. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • violent/aggressive behaviour and language • depression and anxiety and suicidal thoughts • appearing nervous and withdrawn, including wariness or distrust of adults • difficulty adjusting to change • psychosomatic illness • bedwetting and sleeping disorders • 'acting out', such as cruelty to animals • extremely demanding, attention-seeking behaviour • participating in dangerous risk-taking behaviours to impress peers • overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative behaviour • taking on a caretaker role prematurely, trying to protect other family members • embarrassment about family • demonstrated fear of parents, carers or guardians, and of going home • disengagement from school (absenteeism, lateness and/or school refusal) and/or poor academic outcomes • parent-child conflict • wearing long-sleeved clothes on hot days in an attempt to hide bruising or other injury • becoming fearful when other children cry or shout • being excessively friendly to strangers. <p>For older children and young people indicators can also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moving away/running away from home • entering a relationship early to escape the family home • entering into other violent and/or unsafe relationships • involvement in risk taking and/or unlawful activity • alcohol and substance misuse. |
|---|---|--|

Emotional Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats. If you suspect that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm, you must follow the Four Critical Actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speech disorders such as language delay, stuttering or selectively being mute (only speaking with certain people or in certain situations) delays in emotional, mental or physical development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> overly compliant, passive and undemanding behaviour extremely demanding, aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour or anti-social and destructive behaviour low tolerance or frustration poor self-image and low self-esteem unexplained mood swings, depression, self-harm or suicidal thoughts behaviours that are not age-appropriate, e.g. overly adult, or overly infantile fear of failure, overly high standards, and excessive neatness poor social and interpersonal skills violent drawings or writing lack of positive social contact.
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious neglect includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health or physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk. If you suspect that a child is experiencing serious neglect, you must follow the Four Critical Actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appearing consistently dirty and unwashed being consistently inappropriately dressed for weather conditions being at risk of injury or harm due to consistent lack of adequate supervision from parents being consistently hungry, tired and listless having unattended health problems and lack of routine medical care having inadequate shelter and unsafe or unsanitary conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gorging when food is available or inability to eat when extremely hungry begging for or stealing food appearing withdrawn, listless, pale and weak aggressive behaviour, irritability involvement in criminal activity little positive interaction with parent, carer or guardian poor socialising habits excessive friendliness towards strangers indiscriminate acts of affection poor, irregular or non-attendance at school staying at school for long hours and refusing or being reluctant to go home self-destructive behaviour taking on an adult role of caring for parent.

These indicators are compiled from information provided by **PROTECT Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools DET 2018**

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.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:

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office.

All allegations of 'reportable conduct' **must** be reported as soon as possible to:

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- Diocesan education office

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:

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office.

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

East Division **1300 360 391**

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 SECURITY SERVICES UNIT

(03) 9589 6266

STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT

(03) 9651 3622

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

(03) 9637 2595

DIOCESAN OFFICE

Sandhurst **(03) 5443 2377**

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**.

August 2018 Edition

PROTECT

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA State Government | Education and Training

CECV catholic education commission of victoria ltd

Enseignement Catholique du Victoria

PROTECT

Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse

A TEMPLATE FOR VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

When to use this template

School staff should use this template to document any incident, disclosure or suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, including exposure to family violence. This template should be used in conjunction with the following:

Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Completing this template should not impact on reporting times. If a child is in immediate danger, school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police.

Whilst you may need to gather the information to make a report, remember it is not the role of school staff to investigate abuse, leave this to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection.

This template should also be used if you make a decision not to report, to record your rationale for this decision and any other related follow up actions you take to support the child.

Why record this information?

When completing this template your aim should be to provide as much information as possible. This information will be critical to any reports and may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of court proceedings. These notes may also later assist you if you are required to provide evidence to support any decisions.

It is a requirement under *Ministerial Order No. 870- Child Safe Standards- Managing the risk of child abuse in schools* for schools to keep clear and comprehensive notes on all observations, disclosures and other details that led them to suspect the abuse.

August 2018 Edition



Education
and Training



RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE

IF YOU ARE MAKING A REPORT TO DHHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE YOU MUST SEEK ADVICE BEFORE CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS SO AS NOT TO COMPROMISE ANY INVESTIGATION OR PLACE A CHILD AT FURTHER RISK – THIS IS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL IN INSTANCES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE.

STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE RESPONSE

NAME:

OCCUPATION:

LOCATION (SCHOOL ADDRESS):

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

CRITICAL ACTION 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

If anyone is in immediate danger school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police on 000.

See Action 1 of **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse**

RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FIRST AID? PROVIDE DETAILS IF 'YES'.

WHO ADMINISTERED THIS? (NAME AND TITLE)

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FURTHER IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE?

CURRENT LOCATION AND SAFETY STATUS:

E.G. ARE ALL IMPACTED STUDENTS SAFE AND NOT IN ANY IMMEDIATE DANGER?

IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER SCHOOL STAFF SHOULD REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO VICTORIA POLICE ON 000.

CHILD'S INFORMATION

PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME:

GENDER:

YEAR LEVEL/CLASS:

DATE OF BIRTH:

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:

PARENT/CARER NAME/S:

PARENT/CARER CONTACT:

LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN BY CHILD:

DISABILITIES, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES:

CHILD'S BACKGROUND

CULTURAL STATUS AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

IF THE CHILD IS OF ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BACKGROUND, GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS MUST CONTACT THEIR KOORIE ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT OFFICER, AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS MUST CONTACT THE DIOCESAN EDUCATION OFFICE TO ARRANGE CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE SUPPORT. IF THE CHILD IS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT YOU MUST NOTIFY THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION DIVISION ON (03) 9637 2990.

ANY KNOWN PREVIOUS HISTORY OF SUSPECTED ABUSE (INCLUDING EXPOSURE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE) PRIOR TO THIS INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION, OR INVOLVEMENT WITH AGENCIES:

FAMILY BACKGROUND

FAMILY COMPOSITION (IF KNOWN):

LIST PARENTING OR CARE ARRANGEMENTS AND SIBLING NAMES AND AGES

ANY OTHER PEOPLE LIVING WITH THE CHILD (IF KNOWN):

FAMILY BACKGROUND

DISABILITY, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES IN FAMILY (IF KNOWN):

LIKELY REACTION TO A REPORT BEING MADE (IF KNOWN):

DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION

GROUNDS FOR YOUR BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED, OR IS AT RISK OF ABUSE

INDICATORS OR INSTANCES WHICH LED YOU TO BELIEVE A CHILD/CHILDREN ARE
SUBJECT TO CHILD ABUSE, OR AT RISK OF ABUSE INCLUDING EXPOSURE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE:

*DETAIL ANY DISCLOSURES OR INCIDENTS OR SUSPICIONS (INCLUDING NAMES, TIMES AND DATES DOCUMENTING
A CHILD'S EXACT WORDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE). INCLUDE SPECIFIC DETAIL HERE ON WHAT LED YOU TO FORM A
REASONABLE BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN, OR IS AT RISK OF BEING ABUSED*

ANY PHYSICAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

ANY BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

ANY PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR OR PRIOR CONCERNS LEADING UP TO AN INCIDENT,
DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION:

DETAILS OF PERSONS ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTED THE ABUSE (IF KNOWN)

NAME:

GENDER:

DATE OF BIRTH:

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

NOTING IF THEY ARE WITHIN THE SCHOOL OR WITHIN THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY (THIS WILL IMPACT WHO YOU REPORT TO)

ADDRESS:

CONTACT DETAILS:

CRITICAL ACTION 2: REPORTING

See Action 2 of **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse**

REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

TICK THE AUTHORITIES YOU HAVE REPORTED TO:

- ☐ VICTORIA POLICE
- ☐ DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
- ☐ CHILD FIRST
- ☐ DECISION NOT TO REPORT

IF YOU'VE DECIDED NOT TO REPORT, LIST YOUR REASONS HERE. ALSO INCLUDE ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY YOU BELOW:

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH ANY OF THE ABOVE AUTHORITIES:

DATE:

TIME:

AUTHORITY:

OUTCOMES FROM THE REPORT:

REPORTING INTERNALLY

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP:

TIME:

DATE:

NAMES:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS TO EITHER OF THE FOLLOWING:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOL STAFF MUST REPORT TO SECURITY SERVICES UNIT AND ALSO TO THE EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH
IF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION INVOLVES A STAFF MEMBER, CONTRACTOR OR VOLUNTEER

