



MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

Authority and Review	<p>Authorisation: College Principal</p> <p>Date of last review: April 2023 Date of next review: April 2026</p>
Definition	<p>Mandatory Reporting is the legal requirement for certain professional groups to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities.</p>
Glossary	<p>Child FIRST / Orange Door - A family services community-based intake and referral service.</p> <p>Child Protection - The statutory child protection service provided by DFFH, which is able to intervene to protect children and young people at risk of significant harm.</p> <p>DFFH - Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.</p> <p>CYFA - Children, Youth and Families Act 2005.</p> <p>CCYP – Commission for Children and Young People.</p> <p>VIT – Victorian Institute of Teaching.</p> <p>Four Critical Actions for Schools – The Department of Education & Training’s PROTECT guidance for responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.</p>
Purpose	<p>Bialik College is committed to preventing harm to children through the reporting of child abuse and neglect under the Children, Youth and Families Act, (2005), following the guidelines of Ministerial Order 1359 and the 11 Child Safe Standards.</p> <p>This policy is consistent with the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children (2009-2020) and complements Bialik College’s Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy (and included Child Safety Code of Conduct). The National Framework states that “protecting children is everyone’s business: parents, communities, governments and business all have a role to play” and provides the foundation for improving the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children through the following six outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children live in safe and supportive families and communities, • children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early, • risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing, • Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities, • child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented, and survivors receive adequate support. <p>This policy is based on the principle of partnership and shared responsibility across a broad range of human service professionals, including schools and licensed children’s services. Most children are best protected and cared for within their own family. However when parents, carers or guardians are unwilling or unable to protect their children from significant harm, the protection of the child becomes the responsibility of the wider community and, at times, requires statutory Child Protection intervention. Licensed children’s services and Victorian schools play an</p>

	<p>important role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect through their access to information about family functioning and the needs of children.</p> <p>When a school or licensed children’s service staff member forms a belief that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed, they must take action that is timely, respectful, adheres with this policy and with the Four Critical Actions for Schools.</p> <p>MANDATORY REPORTING</p> <p>Schools have an important role to play in supporting children and their families and in protecting students who may be at risk of harm due to abuse or neglect. Education staff are in close daily contact with students and are well placed to observe when a child or young person appears to be at risk of harm.</p> <p>DUTY OF CARE</p> <p>School staff have a duty of care to protect and preserve the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people in their care and staff must always act in the best interests of those children and young people. If a staff member has any concerns regarding the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, it is important to take immediate action.</p> <p>Please Note: The role of investigating an allegation of child abuse rests solely with DFFH (Child Protection) and/or Victoria Police.</p> <p>In supporting a child who is involved with Child Protection, staff members may be called upon to act as a support person, attend Child Protection case plan meetings, observe and monitor the student’s behaviour, and liaise with professionals. At Bialik College this is normally the role of the Principal but may be delegated to the Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care), relevant Head of School, a School Psychologist or a member of the Child Protection Team.</p>
<p>To whom does this policy apply?</p>	<p>This policy applies to the College, including all paid employees, volunteers and contractors if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their employment duties, they have reason to form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in danger or there is a need to protect a child from physical injury or sexual abuse.</p> <p>Additionally, any adult (aged 18 and over) who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child (aged under 16) must disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse). Nevertheless, Bialik College advocates that all adults assume a moral responsibility to report all types of suspected child abuse.</p> <p>Consequently, all staff, volunteers and contractors play a critical role in protecting children at the College and have a responsibility to report all types of child abuse (physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse and neglect).</p> <p>Under the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i>, any person may make a report to the Police, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – Child Protection (DFFH) or to family services such as Child FIRST / Orange Door if they have a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child.</p> <p>When a member of staff, volunteer or contractor forms a belief that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed, he/she must take action that is timely, respectful and coordinated. (See Procedures below)</p> <p>Under the 2013 Betrayal of Trust legislation, three offences apply to all adults:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a grooming offence refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of

