

CHILD SAFE

POLICY

Rationale:

Everyone in society has a moral responsibility to keep children safe and to protect them from harm. A Statement of Commitment to child safety helps raise awareness about the importance of child safety in school and the community and affirms the organisation's commitment to child safety and expectations.

Statement:

Lorne P-12 College is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Lorne P-12 College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Lorne P-12 College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and vulnerable children. We understand that greater protection measures need to be taken to ensure the safety of young children and those with a disability.

Every person involved in Lorne P-12 College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make

Implementation:

In its planning, decision-making and operations Lorne P-12 College will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Links and Appendices:

The following are links to support material for schools:

- [DET - Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Ministerial Order No. 870](#)
- [Safe Schools Hub](#)
- [DET - Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault](#)

- [Betrayal of Trust Implementation](#)
- [Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics](#)

Related School Policies:

- Child Protection Reporting Policy
- Supervision and Duty of Care Policy

Appendices connected with this policy are:

- **Appendix A:** Standard 1 - Embedding a Culture of Child Safety at Our School
- **Appendix B:** Standard 2 - Child Safe Statement of Commitment
- **Appendix C:** Standard 3 - Child Safe Code of Conduct
- **Appendix D:** Standard 4 - Child Safe HR Practices
- **Appendix E:** Standard 5 – Identifying and Responding to Child Abuse in Victorian Schools
- **Appendix F:** Standard 5 – Student, Parent & Staff Resources
- **Appendix G:** Standard 6 – Risk Management Strategies
- **Appendix H:** Standard 7 – Strategies to Promote Child Empowerment

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or when deemed necessary.

This statement was endorsed by School Council in....

Jun 2018

EMBEDDING A CULTURE OF CHILD SAFETY

CHILD SAFE – STANDARD 1

Rationale:

Governance arrangements, underpinned by a firm commitment from Lorne P-12 College's school leadership team and our school values of Respect, Cooperation and Personal Best are the starting point to embedding a culture of child safety at our school. Strategies that seek to prevent harm and neglect (including physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, racial and cultural or religious abuse) all contribute to a child safe culture. It is therefore critical that child safety is part of the everyday thinking and practice of all within our school community. It is important to maintain the momentum of a child safe culture by monitoring our performance and checking that child safety continues to be prominent in the school's governance and planning.

Background:

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015* to introduce seven child safe standards (the Standards) into law. The Standards apply to all organisations involved in child-related work in Victoria.

Ministerial Order No. 870 provides the framework for how schools will be required to comply with the Standards. Overall responsibility for ensuring compliance rests with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

The Ministerial Order specifies the following requirements for schools regarding Standard 1:

"The school governing authority must:

- (a) develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school;*
- (b) allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies;*
- (c) inform the school community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities;*
- (d) put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices; and*
- (e) periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies."*

Implementation:

A) Development of strategies to embed a culture of Child Safety at the school

- The School Council, as the school's governing authority, demonstrates a commitment to child safety modelled by the school's leadership.
- The School Council and school Leadership Team, actively support their commitment to child safety by well resourcing the College's Wellbeing Team including the Wellbeing and Engagement Leading Teacher and the Child Safety Officer.
- Children, staff and school community members are informed of what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.
- Members of the school community including teachers, parents and students, are empowered to discuss child safety and raise concerns about child abuse through our Wellbeing and Leadership school teams.
- All staff and volunteers are supported to consider the safety of all children, including the recognition of the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.
- The school recognises that young children and those with a disability are at greater risk of abuse or exploitation and staff will provide greater levels of supervision and support.

- The Wellbeing Team supported by the school Leadership Team authorises arrangements and strategies to improve child safety practices across the school.
- Child safety conversations are regularly scheduled in our meeting planning for whole Staff Meetings and Professional Learning Community conversations.

B) Child Safety Roles and Responsibilities:

- Our school's governing authority, the School Council, has allocated roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies as outlined above.
- The school has designated the Wellbeing Team as the key people to undertake child safety roles and to ensure school responsibilities are being carried out. The team includes school leaders, teachers, and support staff including the school chaplain.
- These child safety roles including contact details will be clearly communicated to the school community via parent information nights, level handbooks, newsletter articles and website information.
- We will build the child safety capacity of the school staff by making training available, including responsibilities in positions descriptions, and providing ongoing induction and training for all staff and volunteers in child safety including how to recognise and respond to child abuse.
- The Wellbeing Team's Special Needs Coordinator will act as the schools' Child Safety Officer.

Child Safety Officer:

The Child Safety Officer will:

- a) Provide authoritative advice:-
 - I. Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety.
 - II. Liaise with the principal and school Leadership Team to maintain the visibility of child safety.
 - III. Lead the development of the school's child safety culture in partnership with the Wellbeing Team, including being a child safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety.
- b) Raise awareness:-
 - I. Ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately.
 - II. Ensure the school's child safety policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.
 - III. Ensure the child safety policy is publicly available and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this.
 - IV. Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special education needs and young carers.
 - V. Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.
- c) Train:-
 - I. Being authoritative in providing advice by:
 - Keeping their skills up to date with appropriate training carried out every two years
 - Having a working knowledge of how the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Community Service Organisations conduct a child protection case conference to be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required.
 - II. Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
 - III. Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child safety policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff.
 - IV. Make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest DHHS and DET policies and guidance.

C) Informing the School Community

- Our school's governing authority, the School Council, has informed the school community about the strategies and put these into practice. The allocated appropriate roles and responsibilities to ensure that practices are embedded.
- Child safety information will be embedded in regular school communications, including year level information nights, the newsletter and the school website.
- Key child safety personnel will be identified including their roles and contact details.
- The school will update the school community in regards to the school's progress in implementing child safety strategies, changing strategies or developing new strategies.
- The Wellbeing Team will champion child safety in our school; they will promote, monitor and report on the implementation of the school's child safety strategies.
- The Wellbeing Team will facilitate reports of progress to the School Council as appropriate.

D) Evaluation

- The School Council will ensure that the Wellbeing Team has periodically reviewed the effectiveness of the strategies, and if appropriate, revised the strategies.
- The Wellbeing Team will review our school's child safety related policies and practices at least annually or following identification of a potential risk, or a report that occurs within the school.
- As part of their review and evaluation, the Wellbeing Team will consult with staff and where appropriate the wider community to inform strategic directions and practices.
- Outcomes of the review will be reported to the Leadership Team, staff and the School Council.
- The Wellbeing Team will evaluate the training needs for staff and SC members, following their audit of the school's child safety related policies and practices.

Links and Related Policies:

The following are links to support material for schools:

- [DET - Child Safe Standards](#)

Related School Policies:

- [Child Protection Reporting Policy](#)
- [Supervision and Duty of Care Policy](#)

This practice was endorsed by School Council in....

June 2018



STATEMENT of COMMITMENT

CHILD SAFE – STANDARD 2

Rationale:

Everyone in society has a moral responsibility to keep children safe and to protect them from harm. A Statement of Commitment to child safety helps raise awareness about the importance of child safety in school and the community and affirms the organisation's commitment to child safety and expectations.

Statement:

Lorne P-12 College is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Lorne P-12 College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Lorne P-12 College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of young children and those with a disability.

Every person involved in Lorne P-12 College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make

Implementation:

The school's plan for creating a Child Safe culture will be communicated to the community on our website along with all of the school's policies. Information about Child Safety will also be published in the school's newsletter, displayed around the school on noticeboards and distributed at parent information sessions.

