



Star of the Sea College

Child Safety – Reporting Obligations

Star of the Sea College is a Catholic Independent Girls' school, founded by the Presentation Sisters in 1883. Since 2014, Star of the Sea College has operated under the auspices of Kildare Ministries.

At Star of the Sea College we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of our students as a central and fundamental responsibility of our College. Our commitment is drawn from, and inherent in, the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel: *CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety*

PURPOSE

Under the [National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020](#), protecting children is everyone's responsibility – parents, communities, governments and business all have a role to play. In Victoria, a joint protocol, PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian Schools, involving the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection, the Department of Education and Training (DET), the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, exists to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

All teachers, other staff, parish priests, canonical and religious order administrators of Catholic schools within Victoria must understand and abide by the professional, moral and legal obligations to implement child protection and child safety policies, protocols and practices

Schools must comply with the legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the ***Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)***, the ***Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*** and the recommendations of the [Betrayal of Trust Report](#).

This policy is designed to assist staff to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- understand the four critical actions for schools, which are:
 - Responding to an emergency
 - Reporting to Authorities
 - Contacting Parents/carers
 - Providing support
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.



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Child Protection Reporting Obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements. This policy sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed.

PROCEDURES

1. Understanding Obligations

a. **Duty of Care Obligations¹**

School staff members have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children under their care and supervision from harm that is reasonably foreseeable (this applies to ALL school staff). The question of what constitutes “reasonable steps” will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. The staff member may breach their duty of care towards a student if they fail to act in the way a reasonable or diligent professional would have acted in the same situation. In relation to suspected child abuse, reasonable steps may include (but are not 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 Victoria Police and DHHS Child Protection arranging counselling and/or other appropriate welfare support for the child providing ongoing 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 ongoing support to the child. The Four Critical Actions outlines steps to take and services to refer to depending on your assessment of the child’s situation. The staff member must follow the Four Critical Actions, including reporting to Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection, or referring to other services like Child FIRST, to ensure that they fulfil their duty of care obligations. Duty of care also extends to students who are: aged 17 years and over. In circumstances where the staff member suspects that the student is subject to abuse, they should still follow the Four Critical Actions.

Although DHHS Child Protection generally work with children under 17, they can still be contacted with concerns relating to students 17 and over for referral and advice. Other services, such as The Orange Door, can provide services and support to adolescents. involved in student sexual behaviour Staff members have a duty of care towards all students involved in student sexual behaviour, including students exhibiting concerning/ harmful behaviours, students impacted by such behaviours and any other students in the school who may have witnessed and/or been affected by the sexual behaviour. *See Identifying and Responding to*

Student Sexual Offending: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/SSO_Policy.pdf.

b. **Mandatory Reporting**

There are certain classes of professionals who are classified as “mandatory reporters”. Within a school mandatory reporters include all: Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers, including principals, staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT registered doctors and nurses. All mandatory reporters must make a report to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection as soon as

¹ https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf



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practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that: a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type. It is a criminal offence not to report in these circumstances. Mandatory reporters must also follow the Four Critical Actions to ensure they fulfil all their legal obligations.

c. Criminal Offences

The Victorian Government has introduced criminal offences to protect children from sexual abuse. Under these reforms a failure to report, or take action in relation to suspected child sexual abuse can now constitute a criminal offence Failure to disclose This offence applies to all adults (not just professionals who work with children) who: form a reasonable belief that another adult may have committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 years of age; AND fail to report this information to Victoria Police. A person will not be guilty of the offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information. A reasonable excuse includes:

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

Additional exemptions apply where:

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

Failure to protect

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

- knows of a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16, under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the organisation (e.g. employee, contractor, volunteer, visitor); AND □ has the power or responsibility to remove that risk; AND □ negligently fails to remove or reduce the risk of harm.

Within a school setting, a position of authority includes principals and assistant principals and staff in institutional management positions (for example in government schools this includes Regional Directors and other senior managers).

d. Ministerial Order No 870: Child Safe Standards



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All Victorian schools must comply with Ministerial Order No. 870 - Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools in order to be registered, and remain registered with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

The Order specifies how every Victorian school must:

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

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

e. **Reportable Conduct Scheme**

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

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

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

- information about something that is alleged to have occurred outside the course of the person's employment or engagement with the school
- sexual offences, sexual misconduct or physical violence committed in the presence of a child (which may include family violence committed by a school staff member in front of their own child). However, student-to-student abuse is not covered by the Scheme.