	<p>befriending and influencing a child, and in some circumstances, members of the child’s family. It is engaged in with the intention to achieve a criminal objective of sexual activity with children</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. a failure to disclose offence refers to the requirement of any adult (aged 18 and over) who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child (aged under 16), to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse) 3. a failure to protect offence refers to the requirement of any person in a position of authority to reduce or remove the risk of sexual abuse of a child by an adult associated with their organisation. An offence is committed if such a person knows of the risk of abuse and has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so. <p>Action taken must comply with the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse (see Appendix below).</p> <p>MANDATORY REPORTERS</p> <p>Certain professionals are legally required to report as soon as practicable to Police or DFFH if in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their employment duties they have reason to form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in danger or there is a need to protect a child from physical injury or sexual abuse. A report must be made each time such a belief is formed.</p> <p>Within the College, Mandatory Reporters include the following professionals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Medical practitioners 2. Teachers (including early childhood teachers) 3. The Principal 4. Religious leaders <p>Mandatory Reporters are both legally and professionally protected for a report made in good faith. That means that a Mandatory Reporter cannot be successfully sued or subjected to any legal liability, nor can they be disciplined for unprofessionalism.</p>
<p>Policy</p>	<p>Bialik College adheres to the belief that every child has a right to live a full and productive life in an environment that builds confidence, friendships, security and happiness irrespective of their family circumstances or background.</p> <p>The Children, Youth and Families Act (CYFA) 2005 have a unifying set of ‘best interests principles’. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the child • Reporting to Child Protection all allegations or disclosures of physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect • Reporting to Child Protection when a belief is formed that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed • Making the child’s ongoing safety and wellbeing the primary focus of decision-making • Sharing appropriate information, expertise and resources with other service providers • Protecting and promoting the cultural and spiritual identity of a child

- and maintaining their connection to their family or community of origin
- Enabling the child and the child's family to access appropriate services in order to reduce the long-term effects of abuse or neglect.

MANDATORY REPORTING

A report to Child Protection (DFFH) or Police will occur as soon as practicable after forming a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child or they are the perpetrator.

Please Note: Staff are required to discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the Principal, Assistant Principal (Student Wellbeing), School Psychologist, Head of School, Head of Student Services or member of the Child Protection Team. If a staff member has formed a reasonable belief that there has been institutional abuse, they are required to contact Child Protection (DFFH) with or without discussing the matter with other staff members.

If the Principal, Assistant Principal (Student Wellbeing), School Psychologist or Head of School does not wish to make a mandatory report, this does not discharge the obligation to do so if a reasonable belief has been formed that abuse may have occurred. If the concerns continue, even after consultation, there is still a legal obligation to make a mandatory report of their concerns. Bialik College will continue to assist any staff member, volunteer or contractor who is making a Mandatory Report even if College Leadership do not believe a report is warranted.

DUTY OF CARE

The College, including all staff, volunteers and contractors have a duty of care to support and protect the children and young people with whom we are professionally involved. When a staff member or volunteer forms a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, they are ethically bound to take action to protect the safety and wellbeing of that child or young person, whether or not they are a mandated reporter. Duty of care is breached if a person:

- Does something that a reasonable person in that person's position would not do in a particular situation,
- Fails to do something that a reasonable person in that person's position would do in the circumstances,
- Acts or fails to act in a way that causes harm to someone to whom the person owes a duty of care.

- Other groups where there may be special requirements include:
 - Children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds,
 - Children with refugee backgrounds,
 - Children with disabilities,
 - Children of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander background

<http://www.vacca.org>

At no time should a member of staff feel they must hold information, manage an issue, counsel the student regarding any matter of welfare or safety concern without seeking support from the Principal, Assistant Principal (Student Wellbeing), Head of School, Head of Student Services, a member of the Child Protection Team, the Police or Child Protection (DFFH).