The Wellbeing Team of P-12 College will ensure the following actions are undertaken, we will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety by closely monitoring students, particularly those at risk.
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives through access to internal and external expertise in a regulated manner.
3. Offer programs that support the building of strategies around resilience, management of conflict, positive mental health, mindfulness etc. to support students' willingness to discuss and resolve child safety matters.
4. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons, including school staff, parents and children to safely disclose risks of harm to children.
5. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
6. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children.
7. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development.
8. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues.
9. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
10. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.
11. Communicate regularly with families and carers, as appropriate.
12. Support and assist children who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

In response to the Betrayal of Trust report the Victorian Government has strengthened laws to protect our children from sexual abuse and exposure to sexual offenders. This is in recognition of the shared community responsibility to protect children from abuse and to provide a safe environment for children to develop, learn and play.

A new criminal offence for failing to protect a child under the age of 16 from a risk of sexual abuse commenced on 1 July 2015.

The offence applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

This offence encourages organisations to actively manage the risks of sexual offences being committed against children in their care to protect them from harm.

Evaluation:

This statement of commitment will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Links and Related Policies:

The following are links to support material:

- [Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect](#)

This statement was endorsed by School Council in....

June 2018



CODE OF CONDUCT

CHILD SAFE – STANDARD 3

Rationale:

Lorne P-12 College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

Aim:

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

Implementation:

The Principal and school leaders of Lorne P-12 College will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Lorne P-12 College will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, volunteers, school councillors, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour as documented below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, school councillors, contractors, and any other school community members involved in child-related work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy.
- Treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership team and/or the child safety officer assigned.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, school councillors, contractors, and any other school community members involved in child-related work we must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- Develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts).
- Exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context.
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate.
- Discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting.
- Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter.
- Photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes.
- In the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

Links and Related Policies:

The following are links to support material for schools:

- [DET - Child Safe Standards](#)

Related School Policies:

- [Child Protection Reporting Policy](#)
- [Supervision and Duty of Care Policy](#)

Evaluation:

This code of conduct will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This code of conduct was last ratified by School Council in....

June 2018



CHILD SAFE HR PRACTICES

CHILD SAFE – STANDARD 4

Rationale:

Strong human resource practices promote child safe school environments and reduce the risk of child abuse. Lorne P-12 College utilises policies and procedures for recruitment, supervision, training and managing performance that support a child safe school environment.

Implementation:

- The school will ensure that position descriptions for all new positions, teaching and non-teaching, include the standard ‘Child safe environments’ clause as provided in the ‘Recruitment in Schools’ Guide.
- For our existing staff, the school has promoted and will embed the school’s Child Safety Code of Conduct in accordance with Standard 3.
- As part of the selection process, the principal will implement practices to ensure satisfaction that external applicants meet the *Child Safe Standards* prior to the applicant’s employment at the school.
- When recruiting new staff, teaching and non-teaching, or volunteers the school panels will monitor the following important child safety areas for assessment:
 - a. The applicant’s motivation to work with children (personal or professional)
 - b. The applicant’s relevant and verifiable child-related work experience
 - c. The applicant’s understanding of professional boundaries
 - d. The applicant’s communication skills.
- As part of the selection process for non-teaching staff engaged in child-connected work, the school will collect Working With Children Checks (WWCC).
- As part of the selection process for teachers, the principal will check the person’s Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) status.
- All selection panels will engage in a minimum of one verbal referee check to ascertain the person’s history of work involving children and the person’s suitability for the job and working with children.
- The school acknowledges that certain specialist roles may present different child safety risks for the school, such as a school nurse, welfare counsellor, bus driver, sports coach, camp instructor or music teacher. At Lorne P-12 College, these specialist roles will require at least two forms of personal identification with the same name and address and may require a criminal records check and/or greater referee checks to be completed.
- The school may complete additional background searches online and through social media.
- The school will ensure that all new school staff are inducted into the school’s policies, codes of conduct, practices and procedures governing child safety. This process will be supported by the school’s Wellbeing and Administration Teams.
- As part of the DET’s Performance and Development process, school leaders will monitor and assess staff members’ suitability for continuing child connected work.
- The school’s Child Safety Policies and Procedures will be evaluated at a minimum annually or as required by the school Wellbeing Team, with the findings being shared with the School Council. This information will support the School Council to be satisfied that the processes and strategies in place are assuring that school staff (teaching and non-teaching) and volunteers who engage in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety. Any concerns raised by the School Council will be appropriately addressed.

Links and Related Policies:

The following are links to support material for schools:

- [DET - Child Safe Standards](#)
- [VRQA - Staff Selection Checklist](#)

Related School Policies:

- [Child Protection Reporting Policy](#)
- [Supervision and Duty of Care Policy](#)
- [Working With Children Check Policy](#)

This practice was endorsed by School Council in....

June 2018



RESPONDING & REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

CHILD SAFE – STANDARD 5

Rationale:

As members of a school community, we all have a moral obligation to protect any child under our care and supervision from foreseeable harm. As staff members of Lorne P-12 College, we play an especially critical role in protecting children (including identifying, responding and reporting child abuse) and we must meet a range of legal obligations to do so. At Lorne P-12 College, our procedures are:

- Sensitive to student diversity.
- Publicly available via this policy on our website.
- Accessible to children, staff and the wider community.

To comply with our legal and moral obligations we must report any reasonable suspicion that a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused by following the Four Critical Actions for Schools:

- 1) Responding to an Emergency
- 2) Reporting to Authorities
- 3) Contacting Parents/Carers
- 4) Providing Ongoing Support.

1) Our Obligation to Protect Children

- All school staff members have a moral and legal obligation and a Duty of Care to protect any child under their care from foreseeable harm (not just staff who are classified as mandatory reporters).
- Every staff member must respond to any reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused by following the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse.
- Recent changes to Victorian legislation create additional legal obligations in relation to reporting suspected sexual child abuse. Failing to meet these obligations can constitute a criminal offence, including a:
 - Failure to disclose a sexual offence.
 - Failure to protect a child (where it is known that a person associated with their organisation poses a substantial risk of sexually abusing children).
- The easiest way to comply with our legal and moral obligations is to remember that **you must report any reasonable suspicion that a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused.**
- This includes abuse that has, or is suspected to have, taken place within or outside of school grounds and hours.
- Further detailed information can be found following this DET link:
 - [PROTECT Children.](#)

All school staff members have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children under their care and supervision from harm that is reasonably foreseeable. The question of what constitutes ‘reasonable steps’ will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. In relation to suspected child abuse, reasonable steps may include but are not necessarily limited to:

- Acting on concerns and suspicions of abuse as soon as practicable, seeking appropriate advice or consulting with other professionals or agencies when the school staff member is unsure of what steps to take.
- Reporting the suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities such as the Victoria Police and DHHS Child Protection, arranging counselling and/or other appropriate welfare support for the child,

- providing on-going support to the child – this may include attending DHHS Child Protection Case Planning meetings, and convening regular Student Support Group meetings .
- Sharing information with other school based staff who will also be responsible for monitoring and providing on-going support to the child.

Duty of care also extends to students who are:

- Aged 17 years and over. In circumstances where staff suspect that a student over the age of 17 is subject to abuse you should still follow the Four Critical Actions for Schools as outlined later in this document. Although DHHS Child Protection work with children under 17 they can still be contacted with concerns relating to students 17 and over for referral and advice.
- Involved in student sexual offending. We have a duty of care towards all students involved in student sexual offending, including the alleged victim, assailant and any other students in the school who may have witnessed and/or been affected by the abusive behaviour.

All school staff members, visitors, trades people, contractors, volunteers, etc. have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children within our school community from harm that is reasonable foreseeable. (This applies to everyone connected to the school environment.) It is particularly important that visitors or others associated with the school, such as contractors, etc. seek out school personnel who can assist and provide advice in regards to any further steps that might need to be taken.

2) Identifying Signs of Child Abuse

At Lorne P-12 College all staff members play a critical role in protecting children from child abuse. In some cases staff members may be the best-placed or only adult in a child's life who is in a position to identify and respond to signs that a:

- Child is being abused, or is at risk of abuse.
- School community member (including a school staff member) may be a perpetrator of child abuse.

