



**BRIGHTON**  
SECONDARY COLLEGE

**CHILD  
SAFETY  
RESPONDING  
AND  
REPORTING  
OBLIGATIONS  
POLICY AND  
PROCEDURES  
2020-2023**

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand the various legal and other reporting obligations related to child safety that apply to Brighton Secondary College. The specific procedures that are applicable at our school are contained at Appendix A.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers and school community members. It also applies to all staff and students engaged in any school and school council-run events, activities and services.

## POLICY

All children and young people have the right to protection in their best interests.

Brighton Secondary College understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse including:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse (including sexual exploitation)
- Family violence
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect (including medical neglect)
- Grooming

The staff at Brighton Secondary College are required by law to comply with various child safety reporting obligations. For detailed information about each obligation, please refer to [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

At Brighton Secondary College we also recognise the diversity of the children and young people at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering child safety.

## MANDATORY REPORTING

Principals, registered teachers, registered medical practitioners, nurses and all members of the police force are mandatory reporters under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic). As a result of changes to mandatory reporter groups, registered psychologists will be mandatory reporters from 1 March 2019, and then from 21 January 2020, school counsellors will also be mandatory reporters.

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (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.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at Brighton Secondary College to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module annually.

For more information about Mandatory Reporting see the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#).

## CHILD IN NEED OF PROTECTION

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires all staff who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to report their concerns to DHHS or Victoria Police, and discuss their concerns with the school leadership team.

For more information about making a report to DHHS Child Protection, see the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Child Protection – Making a Report and Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

At Brighton Secondary College we also encourage all staff to make a referral to Child FIRST when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST see the School Policy and Advisory Guide: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations.

## REPORTABLE CONDUCT

Our school must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (9637 2594) if we become aware of an allegation of 'reportable conduct'.

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

- a sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing), sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- behaviour causing significant emotional or physical harm to a child;
- significant neglect of a child; or
- misconduct involving any of the above.

The Department, through the Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

Our principal must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former teachers, contractors, volunteers (including parents), allied health

staff and school council employees.

If school staff become aware of reportable conduct by any person in the above positions, they should notify the school principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the principal, they should notify the Regional Director.

For more information about Reportable Conduct see the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#).

### **FAILURE TO DISCLOSE OFFENCE**

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (ie persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 by another person aged 18 years or over.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000 or local police station) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

"Reasonable belief" is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.
- "Reasonable excuse" is defined by law and includes:
  - fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation)
  - where the information has already been disclosed, for example, through a mandatory report to DHHS Child Protection.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Failure to disclose offence](#).

### **FAILURE TO PROTECT OFFENCE**

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include principals, assistant principals and campus principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (ie persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Failure to protect offence](#).

### **GROOMING**

Grooming is a criminal offence under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic). This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in sexual activity 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.

For more information about this offence and reporting obligations see: [Child Exploitation and Grooming](#).

### **RELATED POLICIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

- [Child Safety Standards Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safety Standards - Risk Assessment](#)
- [Child Safety Policy](#)
- [Duty of Care Policy](#)
- [Visitors Policy](#)
- [Volunteers Policy](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)

## REVIEW CYCLE

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

## APPENDIX A:



## RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

### 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. 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.

### 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.

## RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE

PLEASE NOTE: 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

STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE RESPONSE
NAME:
OCCUPATION:
LOCATION (SCHOOL ADDRESS):
RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

LAST UPDATED: 11/08/2020

LAST RATIFIED BY COLLEGE  
COUNCIL: 24/06/2020

NEXT REVIEW DATE: 11/08/2023

**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 (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 CONTINUED**

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**

**GROUND'S FOR YOUR BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN, OR IS AT RISK OF ABUSE**

INDICATORS OR INSTANCES WHICH LED YOU TO BELIEVE THAT A CHILD/CHILDREN ARE SUBJECT TO CHILD ABUSE, OR AT RISK OF ABUSE:  
*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:  NOTHING IF THEY ARE WITHIN THE SCHOOL OR WITHIN THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY (THIS WILL IMPACT ON 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		
<p>TICK THE AUTHORITIES YOU HAVE REPORTED TO:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> VICTORIA POLICE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DHHS CHILD PROTECTION</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CHILD FIRST</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DECISION NOT TO REPORT</p> <p>IF YOU'VE DECIDED NOT TO REPORT, LIST YOUR REASONS HERE. ALSO INCLUDE ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY YOU BELOW:</p>		
<p>PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS TO EITHER OF THE FOLLOWING:</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>CATHOLIC SCHOOL STAFF MUST REPORT TO THEIR CATHOLIC DIOCESAN EDUCATION OFFICE</i></p>		
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>DATE:</td> <td>TIME:</td> </tr> </table>	DATE:	TIME:
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).
HAVE YOU SOUGHT ADVICE FROM DHHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE?  <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES
IS IT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER  <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> 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 ON 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:
REFERRALS(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 ACTION.

**SAFETY AND WELLBEING**

CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE CHILD
IS THE CHILD SAFE FROM ABUSE AND HARM?
<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<i>IF NOT CONSIDER THE NEED TO MAKE A FURTHER REPORT</i>
DOES THE CHILD HAVE ANY WELLBEING ISSUES THAT ARE NOT CURRENTLY BEING ADDRESSED?
<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<i>IF SO, CONSIDER HOW THESE CAN BE ADDRESSED AND CAPTURED WITHIN A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN</i>

CURRENT WELLBEING OF OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE
ARE THERE ANY OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE?
<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<i>IF SO HAVE THEIR WELLBEING NEEDS BEEN MET</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<i>IF SO, CONSIDER HOW THESE CAN BE ADDRESSED AND CAPTURED WITHIN A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN</i>

CURRENT WELLBEING OF IMPACTED STAFF MEMBERS
<p>DOES THE STAFF MEMBER WHO MADE THE REPORT/ WITNESSED THE INCIDENT, FORMED A SUSPICION OR RECEIVED A DISCLOSURE REQUIRE ANY SUPPORT?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>IF SO HAS THIS BEEN RECEIVED?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>

REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN	
<p>HAVE SCHOOL STAFF FOLLOWED THE FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOLS: RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURES OR SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE?</p> <p><b>WAS AN APPROPRIATE DECISION MADE IN RELATION TO WHEN TO ACT?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p><b>COULD THE SUSPECTED ABUSE HAVE BEEN DETECTED EARLIER?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p><b>ACTION 1</b></p> <p><b>DID THE SCHOOL TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION IN AN EMERGENCY?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p><b>ACTION 2</b></p> <p><b>WAS A REPORT MADE TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES AND INTERNALLY?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p><b>WERE SUBSEQUENT REPORTS MADE IF NECESSARY?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p><b>ACTION 3</b></p> <p><b>DID THE SCHOOL CONTACT THE PARENTS/CARERS ASAP?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>	<p><b>HAVE THE PARENTS CONTINUED TO BE ENGAGED IF APPROPRIATE?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p><b>ACTION 4</b></p> <p><b>HAS THE SCHOOL PROVIDED ADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p><b>HAS A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN BEEN ESTABLISHED, IMPLEMENTED AND REVIEWED?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p><b>HAS A STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP BEEN ESTABLISHED?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p><b>WAS THE STUDENT APPROPRIATELY SUPPORTED IN ANY INTERVIEWS?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p><b>HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS BEEN RECEIVED?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p><b>HAVE THE COMPLAINTS BEEN RESOLVED?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>

### 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.

### 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**.





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