<p>Procedure</p>	<p>RESPONDING TO A CONCERN</p> <p>You are concerned about a child because you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • received a disclosure from a child about abuse or neglect, • observed indicators of abuse or neglect, • are aware of possible harm via your professional responsibilities. <p>While a concern may exist regarding the potential danger of retribution from perpetrator against the victim, or others, following a report, the following actions must still be implemented. These concerns must form part of the report.</p> <p>At all times remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the Bialik College ‘Guide to Managing a Disclosure’ documentation, and the Four Critical Actions for Schools (see appendix below): <p>Action 1</p> <p>Responding to an Emergency</p> <p>If a child is at immediate risk of harm, safety must be ensured by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Separating alleged victims ○ Administering first aid ○ Calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns ○ Identify a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police. ○ Consider maintaining the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence ○ If there is no immediate risk, go to Step 2 <p>Action 2</p> <p>Reporting to Authorities / Referring to Services</p> <p>As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse must be reported as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.</p> <p>A. If the source of suspected abuse comes from within the school, all instances of child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor must be reported to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Victoria Police ▪ CCYP ▪ Principal and/or Bialik College Council President <p>B. If the source of suspected abuse comes from within the family or community, all incidents, suspicions and disclosure of child abuses must be reported as soon as possible to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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, serious impact on the child’s safety, stability or development ▪ Victoria Police (including suspected grooming) ▪ Principal and/ or Bialik College Council President <p>C. If there is a belief that a child is not subject to abuse, but significant concerns are held for their wellbeing, action must still be taken. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child First / The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family is open to receiving support) ▪ DHHS Child Protection ▪ Victoria Police
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Action 3

Contacting Parents/Carers

The School 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 parent/carer (eg. In circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- To contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day as the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- How to communicate with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

Action 4

Providing Ongoing Support

The College must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a *Student Support Plan* in consultation with the Bialik Child Protection Team and/or the Bialik Psychology & Counselling Team. This is an essential part of the duty of care requirements. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to internal or external wellbeing professionals and support.

Note: Each time a further instance or risk of abuse is raised (including new information regarding a previous report), these Four Actions must be followed.

Staff, volunteers and Contractors may, at any time and in any circumstance, seek assistance and guidance from any member of the Bialik Child Protection Team.

The College recognised that being involved any part of a mandatory report can be an emotionally challenging situation, and all those involved are encouraged to also seek personal support available from the Bialik Psychology & Counselling Team or the Bialik Employer Assistance Program (EAP Assist – 0407 086 000).

Staff, Volunteers or Contractors who are involved with any part of responding to an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse or neglect must:

- Record all observations, details, conversations, etc. (recommendation to use the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template](#)),
- Forward all notes to the appropriate Head of School or member of the Child Protection Team with the instruction for the notes to be saved under the child's Confidential Notes,
- Consult with the Principal, appropriate Head of School, member of the Child Protection Team and/or other appropriate colleagues,
- Follow the outlined procedures above, or ensure that a member of the College is doing so,
- Ensure that the appropriate external agencies have been contacted,
- Follow the advice of the appropriate external agency,
- Consider whether secondary victims (siblings, parents, family members, friends, etc) may also exist and require support,
- Seek further advice wherever needed.

	<p>IMPORTANT NOTES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of investigating an allegation of child abuse rests solely with Child Protection and/or Victoria Police. • Differences of opinion may occur between the School and Child Protection. In this event, the “best interests principles” provide a decision making framework. The opinion of both the College and Child Protection should be documented on Synergetic and updated when necessary. • The decision will either be to continue monitoring as a Wellbeing Concern which is documented appropriately or to proceed with a Mandatory Report without delay. If a Mandatory report is made, maintaining confidentiality is essential and details are <u>only</u> discussed with those involved. • Any external bodies/individuals seeking information regarding the report MUST be directed to the Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care) or a member of the Child Protection Team. • Any staff member involved in a Mandatory Report will be offered appropriate support by the College. • Following a Mandatory Report, all relevant pastoral support is to be provided to the child, including regular conversations and observations to ensure that the child is safe and supported.
<p>Legal Obligations & Training</p>	<p>The following criminal offences relate to the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) and the CYFA Section 184(1)</p> <p>The Offence of Failure to Disclose (Sexual Abuse)</p> <p>(See section: ‘To whom does this policy apply?’)</p> <p>As part of annual training all Bialik employees, contractors and volunteers are made aware of the nature of this offence, as well as how it differs from mandatory reporting. Such offences will be managed by the Principal, member of the Senior Leadership Team or member of the Child Protection Team in consultation with Victoria Police, the CCYP (under the Reportable Conduct scheme) and relevant authorities.</p> <p>The Offence of Failure to Protect (Sexual Abuse)</p> <p>(See section: ‘To whom does this policy apply?’)</p> <p>As part of annual training all Bialik employees, contractors and volunteers are made aware of the nature of this offence, as well as how it interacts with other child safety obligations.</p> <p>In addition, the College conducts such checks that are necessary to ensure that all employees comply with the terms of our Recruitment Policy, including rigorous checks and induction processes.</p> <p>Such offences will be managed by the Principal, member of the Senior Leadership Team or member of the Senior Leadership Team or member of the Child Protection Team in consultation with Victoria Police, the CCYP (under the Reportable Conduct scheme) and relevant authorities.</p> <p>The Offence of Grooming</p> <p>(See section: ‘To whom does this policy apply?’)</p> <p>As part of annual training all Bialik employees, contractors and volunteers are made aware of the nature of this offence and, in the case of teachers, are directed to review the VIT’s Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct and Ethics.</p>