At Lorne P-12 College all staff members will receive training to support them in identifying signs of Child Abuse. Members of the Wellbeing Team, will have higher levels of expertise and be able to act as supporters to other staff members.

There are different types of abuse and all staff are required to be able to recognise the possible physical and behavioural indicators of:

- [Physical child abuse](#)
- [Child sexual abuse](#)
- [Grooming](#)
- [Emotional child abuse](#)
- [Neglect](#)
- [Family violence](#)
- [Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Sexual Behaviour in Children Under 10](#)

Please be aware that these links lead to information with 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 a member of the school's Wellbeing or Leadership teams about arranging appropriate support. You can also talk to your GP or another allied health professional. Government school staff can also contact the Employee Assistance Program on 1300 361 008.

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

- 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 practicable.

If physical and/or behavioural indicators lead you to suspect that a child has been or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, you must respond as soon as practicable by following the Four Steps: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse.

If you believe that a student is not being abused, but you still hold concerns for their safety or wellbeing, refer to advice about responding to concerns about the wellbeing of a child (or unborn child) to determine who to consult with, when to make a report and when to engage other wellbeing professionals. Follow this link for further information: [Responding to Other Concerns about the Wellbeing of a Child](#)

3) Four Critical Actions for Schools

Staff at Lorne P-12 College must take action if they suspect a child is being abused. Staff play a critical role in protecting children in our school's care.

- Staff must act, by following the 4 critical actions, as soon as an incident is witnessed, a disclosure is received or a reasonable belief is formed that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
- Staff must act if they form a suspicion/reasonable belief, even if they are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- Staff must use the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template included in this document to keep clear and comprehensive notes.
- A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

CRITICAL 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.

CRITICAL 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.

IF THE SOURCE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE IS 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: The School Principal and/or Leadership Team member / Employee Conduct Branch / DET Security Services Unit.

IF THE SOURCE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE IS FROM 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: School Principal and/or leadership team and DET Security Services Unit.

CRITICAL ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

The 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/carers (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 parents/carers 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).

CRITICAL ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

The 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.

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

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.

CONTACTS

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION - South Division 1300 655 795 and West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599

After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78

CHILD FIRST - www.dhs.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA POLICE - 000 or contact 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

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

PROTECT

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

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

If a child is at new/old risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victim and others involved;
- administering first aid;
- using other reasonable and available measures to respond to immediate health or safety concerns;
- identifying a contact person on the school for future liaison with Police;

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential offence 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 directly to:

- **SCHOOL PRINCIPAL** 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 leadership team;

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

You must report all instances of suspected child abuse to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse;
- at risk of having been hurt 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.

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 not ignore a child who discloses an incident, receives a disclosure or forms a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused;
- You must use the 'Investigative Interview 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/carers in circumstances where the child is a mature minor, unless they are open to receiving support, or to Child FIRST or DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police;
- 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.

Failure to do so may result in a criminal offence. It includes development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.

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

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

- North Division 1300 655 7777
- South Division 1300 655 795
- East Division 1300 360 161
- West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599

DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT

- After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78

STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT

- (03) 9407 2834

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

- (03) 9637 2595

DET CRIMINAL OFFICE

- Melbourne (03) 9429 0258
- Geelong (03) 5227 0016
- Sale (03) 4422 8669
- Spotswood (03) 5441 3337

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIAS

- (03) 9429 2399

4) Responding to other Concerns about a Child

If you believe that a student is not being abused, but you still hold concerns for their safety or wellbeing, refer to advice about responding to concerns about the wellbeing of a child (or unborn child) to determine who to consult with, when to make a report and when to engage other wellbeing professionals. Follow this link for further information: [Responding to Other Concerns about the Wellbeing of a Child](#)

Regardless of the suspected cause, all concerns about the wellbeing of a child (or their 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.

Staff should make a referral to Child FIRST if:

- there is significant concern for a child's wellbeing
- the concerns have a low-to-moderate impact on the child
- the child's immediate safety is not compromised
- the school has discussed the referral with the family and they are supportive of it.

Staff 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.

5) Responding to suspected Child Abuse Template

- School staff will use the [DET template](#) beginning on the following pages 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 above four critical actions.
- Completing the template should not impact on reporting times. If a child is in immediate danger, school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police.
- Whilst gathering information to make a report, it is not the role of school staff to investigate abuse, leave this to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection.
- When completing this template the aim is 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 staff if they 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.

6) Privacy and Information Sharing

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

- 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.

7) Contact Details and More Information

Within the Department of Education and Training, there are a number of supports available to Victorian government schools responding to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, including:

Security Services Unit (SSU)

The Security Services Unit provides a 24-hour communications centre for schools and Departmental staff to report a range of incidents. On receiving notification of an incident involving child abuse the Security Services Unit immediately alerts the Student Incident and Recovery Unit (SIRU) and relevant staff within the Central and Regional Office.

Regional Offices

Principals of Victorian government schools are required to maintain on-going contact with their Regional Office throughout any incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse. Each region has an emergency management contact/s. These officers can provide initial advice and support to Victorian government schools during and after incidents, and assists schools to minimise the effects of trauma and enhance recovery.

Student Incident and Recovery Unit (SIRU)

The Student Incident and Recovery Unit (SIRU) works with Victorian Government schools following incidents of a sexual nature to ensure appropriate advice and supports are in place that prioritise the health and wellbeing of the children involved. The SIRU is notified by the Security Services Unit as soon as an incident involving sexual abuse (or problem sexual behaviour) is reported.

The SIRU will:

- provide timely and appropriate advice to Victorian Government schools
- support regions and Victorian Government schools to respond to critical incidents of a sexual nature
- advise Victorian Government schools to meet their legal obligations and duty of care responsibilities
- assist Principals and senior school staff from Victorian Government schools to manage incidents of a sexual nature in a manner that ensures adverse impact on the school community is minimised
- monitor the progress of school management of such incidents
- provide advice on appropriate response measures, such as counselling and management strategies to support those involved in allegations of sexual offending or problem sexual behaviour
- provide advice on the provision of a suitable level of support to school staff and members of the school community on whom the incident has impacted

The SIRU works closely with other key agencies, such as Victoria Police SOCIT and the DHHS, and with organisations such as the Centre against Sexual Assault (CASA) to support student wellbeing in Victorian Government schools.

Student Support Services

The role of the Student Support Services (SSS) is to provide support to Victorian Government schools including:

- establishing a relationship with students and possibly their families
- providing a supportive, calm approach and acknowledging the issues raised
- clarifying the needs of the child
- evaluating the child's present strengths and resources
- evaluating possible ways of accommodating the child's identified needs, such as referral for specialist counselling and school-based supports
- documenting information and actions
- identifying the process for follow up and review
- ascertaining which intervention programs are most appropriate in meeting an individual child's needs
- working with the school staff on the appropriate strategies and supports needed for individual children

Employee Conduct Branch

The Employee Conduct Branch is responsible for the implementation of policy and the provision of advice on complaint resolution procedures, unsatisfactory performance, serious misconduct (which would include allegations of child abuse), equal opportunity complaints, managing appeals against disciplinary action, criminal records checks and police liaison, as it relates to Victorian Government school and DET employees. The branch also manages discipline matters involving members of the teaching service (including Principal Class Officers), Student Support Services and public servants. A key role of the branch is to support Principals or designated officers in their management of processes, and provide advice to them concerning legislative and procedural frameworks.

The Employee Conduct Branch must be contacted on all issues of alleged serious misconduct including allegations of child abuse and grooming which involve a staff member employed by the Department. This includes teachers and Principals.

Legal Division

The Department's Legal Division provides specific advice to government school Principals in relation to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.

Communications Division

The Department's Communications Division manages all Departmental media liaison, and can support Principals of Victorian government schools in responding to media enquiries relating to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.

