

## St John the Apostle internal school process for mandatory reporting

Making a Mandatory Report	
Step	Description
1.Keep Notes	<p>Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behavior)</li> <li>• The source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person)</li> <li>• The actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with the Principal, report to DFFH, Child Protection, etc.)</li> </ul>
2.Discuss Concerns	<p>Due to the complexity of child abuse incidents, disclosures and suspicions, it is recommended that concerns and observations regarding suspected physical or sexual abuse of a child are discussed with the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team and/or Catholic Education Melbourne's Student Wellbeing Information Line.</p> <p>This is not a legal requirement, however will help to ensure support is provided to all involved in matters of this nature. The confidentiality of these discussions must be maintained.</p> <p>You should the make your own assessment about whether you are required to make a report about the child or young person and to whom the report should be made.</p> <p>It is important to remember that the duty to report abuse or suspicions of abuse exists even if the Principal, member of the Leadership Team or a representative of Catholic Education Melbourne advises you not to proceed with reporting suspected abuse.</p>

<p>3. Gather and Document Information</p>	<p>Gather the relevant information necessary to make the report. This should include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Full name, date of birth and residential address of the child or young person</li> <li>● The details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns</li> <li>● Your involvement with the child or young person</li> <li>● Details of any other agencies which may be involved with the child or young person</li> </ul> <p>This information should be collected and documented using the <i>Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools</i>. The template is to be used to record as much information as possible to provide when you make your report to either the Police or DHHS Child Protection.</p> <p>It's critical that completing the template does not impact on reporting times – if a child is in immediate danger school staff need to report the matter immediately to the Police.</p>
<p>4. Make the Report</p>	<p>To report concerns which are life-threatening phone 000 or the local police station.</p> <p>Where the source of the abuse comes from within the school; that is, the suspected or alleged abuse involves a staff member, volunteer or contractor at the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contact the Police. The Police will, in this case, contact DHHS Child Protection when appropriate</li> <li>● You must also report internally to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Principal, or the Leadership Team if the Principal is involved in the allegation</li> <li>- Catholic Education Melbourne's Student Wellbeing Information Line (9267 0228)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Where the source of the suspected or alleged abuse comes from within the child's family or community, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Report sexual abuse and grooming to the Police</li> <li>● Report the matter to DFFH Child Protection if you consider the child to be in need of protection due to child abuse, or has been, is being or is at risk of being harmed due to any form of abuse. If after hours call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78.</li> </ul> <p>Reporting internally to:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Principal, or a member of the Leadership Team if the Principal is unavailable</li> <li>• Catholic Education Melbourne's Student Wellbeing Information Line (9267 0228)</li> </ul>
5. Document Written Records of Report	<p>Make a written record of the report including the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported</li> <li>• The name and position of the person who made the report and the person who received the report</li> </ul> <p>The information initially recorded in the <i>Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools</i> and any additional information provided to either the Police or DHHS Child Protection is to be stored securely and maintained for a minimum of seven years by the school, to ensure that records are accessible upon request by external authorities investigating the matter.</p>
6. Additional Steps for Overseas Students	<p>Where a child protection incident, disclosure or suspicion involves an international student at the school and the school has issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter for that student (thereby assuming responsibility for the child's accommodation, support and general welfare) the school will also need to contact the VRQA.</p>

### Appendix – Reporting Criteria: Failure to Disclose

In accordance with the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*, this table sets out when to report a concern that a child or young person has been sexually abused or is in need of protection from sexual abuse.

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p><i>Reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16.</i></p> <p>Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to Victoria Police.</p> <p>You will not be guilty of an offence if you do not report in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The victim is 16 years of age or older and does not want the information reported to the Police. However, this exception does not apply where the victim is aged under 16 years, or is aged over 16 years and has an intellectual disability and does not have the capacity to make an</li> </ul>	<p>Any person aged 18 or over</p>	<p>Victoria Police</p>

informed decision about whether or not to report

- The victim has disclosed the information in confidence in the course of a therapeutic relationship with you as a registered medical practitioner, counsellor or in religious confession to a member of the clergy. A 'counsellor' is a person who is treating a person for an emotional or psychological condition

*Please note that under the 'Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) the exceptions to making a disclosure under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) may be overridden.*

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) Privacy Compliance Manual (updated by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV): Dec 2015) also provides details relating to the role of school counsellors and their obligations to pupils, the school at which the pupils are enrolled and the parents of those pupils (refer to Section 26).

Where it is necessary for school counsellors to directly pass on information, which relates to the wellbeing of a students at a school, this information must be conveyed to a person (i.e. school Principal) who has a legal obligation to receive it without betraying confidence (Section 26.3). A mandatory report may then need to be made.

- The victim turned 16 years of age before 27 October 2014.

Reasonable excuses for failing to comply with the requirement include:

- A reasonable belief that the information has already been reported to the Police or DHHS Child Protection disclosing all of the information

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A reasonable fear that the disclosure will place someone (other than the alleged perpetrator) at risk of harm</li></ul>		
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# FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

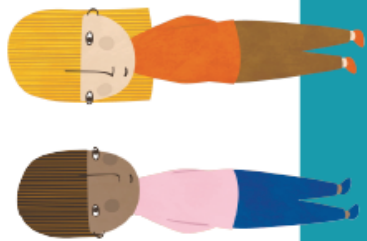
## Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

**PROTECT**

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA  
State Government

Education and Training



### 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

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 or volunteer to Victoria Police.

You must also report internally to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
  - School Principal and/or leadership team
  - Employee Conduct Branch
  - DET Security Services Unit
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
  - School Principal and/or leadership team
  - Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
  - School Principal and/or school chairperson

#### 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.

##### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- School Principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office

##### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- School Principal and/or school chairperson

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 (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

### YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

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

- You must act, by following the 4 critical actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a 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 (eg, if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- You must use the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse** template to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

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

### 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 (eg, 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).

### 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.

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 9777**
- South Division **1300 655 795**
- East Division **1300 360 391**
- West Division (Rural) **1800 075 599**
- West Division (Metro) **1300 664 9777**

#### AFTER HOURS

After hours, weekends, public holidays **13 12 78**

#### CHILD FIRST

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

#### VICTORIA POLICE

000 or your local police station

**DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT**  
(03) 9589 6266

**STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT**  
(03) 9637 2934

**EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH**  
(03) 9637 2595

#### DIOCESAN OFFICE

Melbourne (03) 9267 0228  
Ballarat (03) 5337 7135  
Sale (03) 5622 6800  
Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377

#### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

VICTORIA  
(03) 9825 7200