	<p>In addition, the College conducts rigorous checks and induction processes and review of the ICT Acceptable Use policy (focusing on staff/student contact and social media use).</p> <p>Such offences will be managed by the Principal, member of the Senior Leadership Team or member of the Child Protection Team in consultation with Victoria Police, the CCYP (under the Reportable Conduct scheme), Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) and relevant authorities.</p> <p>Note: This policy does not require the displacement or discharge of any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse</p> <p>Advising parents, carers or guardians School staff do not require the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to DFFH, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so. School staff will seek guidance from DFFH and/or Victoria Police regarding communication with parents.</p> <p>Confidentiality for Staff involved in a Mandatory Report Under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.), the identity of a Mandatory Reporter remains confidential unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Reporter chooses to inform the child and/or the child’s parent(s) or guardian(s) themselves (under the Principal’s, DFFH or Police guidance), • The Reporter consents in writing to have their identity disclosed by the Police, Child Protection and/or Child FIRST, • The Court decides that it needs the information provided in the report to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child, • The court decides that it is satisfied that the interests of justice require that the evidence be given. <p>For Courts to order disclosure of a Reporter’s identity requires exceptional circumstances and is not normal practice.</p> <p>ENSURING THAT A CHILD PROTECTION INTERVIEW TAKES PLACE</p> <p>Victorian schools do not have the power to prevent parents, carers or guardians from removing their children from school and should not attempt to prevent the parents, carers or guardians from collecting the child. If a parent/carer or guardian removes a child before a planned interview has taken place, the Principal and/or their nominee should contact Child Protection and/or Victoria Police immediately.</p>
<p>Misconduct Allegations</p>	<p>If the College receives information alleging that a teacher, other staff member, volunteer or contractor has abused a child or young person, this information will be referred to the Principal and or Bialik College Council President, Victoria Police and DFFH. The Principal will also inform CCYP via their online form within three days. Within 30 calendar days after becoming aware of a reportable allegation the College must provide the Commission with detailed information about the allegation, disciplinary or other actions undertaken, and the response of the worker or volunteer to the allegation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the allegation is about the Principal, the Bialik College President should be informed, who can provide advice regarding the appropriate person to contact. Refer to the Whistle-blower Policy if misconduct is suspected. • The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) will be informed. <p>If Bialik College receives information alleging that a teacher or other staff member</p>