Roles of Other Relevant Authorities:

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

Under the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has a responsibility to provide child protection services for all children and young people under the age of 17 years, or where a protection order is in place, for children under the age of 18.

The main functions of DHHS Child Protection are to:

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

DHHS Child Protection will also intervene and bring cases before the Children's Court if a child's safety cannot be managed without intervention. DHHS Child Protection has a responsibility to provide adequate supervision, care and protection for children in accordance with orders granted by the Children's Court.

CHILD FIRST

Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Teams (Child FIRST) were introduced to give families an opportunity to obtain family services earlier at their own request or following a referral from others, including school staff.

Child FIRST is staffed by family services practitioners who are experienced in assessing the needs of vulnerable children and their families. Child FIRST teams work closely with community-based DHHS Child Protection workers.

The role of Child FIRST includes:

- providing a point of entry to a local network of family services
- receiving reports about vulnerable children where there are significant concerns about their wellbeing
- undertaking an initial identification and assessment of the risks to the child and the child's needs in consultation with DHHS Child Protection and other services
- identifying appropriate service responses for families.

VICTORIA POLICE

Both DHHS and Victoria Police have statutory responsibilities under the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* in relation to the protection of children. DHHS Child Protection is the lead agency responsible for the care and protection of children, while Victoria Police is responsible for criminal investigations into alleged child abuse.

Members of Victoria Police are protective interveners and mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*. The predominant role of police in child abuse incidents is to detect and investigate alleged child physical and sexual abuse and to initiate legal proceedings where appropriate, against the alleged offender/s.

The key responsibilities of Victoria Police in relation to child abuse are to:

- ensure all police members are aware of relevant legislation and their responsibilities
- ensure all police accept and carry out their responsibilities under the Act
- conduct all investigations on the basis that the safety and welfare of the child are paramount
- plan investigations in collaboration with other, relevant agencies
- work with other agencies in accordance with agreed work practices
- provide information to other, relevant agencies
- provide training for staff, and, jointly, with relevant agencies.

Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams (SOCIT) have been established to ensure that appropriately trained and qualified police officers are available to respond to and investigate allegations of child abuse and sexual offences.

Counselling/Support Organisations:

THE CENTRE AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

There are 15 Centres Against Sexual Assault, who work to ensure that women, children and men who are victim/survivors of sexual offending have access to comprehensive and timely support and intervention to address their needs. Phone: 1800 806 292

GATEHOUSE CENTRE, ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Provides support and assistance to children and young people affected by sexual offending or problem sexual behaviours.

CHILDREN'S PROTECTION SOCIETY

Provide advice and support to children and families to help them break out of the cycle of abuse, neglect, poverty and disadvantage through a creative portfolio of programs, resources and services. Phone: (03) 9450 0900

AUSTRALIAN CHILDHOOD FOUNDATION

Provide recognised programs that counsel and support children to recovery, help professionals who work with children to better support at risk children and raise awareness of the causes and consequences of abuse. Phone: 1800 176 453

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-operative Limited provides legal advice and representation for the Koorie community. Phone: (03) 9322 3555 or country toll free on 1800 015 188

CHILD WISE

Child Wise is Australia's leading international child protection charity committed to the prevention and reduction of sexual abuse and exploitation of children around the world. Phone: (03) 9695 8900

ABORIGINAL FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND LEGAL SERVICES

Provides assistance to victims of family violence and sexual offending and to work with families and communities affected by violence.

HEADSPACE

Headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds, along with assistance in promoting young peoples' wellbeing. This covers four core areas: mental health, physical health, work and study support and alcohol and other drug services. Information and services for young people, their families and friends as well as health professionals can be accessed through this website, headspace centres, online counselling service eheadspace, and postvention suicide support program headspace School Support.

Contact Information

24 HOUR SERVICES

- Victoria Police - 000
- Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection - 131 278
- Department of Education and Training Security Services Unit - (03) 9589 6266

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Security Services Unit - (03) 9589 6266
- Student Incident and Recovery Unit - (03) 9637 2934 or (03) 9637 2487
- Legal Division - (03) 9637 3146
- Employee Assistance Program - 1300 361 008
- Employee Health - (03) 9637 2395
- Employee Conduct Branch - (03) 9637 2595
- Privacy Unit - (03) 9637 3601
- International Division - (03) 9651 3976
- Communications Division - (03) 9637 2871

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES CHILD PROTECTION

West Rural and Regional LGA – Surf Coast – 1800 075 599

CHILD FIRST

Surf Coast - 1300 551 948

OTHER SERVICES

- Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA) - Emergency Counselling & Support Line - 1800 806 292
- Australian Childhood Foundation - 1800 176 453
- Child Wise - (03) 9695 8900
- Vic Aboriginal Education Association - (03) 9481 0800
- Child Safety Commission - 1300 782 978
- Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner - 1800 880 176
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) - (03) 9287 8800
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) - (03) 9411 9411

SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR TREATMENT SERVICES PROVIDERS

- Aust Childhood Foundation - (03) 9874 3922
- Children's Protection Society - (03) 9450 0900
- Berry St - (03) 5822 8100
- Barwon CASA - (03) 5222 4318

Links and Related Policies:

The following are links to support material for schools:

- [DET - Child Safe Standards](#)
- [DET - Standard 5 Schools Guide](#)

Related School Policies:

- [Child Protection Reporting Policy](#)

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.

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

(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, 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

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 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

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?

- 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 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 the school Leadership Team. This will support staff and the school to continue to protect children in our care and to reflect on 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?

- 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

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

CURRENT WELLBEING OF IMPACTED STAFF MEMBERS

DOES THE STAFF MEMBER WHO MADE THE REPORT/ WITNESSED THE 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 SCHOLS: 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 AND 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

This practice was endorsed by School Council in....

June 2018



STUDENT, PARENT & STAFF RESOURCES

CHILD SAFE – STANDARD 5

Rationale:

Lorne P-12 College aims to support:

- Both primary and secondary students to feel safe and to seek help when they feel unsafe.
- Parents and carers to protect children from abuse.
- Staff to spot the warning signs of child abuse.

Implementation:

- To support these aims, the school will provide students with appropriate curriculum based programs and make the following primary and secondary information sheets readily available.
- All staff will receive the staff child abuse information sheet as part of their introduction to the school year packs with a support presentation from members of the Wellbeing Team.
- As new staff members arrive during the year, they will receive the same information and support as part of their induction to the school.
- The parent information will be advertised through the school newsletter and via the school's website.
- All Wellbeing and Leadership Team members will keep copies of all of this information to support others as required.

Links and Related Policies:

The following are links to support material for schools:

- [DET - Child Safe Standards](#)

The Documents attached:

- [Feeling Safe: for Primary school students](#)
- [Feeling Safe: for Secondary school students](#)
- [Protecting Children from Abuse: for Parents and Carers](#)
- [Spotting the Warning Signs of Child Abuse: for School Staff](#)

This practice was endorsed by School Council in....

June 2018



PROTECT



Education
and Training



Feeling Safe: For Primary School Students

Get the facts

This fact sheet is about making sure you know how to keep safe. It gives you the facts about what to do if someone is hurting you or your friends or making you feel unsafe.

What are your rights?

- Everyone has the right to feel safe and be protected.
- No one is allowed to threaten you, hurt you or touch you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- No one should behave in a way that makes you feel unsafe or afraid, including anyone in your family, anyone at school or anywhere else in the community.



How do I know if something is wrong?

- Every relationship should be respectful.
- It is wrong for anyone to hurt you or make you feel unsafe, uncomfortable or afraid.
- Remember a person doesn't have to physically hurt or touch you to be doing the wrong thing.
- Even if you are not sure, if something doesn't feel right you should tell an adult who can help you.

What should I do if I feel unsafe?