Responding to a reportable conduct allegation

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

To respond to an allegation of reportable conduct in: a Catholic school, Catholic school principals should contact: Archdiocese of Melbourne: Industrial Relations Unit on (03) 9267 0431 or by email on ceoir@cem.edu.au

Interaction with mandatory reporting and other reporting obligations

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



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f. Organisational duty of care

The organisational duty of care requires all organisations that exercise care, supervision or authority over children in Victoria, including Star of the Sea College, to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child (sexual or physical abuse) by an individual associated with the organisation while the child is under their supervision or authority. This duty of care ensures that organisations that work with children have a well-defined and clear legal duty to prevent child abuse. The duty should represent no significant change in day-to-day practice for schools in managing their duty of care obligations, so long as the school is compliant with the Child Safe Standards and is taking reasonable steps to minimise the risk of child abuse. The duty does not change existing duties that schools and teachers already have, but instead reinforces the importance of ensuring that schools take reasonable precautions to minimise the risk of child abuse.

2. Identifying signs of child abuse

School staff members play a critical role in protecting children from child abuse. In some cases the staff member 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.

There are different types of abuse:

- physical child abuse
- child sexual abuse
- grooming
- family violence □ emotional child abuse □ neglect .

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

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

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

Physical Indicators of physical Child abuse include, but are not limited to:

- bruises or welts on facial areas and other areas of the body, e.g. back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs
- bruises or welts in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury, e.g. fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth
- burns from boiling water, oil or flames or burns that show the shape of the object used to make them, e.g. iron, grill, cigarette



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- fractures of the skull, jaw, nose and limbs (especially those not consistent with the explanation offered, or the type of injury possible at the child's age of development)
- cuts and grazes to the mouth, lips, gums, eye area, ears and external genitalia
- bald patches where hair has been pulled out
- multiple injuries, old and new ☐ effects of poisoning ☐ internal injuries.

Behavioral Indicators of physical child abuse include but are not limited to

- disclosure of an injury inflicted by someone else (parent, carer or guardian), or an inconsistent or unlikely explanation or inability to remember the cause of injury
- unusual fear of physical contact with adults
- aggressive behaviour
- disproportionate reaction to events
- wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions to hide injuries
- wariness or fear of a parent, carer or guardian
- reluctance to go home
- no reaction or little emotion displayed when being hurt or threatened
- habitual absences from school without reasonable explanation
- overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative
- unusually nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive and destructive to self and/or others
- poor sleeping patterns, fear of the dark or nightmares and regressive behaviour, e.g. bed-wetting
- drug or alcohol misuse, suicidal thoughts or self-harm

Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse:

- is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity
- can include a wide range of sexual activity and can include exposing a child to pornography ☐ does not always involve physical contact or force.

A staff member must follow the Four Critical Actions if they suspect that:

- a student has been or is being sexually abused, or is at risk of sexual abuse
- a school staff member, contractor or volunteer may be engaging, or are at risk of engaging in sexual behaviour with a child/children.

Unwanted sexual behaviour toward a student by a child 10 years or over can constitute a sexual offence and is referred to as student-to-student sexual offending.

Child sexual abuse may not always include physical sexual contact and can also include non-contact offences, for example:

- talking to a student in a sexually explicit way
- sending sexual messages or emails to a student
- exposing a sexual body part to a student
- forcing a student to watch a sexual act (including showing pornography to the student) ☐ having a student pose or perform in a sexual manner (including child sexual exploitation).



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Child sexual abuse does not always involve force. In some circumstances a student may be manipulated into believing that they have brought the abuse on themselves, or that the abuse is an expression of love, through a process of grooming.

All incidents, suspicions and disclosures of student sexual offending must be responded to by following the Four Critical Actions.

Further specific information is available in [Protect: Identifying and Responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian Schools](#), pages 17-21

Grooming

Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual abuse at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer. If a staff member suspects that a child is being groomed, they must follow the Four Critical Actions.

Family Violence

Family violence can include physical violence or threats, verbal abuse, emotional and physical abuse, sexual abuse and financial and social abuse. If a staff member suspects that a student is exposed to family violence (including witnessing family violence), or is at risk of family violence they must follow the Four Critical Actions.

Emotional Child Abuse

Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness from a person, to the extent that the child suffers, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm to their physical or developmental health. If a staff member suspects that a child is or is likely to, suffer emotional or psychological harm, they must follow the Four Critical Actions.

Neglect

Serious neglect includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health or physical development of the student is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk. If a staff member suspects that a student is experiencing serious neglect, they must follow the Four Critical Actions. If the staff member is concerned that a student may be experiencing neglect that is not “serious”, they should speak to a School counsellor or the Pastoral Leader about their concerns, who will refer to external agencies.