	has acted inappropriately, or abused a child, the matter will be investigated immediately.
Forming a Belief on Reasonable Grounds	<p>A belief is formed on reasonable grounds if a reasonable person, doing the same work, would have formed the same belief on those grounds on matters about which they have become aware, and any opinion in relation to those matters. A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person’s health, safety or wellbeing is at risk and the child’s parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.</p> <p>There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused, • A child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves), • Someone who knows the child or young person states that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused, • A child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused, • A person is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on the child or young person’s safety, stability or development, • A person observes signs or indicators of abuse, including nonaccidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision, or • A child’s actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the child’s parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.
Important Phone numbers	<p>To make a Mandatory Report, contact Intake Unit (Eastern Region) 1300 360 391.</p> <p>To make a Mandatory Report after hours, contact Child Protection Services (24 hour crisis line) 13 12 78.</p> <p>In a situation where you have a significant concern for the child’s wellbeing, but do not believe that the child needs protection, information can be shared with Child FIRST – Child FIRST (Eastern Region) 1300 762 125.</p>
Underpinning Legislation	<p>This Policy is underpinned by the following legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Betrayal of Trust Legislation Victoria 13 November 2013 • Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 incorporating amendments as at 26 April 2023 (CYFA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of those who are mandatory reporters (s 184); • Mandatory Reporting (pt 4.4) • Education and Training Reform Act 2006 incorporating amendments as at 1 January 2023 (ETRA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the risk of child abuse (s 4.3.1(6)(d)) • Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 incorporating amendments as at 28 June 2022 (ETRR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible person (s 5) • Children’s Services Act 1996 incorporating amendments as at 1 February 2021 (Act) • Children’s Services Regulations 2020 (Regulations) • Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 incorporating amendments as at 6 April 2020 (Act)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act (2014) • Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) (2012) and Community of Practice (2019) • Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act (2014) • Child Safe Standards in Victoria (2022) • Ministerial Order 1359 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child Safe standards • Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (pt 6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child Safe standards • Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Offence of Failure to Disclose (s 327) ○ The Offence of Failure to Protect (s 490) ○ The Offence of Grooming (s 49M)
<p>External links</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Teams: Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Child FIRST and family services (web page) • DFFH procedures and guidance for mandatory reporting: Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Mandatory Reporting (web page) • Failure to disclose fact sheet including exemptions: Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety, Failure to disclose offence (document) • Grooming: ISV, A–Z Framework: Grooming (isConnect web page) • Mandatory reporters: Vic DET, Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Obligations (web page) • Mandatory reporting and child safety obligations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E-learning module: Vic DET, Welcome to the Information Sharing and MARAM Online Learning System (e-learning module on web page) ○ Details about information sharing schemes and MARAM: Vic DET, Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module for Government and Non-Government Schools (web page) • Principals’ obligations to report to VIT: Victorian Institute of Teaching, ‘Fact Sheet for Employers’, Changes to VIT’s teacher registration scheme (document) • Reporting to Child Protection: Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, Reporting child abuse and neglect (web page) • Responsible person (definition): ‘Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for the Registration of School Boarding Premises’, School boarding premises minimum standards and guidelines, 36 (guidance document, 10 June 2021) • The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct, Victorian Institute of Teaching • VRQA guidelines to the minimum standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All schools: ‘Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration’, Minimum standards and other requirements for schools (guidance document, 4 June 2020)

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

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

- You **must** act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief* that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
- You **must** act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- It is strongly recommended that you use the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template** to keep clear and comprehensive notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

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

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

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

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm you **must** ensure their safety by:
- separating alleged victims and others involved
 - administering first aid
 - calling **000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
 - identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE

You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **internally** to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Employee Conduct Branch
- DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or school chairperson
- Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

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

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- Employee Conduct Branch

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- Diocesan education office

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE

You **must also** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **internally** to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or chairperson.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your principal **must** consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- not to contact** the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- how to communicate** with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a **Student Support Plan** in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

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

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

AREA

- North Division **1300 664 977**
- South Division **1300 655 795**
- East Division **1300 360 391**
- West Division (Rural) **1800 075 599**
- West Division (Metro) **1300 664 977**

AFTER HOURS

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

CHILD FIRST

<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams>

ORANGE DOOR

<https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html>

VICTORIA POLICE

000 or your local police station

DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE

1800 126 126

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT

1800 126 126

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

(03) 9637 2595

DIOCESAN OFFICE

Melbourne **(03) 9267 0228**
Ballarat **(03) 5337 7135**
Sale **(03) 5622 6600**
Sandhurst **(03) 5443 2377**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA

(03) 9825 7200

THE LOOKOUT

The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: <http://www.lookout.org.au>

Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to **1800 Respect** for counselling, information and a referral service: **1800 737 732**.



APPENDIX 2 –

CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL TREE