- Tell an adult you trust – telling someone won't get you in trouble.
- If you feel threatened, unsafe, or if you feel uncomfortable about how someone is touching you, talking to you, or treating you, you should tell a trusted adult.
- You can tell a teacher or any adult at your school. They will be able to help you.
- You can also tell your parent, carer, or any family member or adult you trust.
- Even if the person who is making you feel like this has asked you not to tell anyone, you should still talk to an adult. It is more important that you are safe and protected.

What should I do if I am worried that someone I know is unsafe?

- Tell an adult you trust.
- You can tell a teacher or any adult at your school.
- They will be able to help your friend or the person you are worried about.
- You can also tell your parent, carer, or any family member or adult that you trust.
- Even if the person who you are worried about has asked you not to tell anyone, you should still talk to an adult. It is more important to make sure that your friend is safe and protected.

What will happen if I tell an adult at the school that I feel unsafe, or that I think my friend is unsafe?

- Adults at your school must listen to your concerns and help.
- In some cases the adult at school may need to tell another adult about your concerns so that you, or the person you know can be protected.
- Adults at your school can provide you with support and make sure you don't have to deal with this alone.

What if I don't feel like I can talk to anyone at my school

- If you don't feel like you can talk to an adult at your school, you can talk to your parent or carer.
- If you don't feel like you can talk to your parent or carer, you can talk to another adult within your family. This may be an aunt, uncle, a step-parent, or a grandparent.
- If you don't feel like you can talk to any of these adults, you should still try and find an adult that you can trust, and that you can talk to.
- You don't need to deal with things on your own.

There are many people who can help you. Here are some other suggestions:

- visit eHeadspace (which provides an online and a 9am-1am telephone support service) www.eheadspace.org.au or 1800 650 850.
- call KidsHelp Line on 1800 55 1800 or visit www.kidshelpline.com.au for 24 hour support
- call or visit your local police station or call 000.



PROTECT



Education
and Training



Feeling Safe: For Secondary School Students

Get the facts

This fact sheet has been designed to give you the facts about child abuse. It includes advice on what to do if you have been abused, are being abused, or are at risk of being abused. This fact sheet also provides you with advice if you know someone who has been abused, or is at risk of being abused.



What are your rights?

- Everyone has the right to feel safe and be protected from abuse.
- No one is allowed to threaten you, hurt you, or touch you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or afraid.
- This includes all adults, other teenagers and children – it includes everyone from family members, coaches, teachers, to friends and strangers.
- Every relationship should be respectful.
- No one should ever involve you in sexual activity without your consent, and no one should behave in a way that makes you feel unsafe or afraid.
- You don't have to deal with abuse on your own. Talk to a trusted adult. Teachers and other adults at your school can support you to get help.

What is child abuse?

- Child abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological harm, neglect, and family violence.
- Child abuse can also include grooming. This is behaviour where an adult tries to establish a relationship or other emotional connection with a child, to prepare them for a sexual relationship.
- Child abuse does not have to involve physical contact or force. It can include:
 - controlling a child through threats
 - exposing a child to sexual material and sexual acts
 - exposing a child to family violence.
- Child abuse can be perpetrated by any member of a community or a family member. Abuse can impact anyone and it is never the victim's fault.

For more information on sexual abuse and sexual assault visit Youth Central:

<http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/know-your-rights/sexual-assault>

What should I do if I have been abused or I feel unsafe?

- You should talk to an adult you trust.
- If you have been abused, or feel unsafe or threatened in any way you don't have to deal with this on your own.
- Abuse is never your fault and you should tell a trusted adult so you can get the help and support you need to feel safe and protected. Talking to someone won't get you in trouble.
- You can tell a teacher or any adult at your school. They will be able to help you.

What should I do if I think someone I know has been abused or is unsafe?

- You should talk to an adult you trust. Any staff member at your school will be able to help.
- You can also help your friend by encouraging them to tell a trusted adult.

What if my friend doesn't want to tell an adult?

- You should still tell an adult you trust on your friend's behalf.
- Even if your friend has specifically asked you not to tell an adult, you still should. It is more important to make sure that your friend is helped and feels protected.



What will happen if I tell an adult at the school that I feel unsafe, or that I know someone who is unsafe?

- You will be helped.
- Teachers and other adults at your school must listen to your concerns and help you.
- The information will not be shared with the person who is making you feel unsafe.
- Information will only be shared with people who can support and protect you.
- In some cases the people helping you are required by law to tell the police, the Department of Health and Human Services' Child Protection services and/or your family to prevent any further abuse, or risk of abuse.

What if I don't feel like I can talk to anyone at my school?

- You should still find a trusted adult to talk to.
- Abuse or feeling uncomfortable is too big to deal with on your own.

There are many people who can help you. Here are some other suggestions:

- visit eHeadspace (which provides an online and a 9am-1am telephone support service) www.eheadspace.org.au or **1800 650 850**.
- call KidsHelp Line on **1800 55 1800** or visit www.kidshelpline.com.au for 24 hour support)
- call or visit your local police station or call **000**
- Talk to your doctor, psychologist, social worker, welfare officer, or another trusted adult.

PROTECT



Education
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Protecting Children from Abuse: For Parents and Carers

GET THE FACTS

As adults we all play a critical role in protecting children from harm.

As a parent or carer you have the primary responsibility for protecting and caring for your own children and supporting them to build relationships that are safe and respectful.

You also play a critical role in identifying and responding to suspected abuse within the community. In fact it may amount to a criminal offence if you fail to report suspected child sexual abuse.

- Parents and carers are also often in a position to protect the friends of their children. This is because children are most likely to disclose their experiences of abuse to their peers, who in turn may share this with their own parents and carers.
- If your child talks to you about their friend, and you suspect that the child is being abused or is at risk of being abused, you should act. You may be the only adult in a position to act and your response may be critical in protecting that child's safety.

REPORTING ABUSE

What should I do if I suspect that *my child* has been abused?

If you believe your child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused contact Victoria Police immediately via the local police station or on 000 if it's an emergency.

What should I do if I suspect that a child is being abused and authorities have previously investigated and dismissed my report?

If you have new grounds for believing that a child is being abused, you should make another report to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police. Every report is critical to protecting a child as it builds evidence and helps authorities to gain a clearer understanding of risks to the child.

What should I do if I suspect that *another child* has been abused?

If you suspect a child has been abused, or is at risk of abuse (such as physical abuse, family violence or neglect) you should report immediately to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection (see contact details at the end of this fact sheet).

- If you suspect a child has been sexually abused, you must also report your concerns to the Victoria Police. You may be committing a criminal offence if you fail to do so
- You should report even if you're not sure. It is the role of authorities to investigate your concerns and determine if any further action needs to be taken.

What happens to my child if someone at the school suspects that my child has been abused?

All staff members at your child's school are required to report suspected child abuse to DHHS, Child Protection and, in some circumstances, to Victoria Police.

Your child's school will contact you as soon as possible, unless they have been advised not to do so by DHHS, Child Protection and/or Victoria Police.

Where appropriate the school will work with you to ensure your child is provided with support, which may include referring them to wellbeing professionals.

When is it a criminal offence to not report suspect abuse?

Any adult may face criminal charges if they believe that another adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 years of age and does not report this information to the police.

FACTS ON CHILD ABUSE

What is child abuse?

Child abuse:

- can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, emotional or psychological harm, neglect or family violence
- does not have to involve physical contact or force (e.g. child sexual abuse can include talking to a child in a sexually explicit way)
- can be committed by any member of the community, including someone within a child's family or someone within the school setting.

The trauma associated with child abuse can significantly impact upon the wellbeing and development of a child. This is why it is critical that we all respond immediately to any form of suspected abuse.

What are the signs that a child has been abused?

There are a range of physical and behavioural indicators of child abuse.