Forming a 'Reasonable Belief'

If the staff member witnesses, suspects, or receives a disclosure of child abuse including exposure to family violence, the staff member will need to determine whether they have formed a ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ that a child has been or is being abused or is at risk of being abused. A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold:



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

Forming a belief on reasonable grounds may include:

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

Types of Child Abuse and Indicators of Harm

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

There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert staff to the possibility of child abuse and neglect. While any indicators of possible child abuse or neglect are concerning, it is important to know which indicators **must** be reported.

It is **mandatory** to report concerns relating to:

- physical abuse
- child sexual abuse.

While not mandated, making a report to DHHS Child Protection may also be needed for:

- emotional abuse
- neglect
- medical neglect
- family violence
- human trafficking (including forced marriage)
- extreme risk-taking behaviour
- risk to an unborn child
- a child or young person exhibiting sexually-abusive behaviours.



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For full definitions for all of the types of child abuse and a comprehensive list of the indicators of harm are in the link: [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victoria](#)

Reporting Child Protection Concerns

All school staff who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of:

- protection from physical harm or sexual abuse – **must** report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection
- protection from harm that is not believed to involve physical harm or sexual abuse – are encouraged to report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection
- therapeutic treatment – are encouraged to report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.

A template, “Child Safety Reporting Obligations Proforma” for recording information relating to child sexual abuse is to be used for any documentation relating to reporting obligations.

When to Make a Mandatory Report

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p>Mandatory Reporting - DHHS Child Protection</p> <p>Mandatory reporters must make a report as soon as practicable if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child’s parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.</p>	<p>Mandatory reporters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers registered to teach or who have permission to teach pursuant to the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006</i> (Vic.)• Principals of government and non-government schools• Registered medical practitioners• Nurses• All members of the police force.	<p>Contact DHHS Child Protection</p>



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When a Report May Be Required, Though Not Mandated

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p>Child in Need of Protection</p> <p>Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection for any of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child. • The child’s parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child. • The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. • The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. • The child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. • The child’s physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parents are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care. 	Any person	<p>Contact DHHS Child Protection and Victoria Police if it is clear a crime has been committed.</p>
<p>Child in Need of Therapeutic Treatment</p> <p>Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child who is 10 years of age or over, but under 15 years of age, is in need of therapeutic treatment because he or she has exhibited sexually-abusive behaviours. Contact Child First if there is no significant concern about the immediate safety of the child.</p>	Any person	<p>Contact DHHS Child Protection or Child First</p> <p>Contact Details</p>



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<p>Significant Concerns About Wellbeing of a Child</p> <p>School staff can seek advice from or make referral to DHHS Child Protection or Child First if they have a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child and where the immediate safety of the child is not compromised.</p> <p>The staff member should share relevant information with Child First to help them complete their assessment of the referral</p>	Any person	Contact DHHS Child Protection or Child First Contact Details
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When to Report Criminal Offences

This table sets out when to report a concern that a child or a young person has been abused, or is in need of protection.

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p>Reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16</p> <p>Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to police.</p> <p>You will not be guilty of an offence if you do not report in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The victim is 16 years of age or older and does not have an intellectual disability that limits his/her capacity to make an informed decision; and he/she does not want the information reported to the police. • The victim has disclosed the information in confidence in the course of a therapeutic relationship with you as a registered medical practitioner or counsellor. • The victim turned 16 years of age before 27 October 2014. <p>Reasonable excuses for failing to comply with the requirement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reasonable belief that the information has already been reported to police or DHHS Child Protection disclosing all of the information • A reasonable fear that the disclosure will place someone (other than the alleged perpetrator) at risk of harm. 	<p>Any person aged 18 or over</p>	<p>Victoria Police</p>



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3. How to Make a Report for Mandatory Reporting and Criminal Offences

The following information provides practical guidance in relation to record keeping for both mandatory reporting and criminal offences.

Making a Report

In case of emergency or if a child is in life-threatening danger contact (000) or the local police station.

Alternatively, to report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHHS Child Protection, call the local Child Protection Intake Provider (see [DHHS Child Protection contacts](#)). If after hours call the **Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78**.

The table below describes the information to include when making a mandatory report about child abuse or child protection concerns.

Step	Description
1	Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour)• the source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person)• the actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with the principal, report to DHHS Child Protection etc.).
2	Discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the Principal, a member of the Leadership Team or the Student Counsellor. The individual staff member should then make their own assessment about whether they should make a report about the child or young person and to whom the report should be made.
3	Gather the relevant information necessary to make the report. This should include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• full name, date of birth and residential address of the child or young person• the details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns• the individual staff member's involvement with the child or young person• details of any other agencies which may be involved with the child or young person.