CATHOLIC SCHOOL STAFF MUST REPORT TO THEIR CATHOLIC DIOCESAN EDUCATION OFFICE

TIME:

DATE:

NAMES:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

CRITICAL ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

See Action 3 of **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse**

ACTIONS TAKEN

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH PARENTS/CARERS (IF APPROPRIATE):

SCHOOL STAFF MUST CONSULT WITH VICTORIA POLICE AND/OR DHHS CHILD PROTECTION TO DETERMINE IF IT IS APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENTS, IF IT IS, PARENTS MUST BE CONTACTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (PREFERABLY ON THE SAME DAY OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION). THIS IS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL IN INSTANCES OF SUSPECTED FAMILY VIOLENCE.

HAVE YOU SOUGHT ADVICE FROM DHHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

IS IT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

LIST REASONS IF IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER:

IF CONTACTING PARENT/CARER, PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

NAME OF STAFF MEMBER MAKING THE CALL:

NAME OF PARENT/CARER RECEIVING THE CALL:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

CRITICAL ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

See Action 4 of **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse**

PLANNED ACTIONS

INCLUDE DETAIL OF WHAT FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS HAVE OCCURRED TO SUPPORT THE STUDENT (FOR EXAMPLE REFERRAL TO WELLBEING PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER SPECIALISED SERVICES, THE CONVENING OF A STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORT PLANS):

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

SUPPORT:

REFERRAL(S):

PROCESS OF REVIEW

COMPLETE THIS SECTION BETWEEN 4- 6 WEEKS AFTER AN INCIDENT, SUSPICION OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE IN CONJUNCTION WITH YOUR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM.

THIS WILL SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL TO CONTINUE TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN YOUR CARE AND TO REFLECT ON YOUR PROCESSES AND THE NEED FOR ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS.

SAFETY AND WELLBEING

CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE CHILD

IS THE CHILD SAFE FROM ABUSE AND HARM, INCLUDING EXPOSURE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

IF NOT CONSIDER THE NEED TO MAKE A FURTHER REPORT.

DOES THE CHILD HAVE ANY WELLBEING ISSUES THAT ARE NOT CURRENTLY BEING ADDRESSED?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

IF SO, CONSIDER HOW THESE CAN BE ADDRESSED AND CAPTURED WITHIN A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN.

CURRENT WELLBEING OF OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE

ARE THERE ANY OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

IF SO HAVE THEIR WELLBEING NEEDS BEEN MET?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

CURRENT WELLBEING OF IMPACTED STAFF MEMBERS

DOES THE STAFF MEMBER WHO MADE THE REPORT/WITNESSED AN INCIDENT, FORMED A SUSPICION OR RECEIVED A DISCLOSURE REQUIRE ANY SUPPORT?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

IF SO HAS THIS BEEN RECEIVED?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN

HAVE SCHOOL STAFF FOLLOWED THE FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS: RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURES OR SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE?

WAS AN APPROPRIATE DECISION MADE
IN RELATION TO WHEN TO ACT?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

COULD THE SUSPECTED ABUSE HAVE BEEN
DETECTED EARLIER?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

ACTION 1

DID THE SCHOOL TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION
IN AN EMERGENCY?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

ACTION 2

WAS A REPORT MADE TO THE APPROPRIATE
AUTHORITIES AND INTERNALLY?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

WERE SUBSEQUENT REPORTS MADE IF
NECESSARY?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

ACTION 3

DID THE SCHOOL CONTACT THE
PARENTS/CARERS ASAP?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

HAVE THE PARENTS CONTINUED TO BE
ENGAGED IF APPROPRIATE?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

ACTION 4

HAS THE SCHOOL PROVIDED ADEQUATE
SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

HAS A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN BEEN
ESTABLISHED, IMPLEMENTED & REVIEWED?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

HAS A STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP
BEEN ESTABLISHED?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

WAS THE STUDENT APPROPRIATELY
SUPPORTED IN ANY INTERVIEWS?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS BEEN RECEIVED?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

HAVE THE COMPLAINTS BEEN RESOLVED?

- ☐ NO
☐ YES

OTHER LEARNINGS