Most importantly you should act if you notice anything that causes you to form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, including (but not limited to):

- a change in a child's behaviour (e.g. withdrawal, regressive behaviour, or non-age appropriate sexual behaviours)
- physical indicators of abuse (e.g. unexplained bruises, welts, signs of malnutrition)
- an inappropriate relationship between an adult and a child (e.g. inappropriate physical contact, unexplained gifts or phone/email contact).

THE SCHOOL'S ROLE

How must schools respond to suspected child abuse?

All staff in Victorian schools are obligated to respond to any incident or suspicion of child abuse as outlined below:

1. Respond to the emergency

Address any immediate health and safety needs (e.g. administer first aid or contact emergency services).

2. Inform authorities

Report any reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused to the DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

3. Contact parents/carers when appropriate

Contact parents/carers once authorities advise that it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Ideally parents/carers will play a central role in providing support for their children, however schools will be instructed not to contact parents/carers in circumstances where this may impede an investigation or place the child at greater risk.

4. Provide ongoing support for all children impacted by the abuse

Provide appropriate support for all children impacted by abuse. This will likely include ongoing counselling from professionals. The child's ongoing support will be documented in a *Student Support Plan*.

These actions are outlined in further detail in *Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools*.

Are the staff at my child's school required to report child abuse?

Yes – all staff at your child's school are required by law to report any reasonable belief that a child has been abused, or is at risk of abuse.

In some circumstances, it may be a criminal offence for school staff to fail to report child abuse to the authorities.

PROTECTING MY CHILD

What can I do to help educate and protect my child from abuse?

Have a chat to your child and make sure that he or she knows that no one is allowed to threaten, hurt or touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Every relationship should be respectful and no one should behave in a way that makes them feel unsafe or afraid.

Your child's school will also be supporting your child in learning about their rights to be safe and respected. Victorian government schools are teaching the *Respectful Relationships* program which promotes positive attitudes and behaviours and is aimed at preventing family violence.

What should I talk about when I explain safety to my child?

There are some things you can do at home to build your child's understanding of safe and respectful relationships including:

- talking openly with your child about their feelings and relationships
- being sure that they understand you will listen and act if they have concerns about how anyone is treating them
- using the correct names for body parts and having age-appropriate conversations about touching and sexual activity
- letting your child know that adults should never harm or act in a sexual way with any child.

Keeping children safe outside of the home or school

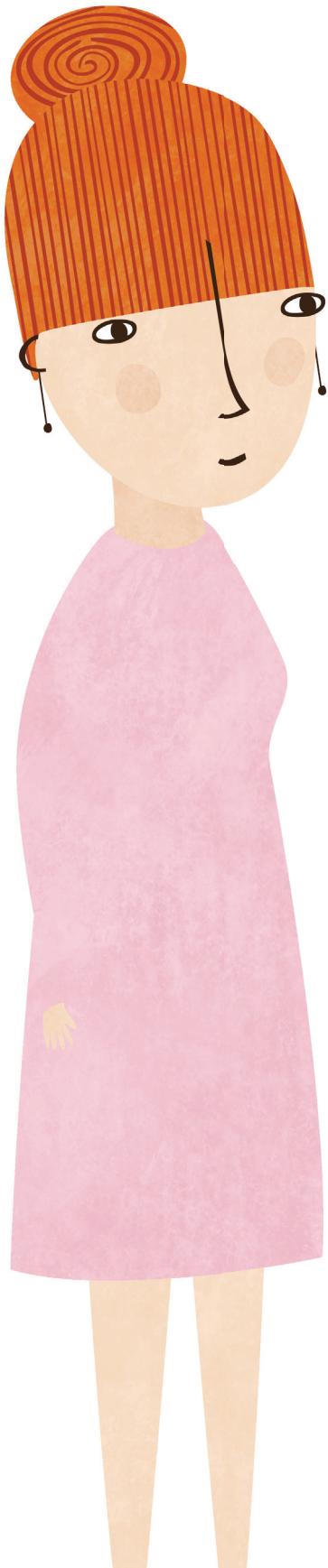
You play a critical role in ensuring your children are spending time in safe places.

In Victoria all people who are working with your children such as coaches and music teachers need to have a current Working With Children Check.

You may like to check that any staff and volunteers spending time with your child after school hours and on weekends have a valid Working With Children Check.

If you think that you may need some help to keep your children safe from harm and support their healthy development, it is important you find some help. Visit the Victorian Government's Better Health Channel for information on seeking support. See www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au.





FURTHER INFORMATION

Where can I go for more information and support?

You can contact DHHS Child Protection and Victoria Police directly to discuss any concerns you may have for the wellbeing of a child (see contact details on the next page)

If you have any concerns about your child or another child at your child's school talk to the principal or another staff member at the school about your concerns. You can also raise this matter with DHHS Child Protection and the Victoria Police.

For further information on where to go for support to keep your children safe from harm visit the Victorian Government's Better Health Channel: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

For more information on:

- your child's school's role in preventing and managing child abuse: www.education.vic.gov.au/protect
- indicators of abuse, visit www.education.vic.gov.au/protect

If you are concerned or unsure about your school's response and/or would like to talk to someone outside of the school please contact:

- Victorian government schools Regional Office: www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx
- Catholic Schools local Diocesan education office: www.cecvcatholic.edu.au/About-Us/Dioceses
- Independent Schools Victoria: www.is.vic.edu.au/who-we-are/contact-us/

CONTACT INFORMATION

24 Hour Services

Victoria Police	000
Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection	131 278

Catholic Education

Archdiocese of Melbourne:	(03) 9267 0228
■ Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics & Investigation	
■ Legal Services	
■ Student Wellbeing Information Line	
■ Communications & Marketing Unit (Media Advisor)	
Diocese of Sale	(03) 5622 6600
Diocese of Ballarat	(03) 5337 7135
Diocese of Sandhurst	(03) 5443 2377

Independent Schools

Independent Schools Victoria	(03) 9825 7200
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Department of Education and Training Regional

North Eastern Victoria	
General enquiries	1300 333 231
Benalla office	(03) 8392 9500
Glen Waverley office	(03) 8392 9300
North Western Victoria	
Bendigo office	(03) 5337 8444
Coburg office	(03) 9488 9488
South Eastern Victoria	
Dandenong office	(03) 8765 5600
Moe office	(03) 5127 0400
South Western Victoria	
General enquiries	1300 333 232
Ballarat office	(03) 5337 8444
Footscray office	(03) 8397 0300
Geelong office	(03) 5225 1000
Horsham office	(03) 5310 5300
Warrnambool office	1300 333 232

Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection

Region	Local Government Areas (LGAs)	Phone No
Northern and western suburban LGAs	Banyule, Brimbank, Darebin, Hobsons Bay, Hume, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Melton, Moonee Valley, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Wyndham, Yarra.	1300 664 977
Eastern suburban LGAs	Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges.	1300 360 391
Southern suburban LGAs	Bayside, Cardinia, Casey, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip, Stonnington.	1300 655 795
West Rural and Regional LGAs	Ararat, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Moorabool, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack, Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Glenelg, Greater Geelong, Moyne, Queenscliffe, Southern Grampians, Surf Coast, Warrnambool.	1800 075 599
North-western rural and regional LGAs	Buloke, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Gannawarra, Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mildura, Mount Alexander, Swan Hill.	1800 675 598
North-eastern rural and regional LGAs	Alpine, Benalla, Greater Shepparton, Indigo, Mansfield, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, Wodonga.	1800 650 227
Eastern and south-eastern rural and regional LGAs	Bass Coast, Baw Baw, East Gippsland, Latrobe, South Gippsland, Wellington.	1800 020 202