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Step	Description
4	<p>Make a report to the relevant agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To report concerns which are life-threatening phone 000 or the local police station. To find the nearest Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team contact your local police station. Visit the Victoria Police website for local contact numbers. To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHHS Child Protection, Call your local Child Protection Intake provider immediately, Child Protection ☐ For After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services, call 13 12 78. To report concerns to DHHS Child Protection, contact your local child protection office. <p>** Non-mandated staff members who believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection are able to report their concerns to Child Protection.</p>
5	<p>Make a written record of the report including the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported the name and position of the person who made the report and the person who received the report.
6	<p>Notify relevant school staff and/or Catholic Education Melbourne staff of a report to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School staff should advise the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team if they have made a report. School staff can seek further assistance by contacting the Catholic Education Melbourne Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Unit.
7	<p>In the case of Koorie students, the principal must notify the Diocese or Regional Office (as appropriate) to ensure the regional Koorie support officer can arrange appropriate support for the student.</p>



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Potential Consequence of Making a Report

Potential Consequences	Description
Confidentiality	<p>The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or parent of the report • the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed • a court or tribunal decides that it necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child • a court or tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to provide evidence.
Professional Protection	<p>If a report is made in good faith:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter • the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.
Interviews	<p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police may conduct interviews of children and young people at the school without their parent’s knowledge or consent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing children and young people at school should only occur in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the best interests of the child to proceed in this manner • DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police will notify the principal or a member of the leadership team of their intention to interview the child or young person on the school premises • When DHHS Child Protection practitioners/Victoria Police officers come to the school premises, the principal or a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to the child or young person • When a child or young person is being interviewed by DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, school staff must arrange to have a supportive adult present with the child or young person.



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Support for the child or young person	<p>The roles and responsibilities of staff members in supporting children who are involved with DHHS Child Protection may include the following: □ acting as a support person for the child or young person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• attending DHHS Child Protection case-planning meetings• observing and monitoring the child’s behaviour liaising with professionals.
Requests for information	<p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Child FIRST and/or Victoria Police may request information about the child or family for the purpose of investigating a report and assessing the risk to the child or young person.</p> <p>In certain circumstances, DHHS Child Protection can also direct school staff and Department staff to provide information or documents about the protection or development of the child. Such directions should be in writing and only be made by authorised persons within DHHS Child Protection.</p>
Witness Summons	<p>If DHHS Child Protection makes a Protection Application in the Children’s Court of Victoria, any party to the application may issue a Witness Summons to produce documents and/or to give evidence in the proceedings.</p>



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Appendix 1: Related Resources

Catholic Education Melbourne

- [Catholic Schools Operational Guide](#) (CEVN website)
- [PROTECT: identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian Schools.](#)
- [PROTECT: Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse template](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)

Department of Education and Training

- [Duty of care](#)
- [Police and DHHS Interviews](#)
- [Responding to Student Sexual Assault](#)
- [Requests for Information about Students](#)
- [Subpoenas and Witness Summonses](#)
- Flowchart: [A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST \(PDF - 270Kb\)](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module.](#)

Department of Health and Human Services

- [Child Protection](#)
- [Child FIRST.](#)

Victoria Police

- [Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams \(SOCIT\).](#)

Department of Justice and Regulations

- [Failure to disclose offence](#)
- [Failure to protect offence](#)
- [Grooming offence.](#)

Further Information

Catholic Education Melbourne Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Unit operates the **Student Wellbeing Information Line (9am – 5pm daily) 03 9267 0228** The *Student Wellbeing Information Line* seeks to:

- address matters that impact on the wellbeing and educational outcomes of young people arising in Catholic school communities across the Archdiocese of Melbourne using a solution focused- framework
- act as a conduit between the school and the family to promote effective communication and resolution of enquiries.



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Responsible Officer	Principal
Approved By	Chair of the Board
Approved and Commenced	2017
Review By	November 2020
Relevant Legislation	<p>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.), Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.) Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.) Ministerial Order No 870 - <i>Child Safe Standards: Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools</i> Privacy and Data Protection Bill 2014 (Vic.) Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001 (Vic.) Working with Children Act 2005</p>
Related Policies & Procedures	<p>Catholic Education Melbourne policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 2.2: Guidelines Relating to the Employment of Staff • Policy 2.19: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations • Policy 2.19a: School Guidelines –Police and DHHS Interview Protocols • Policy 2.26: Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools <p>PROTECT Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian Schools Child Safety Reporting Obligations Proforma Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy Child Safety Policy Critical Incident Procedures Grievance Procedures ICT Staff Policy ICT Student Policy Respectful Relationships Policy Pastoral Care Policy Volunteer’s Policy</p>
Version	5
Amendments to Version	Minor edits eg Ministerial Order 870 Child Safe Standards(not safety) Approval process