Child First

Alpine	1800 705 211	Manningham	1300 762 125
Ararat	1300 783 341	Mansfield	1800 705 211
Ballarat	1300 783 341	Maribyrnong	1300 775 160
Banyule	(03) 9450 0955	Maroondah	1300 369 146
Bass Coast	(03) 5662 5150	Melbourne	1300 775 160
Baw Baw	1800 339 100	Melton	1300 138 180
Bayside	1300 367 441	Mildura	1300 625 533
Benalla	1800 705 211	Mitchell	1800 663 107
Boroondara	1300 762 125	Moira	1300 854 944
Brimbank	1300 138 180	Monash	1300 762 125
Buloke	1300 665 218	Moonee Valley	1300 775 160
Campaspe	1800 260 338	Macedon Ranges	1300 783 341
Cardinia	(03) 9705 3939	Moorabool	1300 786 433
Cardinia - Aboriginal children and families	(03) 9794 5973	Moreland	1300 721 383
Casey	(03) 9705 3939	Mornington Peninsula	1800 260 338
Casey - Aboriginal children and families	(03) 9794 5973	Mount Alexander	1300 543 779
Central Goldfields	1800 260 338	Moyné	1800 663 107
Colac-Otway	(03) 5232 5500	Nillumbik	(03) 9450 0955
Corangamite	(03) 5232 5500	Northern Grampians	1800 195 114
Darebin	(03) 9450 0955	Port Phillip	1300 367 441
East Gippsland	(03) 5152 0052	Pyrenees	1300 783 341
Frankston	1300 721 383	Queenscliff	1300 551 948
Gannawarra	1300 665 218	South Gippsland	(03) 5662 5150
Glen Eira	1300 367 441	Southern Grampians	1300 543 779
Glenelg	1300 543 779	Stonnington	1300 367 441
Golden Plains	1300 783 341	Strathbogie	1300 854 944
Greater Bendigo	1800 260 338	Surf Coas	1300 551 948
Greater Dandenong	(03) 9705 3939	Swan Hill	1300 665 218
Greater Dandenong - Aboriginal children and families	(03) 9794 5973	Towong	1800 705 211
(Greater Geelong	1300 551 948	Wangaratta	1800 705 211
Greater Shepparton	1300 854 944	Warrnambool	1300 543 779
Hepburn	1300 783 341	Wellington	(03) 5144 7777
Hindmarsh	1800 195 114	West Wimmera	1800 195 114
Hobson's Bay	1300 775 160	Whitehorse	1300 762 125
Horsham	1800 195 114	Whittlesea	(03) 9450 0955
Hume	1300 786 433	Wodonga	1800 705 211
Indigo	1800 705 211	Wyndham	1300 775 160
Kingston	1300 367 441	Yarra	(03) 9450 0955
Knox	1300 369 146	Yarra Ranges	1300 369 146
La Trobe	1800 339 100	Yarriambiak	1800 195 114
Loddon	1800 260 338		
Macedon Ranges	1800 260 338		

Other Services

Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA) – Emergency Counselling & Support Line 1800 806 292	1800 806 292
Australian Childhood Foundation	1800 176 453
Children's Protection Society	(03) 9450 0900
Child Wise	(03) 9695 8900
Vic Aboriginal Education Association	(03) 9481 0800
Child Safety Commission	1300 782 978
Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner	1800 880 176
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)	(03) 9287 8800
Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)	(03) 9411 9411

Sexually Abusive Behaviour Treatment Services Providers:

Aust Childhood Foundation	(03) 9874 3922
Children's Protection Society	(03) 9450 0900
Berry St	(03) 5822 8100
Mallee Sexual Assault	(03) 5025 5400
South Eastern CASA	(03) 9928 8741
Ballarat CASA	(03) 5320 3933
Barwon CASA	(03) 5222 4318
Campaspe CASA	(03) 5441 0430
Gippsland CASA	(03) 5134 3922
Goulburn Valley CASA	(03) 5831 2343
Upper Murray CASA	(03) 5722 2203
Wimmera CASA	(03) 5381 9270



PROTECT



Education
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Spotting the Warning Signs of Child Abuse: For School Staff

A REASONABLE BELIEF

What do I do if I suspect (form a reasonable belief) a child is being abused?

You **MUST** take action as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or suspect that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. You **MUST** act whenever you form a reasonable belief which means acting even if you are unsure and have not directly observed the abuse. Failure to act can be a criminal offence.

You **MUST** follow the **Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse**

What is child abuse?

Child abuse can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, emotional or psychological harm, neglect or family violence.

It doesn't have to involve physical contact or force. Child abuse can include:

- talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
- grooming a child for future sexual activity
- forcing a child to watch pornography
- being witness to family violence
- failing to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, supervision or medical care to the extent that the development of the child is placed at serious risk, or is significantly impaired.

Who is most likely to be impacted by child abuse?

Any child can be victim to child abuse, however children who are vulnerable, isolated and/or have a disability are disproportionately abused.

Abuse is often committed by someone the child knows well such as a family member or someone within the school setting. In fact, child abuse can be committed by any member of the community.

Regardless of who the perpetrator or victim is the trauma of child abuse can have devastating impacts upon a child's wellbeing and development that can last for the rest of their life.

This is why it is critical that we respond immediately to any form of suspected abuse within our school communities.



What are the signs that a child has been abused?

The most common physical and behavioural indicators of child abuse are outlined below. This is not an exhaustive list.

If you feel uncomfortable about a child's physical presentation or behaviour, but have not directly witnessed or been told about abuse, or risk of abuse, you should still act.

You can seek further advice and if you form a reasonable belief that a child has been abused, is being abused, or is at risk of abuse then you **MUST** follow the **Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse**.

Common PHYSICAL indicators of child abuse

- bruises, welts, cuts/grazes or burns (especially those on back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs or in unusual configurations and may resemble an object)
- internal injuries and bone fractures not consistent with the explanation offered
- any injury to the genital or rectal area (e.g. bruising, bleeding, infection or anything causing pain to go to the toilet)
- wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions to hide injuries
- sexually-transmitted diseases and/or frequent urinary tract infections
- appearing consistently dirty and unwashed and/or inappropriately dressed for weather conditions
- being consistently hungry, tired and listless
- having unattended health problems and lack of routine medical care
- internal injuries.

Common BEHAVIOURAL indicators of child abuse

- disclosure of abuse and/or drawings or writing which depicts violence and abuse
- habitual absences from school without reasonable explanation
- significant and unexplained delays in emotional, mental or physical development
- regressive or unusual changes to behaviour (e.g. sudden decline in academic performance, nervousness, depression, withdrawal, hyperactivity, aggression, bedwetting)
- drug or alcohol misuse, suicide or self-harm, harm to others or animals
- an inconsistent or unlikely explanation for an injury, or inability to remember the cause
- reluctance to go home and/or a wariness or fear of a parent/carer
- unusual fear of physical contact with adults
- persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity (e.g. excessive masturbation or rubbing genitals against adults, promiscuity)
- poor self-care or personal hygiene
- an unusually close connection with an older person
- possessing expensive gifts or money (e.g. a new mobile phone given to them by a "friend")
- taking on a caretaker role prematurely, trying to protect other family members.

What are the signs that an adult is perpetrating abuse?

The most common indicators that an adult is abusing a child are outlined below. This is not an exhaustive list.

If you feel uncomfortable in any way about a relationship between an adult and a child (or inappropriate relationships between children such as siblings) you **MUST** still act by following the **Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse**.

Common indicators of adults abusing children

Family members (parents, siblings, extended family)

- attempts by one parent to alienate their child from the other parent
- overprotective or volatile relationships
- reluctance by the child to be alone with one or more of their family members
- a child and a sibling behaving like boyfriend and girlfriend (embarrassment if they are found alone together).

Other adults (e.g. school staff member, volunteers, coaches)

- touching a child inappropriately
- bringing up sexual material or personal disclosures into conversations with a child
- inappropriate contact with the child (e.g. calls, emails, texts, social media)
- obvious or inappropriate preferential treatment of the child (making them feel “special”)
- giving inappropriate/expensive gifts to a child
- having inappropriate social boundaries (e.g. telling the child about their own personal problems)
- offering to drive a child to or from school
- inviting themselves over to their homes, calling them at night
- befriending the parents/carers of the child and making visits to their home
- undermining the child’s reputation (so that the child won’t be believed).

Where to go for further advice?

- Your Principal or a member of the leadership team
- DHHS Child Protection on **131 278**
- Your local police station

In addition, Catholic school staff can contact their local diocesan education office:

- Archdiocese of Melbourne: Student Wellbeing Information Line on **(03) 9267 0228**
- Diocese of Sale: Senior Education Consultant on **(03) 5622 6600**
- Diocese of Ballarat: Student Wellbeing on **(03) 5337 7135**
- Diocese of Sandhurst: Team Leader Pastoral Wellbeing on **(03) 5443 2377**.

Want to know more?

The advice contained within this factsheet is drawn from *Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools* which can be found at www.education.vic.gov.au/protect

You must refer to this guidance to ensure you meet your obligations to protect children.

To familiarise yourself with this policy and to consider how it applies in different scenarios, visit www.education.vic.gov.au/protect.



CHILD SAFE RISK MANAGEMENT

CHILD SAFE – STANDARD 6

Rationale:

A child safety risk management strategy is a formal and structured approach to managing risks associated with child safety. At Lorne P-12 College we will develop, implement, monitor and evaluate risk management strategies to ensure child safety in our school environment.

This document outlines how the school will manage risks, who is responsible for the process, and a description of the process itself.

Implementation:

- Annually, the Wellbeing team will complete the following child safety risk management tasks:
 - a. Identify the school's child safety risks across the range of school environments including excursions, swimming, camps, online, performance activities, etc. The team will complete a risk assessment similar to the one included in this documentation.
 - b. Identify any existing risk mitigation measures and/or internal controls already in place.
 - c. Assess and rate the school's child safety risks given the existing controls in place, taking into account the likelihood of risk, and the likely consequence of the risk.
 - d. If the risk rating is more than the 'acceptable level', identify further risk management strategies through additional controls or other prevention, detection or mitigation strategies and then reassess the risk.
- The annual Child Safety risk management process will directly inform the development of the school's Child Safety plan.
- This process will be documented and shared with the school's Leadership Team and School Council.
- The risk assessment will take into consideration the increased level of risk associated with some activities and the vulnerability of particular groups of young people.
- The types of strategies that the school has in place or may be considered for the Child Safety plan include such things as:
 - Child Safety Code of Conduct for all school staff
 - Child Safety reporting procedures
 - Guidance and training for School Councillors
 - Induction for new staff, volunteers, pre-service teachers and contractors
 - Training for students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour
 - Clear windows in walls to enable visibility occupants
 - Assessment of new or modified physical environments for child safety risks
 - Supervision and monitoring of all school activities
 - Monitoring of online searching by students and staff
 - Performance and development processes and procedures
 - Pre-employment suitability checks as outlined in our Child Safe HR Practices document.
- The types of risks that the Wellbeing Team will analyse include, but is not limited to:
 - A culture of people not reporting issues
 - Children alone with one other person unsupervised
 - Recruitment of an inappropriate person
 - Inappropriate behaviour not being reported
 - Harassment via email, SMS or other social media
 - Ad-hoc contractors on the premises for maintenance etc.
 - Vulnerability of staff and students due to unknown personal details
 - Unknown people and environments at excursions and/or camps
 - False allegations.

Sample Risk Assessment Template

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
No organisational culture of child safety – lack of leadership, public commitment and frequent messaging	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possible	Severe	Extreme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed Statement of commitment to child safety is publicly available 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Inappropriate behaviour is not reported and addressed	Child safety code of conduct Clear child safety reporting procedures Performance management procedures	Unlikely	Severe	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Unquestioning trust of long term employees and contractors or norms	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Recruitment of an inappropriate person	WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration	Unlikely	Major	Medium	<p>Processes updated to require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal history search Pre-employment reference check 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
					includes asking about child safety		
Engagement with children online	Child safety code of conduct	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour Ensure appropriate settings on all student technologies 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of new or changed environments for child safety risks Ensure Code and strategies apply in all school contexts 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (eg maintenance)	Child safe environments Information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors Adequate monitoring	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresher training for frequent contractors 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low

Links and Related Policies:

The following are links to support material for schools:

- [DET - Child Safe Standards](#)
- [DET - Risk Assessment Template](#)

Related School Policies:

- [Child Protection Reporting Policy](#)
- [Supervision and Duty of Care Policy](#)
- [Working With Children Check Policy](#)

This practice was endorsed by School Council in....

June 2018



CHILD EMPOWERMENT

CHILD SAFE – STANDARD 7

Rationale:

Lorne P-12 College aims to deliver appropriate education about:

- Standards of behaviour for students attending the school.
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality).
- Resilience.
- Child abuse awareness and prevention.

Implementation:

Student Engagement Policy

- The school's Engagement and Inclusion policy along with the Responsible Behaviours document, provides the basis for the school developing and maintaining a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.
- The school clearly communicates the expectations and aspirations of the school community through the school's values and the behaviour matrices in relation to student engagement, including strategies to address bullying, school attendance and behaviour.

School-wide Positive Behaviour Support

- Lorne P-12 College actively engages with the School-wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) program. The school has worked to develop an evidenced-based framework for preventing and responding to student behaviour. We aim to create a positive school climate, a culture of student competence and an open, responsive management system.
- In line with this, the college has implemented a positive rewards ticketing system with rewards that students can attain for exhibiting behaviours that are outline on our student matrix.

Resources to Support Healthy and Respectful Relationships

- Lorne P-12 College has developed a formal partnership with the Lorne Community Hospital and the Surf Coast Shire to support the mental health and wellbeing of our students. This support includes areas such as minimizing cyber bullying, violence against women, respectful relationships and sexuality education.
- Lorne P-12 College is reviewing our Social and Emotional curriculum (P-10) in light of the new Victorian Curriculum and the Respectful Relationships Education resources. Our focus will be on building positive relationships and social skills. Additionally, challenging negative attitudes such as discrimination and harassment that can lead to violence, often against women.
- The school will review our Health Education policies to support the health messages being delivered within the classroom and engage with the school community for input to related policies and practices.
- Staff will be supported to best manage issues related to disclosure of personal information, giving careful consideration prior to approval for the collection of sensitive information, not promoting their own personal preferences, and selecting health education materials with care and consideration.
- Comprehensive, inclusive sexuality education is part of our school's health education curriculum, which is taught and assessed by teachers. This is a compulsory part of any school's health education program.
- The sexual health responsibilities of the school are shared with local health and welfare community providers and parents.
- Through planning our school ensures that the learning and teaching in sexuality education is developmentally appropriate.
- Lorne P-12 College supports and respects sexuality diversity including same sex attraction.

- The school aims to build student resilience and peer support practices to promote a student's ability to look after oneself, recognise and be aware of one's needs in others, and awareness of appropriate supports in school and in the community.
- The school is very active in supporting environments conducive to good mental health, and sharing appropriate resources with students to improve engagement and wellbeing outcomes.

Resources to Support Resilience

The school is working to strengthen our social and emotional learning skills and enhance the resilience of our students. We will be developing a school-wide approach based on the DET's [Building Resilience: A model to support children and young people.](#)

Resources to support Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention

The school is working to strengthen our curriculum in regards to teaching children about personal safety; focusing on the three key safety messages of recognise, react and report. We will be delivering a curriculum based on the *Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum* developed by Queensland's Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE).

Links and Related Policies:

The following are links to support material for schools:

- [DET - Child Safe Standards](#)

Related School Documents:

- Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- Responsible Behaviours Document

This practice was endorsed by School Council in....

June 2018

