



Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures

POLICY CATEGORY: CHILD PROTECTION

PUBLIC POLICY
STATUS: APPROVED

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

Woodleigh School is committed to providing a caring, supportive and safe environment where every student has a place, a voice and their story is known. Woodleigh is committed to providing safe and supportive environments where all children and young people entrusted to our care are affirmed in their dignity and worth as a person.

1.1. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Woodleigh School is committed to providing a safe and child-friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and can actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. At Woodleigh School, we have zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in our students best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child-safe culture.

1.2. Purpose of this policy and procedure

- To identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection.
- To ensure that everyone within the School community is alert to signs and evidence of abuse and neglect, understand that it is not acceptable and be aware of their reporting responsibilities.
- To ensure that action is taken to protect students from risks and immediate action is taken to ensure the safety of students.
- To ensure that all mandatory reporters are trained with respect to what must be reported and relevant procedures, with refresher training to be completed annually.
- To ensure all reports on reasonable grounds are reported to the relevant authorities.
- To ensure that ongoing support and assistance is provided to students who have been abused and their confidentiality respected with case details and the identity of the student only discussed with those managing the situation.
- To ensure that staff are provided with clear expectation for appropriate behavior.
- To ensure that the School is compliant with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child safety and protection in Victoria, most importantly adhering to Ministerial Order 870

1.3. Scope

This policy applies to all Woodleigh School staff, volunteers and Directors of the Board.

This policy applies to all School activities during and outside of school hours. This includes School activities that are occurring on school campus, offsite, online, extracurricular, sport activities and programs, excursions, camps, interstate and overseas travel.

They are bound by this policy and required to report concerns about, or incidents of child abuse or neglect.

- Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in this policy and procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

2. CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse can take many forms. The perpetrator may be a parent, carer, School staff member, volunteer, another adult or even another child. The nature of child abuse is complex. The abuse may occur over time and potential risk indicators are often difficult to detect. Child abuse is defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.) to include:

- sexual offences
- grooming
- physical violence
- serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect

2.1 Grooming

Grooming is defined as behaviors that manipulate and control a child with the intent of gaining access to the child, obtaining the child's compliance, maintain the child's silence and avoiding discovery of the sexual abuse. Grooming by an adult for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 is crime under section 49M of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).

2.2 Family Violence

Family violence is defined under the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic.) to include behavior that causes a child to hear, witness, or be exposed to the effects of family violence such as abusive, threatening, controlling or coercive behavior. While family violence does not form part of the official definition of 'child abuse' in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act, the impact of family violence on a child can be a form of child abuse; for example, where it causes serious emotional or psychological harm to a child.

2.3 Serious harm and/or neglect

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

There can be physical or behavioral indicators of child abuse and neglect, or a combination of both. While the presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not necessarily prove that abuse or neglect has occurred, the repeated occurrence of either a physical or behavioral indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert School staff to the possibility of child abuse or neglect.

Child sexual abuse is more commonly perpetrated by someone who is known to and trusted by the child, and is often someone highly trusted within their families, communities, schools and/or other institutions.

3. INDICATORS OF HARM

There are numerous indications of possible child abuse and harm. They include:

3.1 Physical Abuse

Physical indicators could include bruises, burns, fractures (broken bones), cuts and grazes to the face and multiple injuries including internal injuries. Behavioural indicators could include disclosure of an injury inflicted by someone else, wearing unusual clothes to hide injuries, wariness or fear of a parent, reluctance to go home, habitual absences from school without explanation, regressive behavior, and alcohol or drug misuse.

3.2 Sexual Abuse

Physical indicators could include injury to the genital area, discomfort in toileting, the presence of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, bruising to breasts, buttocks and thighs, and anxiety related illnesses (anorexia/bulimia). Behavioral indicators could include disclosure of sexual abuse, age- inappropriate sexual activity or behavior, drawings that are sexually explicit, writing stories that are sexually explicit, regressive behavior, truancy, depression, delinquent or aggressive behavior, and sudden decline in academic performance.

3.3 Emotional Abuse

Physical indicators could include speech disorders, delays in physical development and failure to thrive. Behavioral indicators could include being overly compliant, passive and undemanding behavior, attention-seeking behavior, poor self-image, and age inappropriate behavior, fear of failure, setting overly high standards, excessive neatness, and depression.

3.4 Serious neglect and medical neglect

Physical indicators could include consistently being unwashed, inappropriate dressing for weather conditions, consistent hunger and tiredness, and unattended health problems. Behavioral indicators could include begging or stealing food, gorging food, alienation from peers, withdrawal, aggressive behavior, appearing miserable and irritable, and poor attendance at school.

4. WHAT CONCERNS SHOULD BE REPORTED?

Concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children can range from an uncomfortable feeling through to a direct observation of abuse. Staff, volunteers, students and families are encouraged to speak to a Child Protection Officer or their Head of Campus if they have concerns and to be proactive.

Examples of child safety concerns include:

- inappropriate or special relationships developing between staff or volunteers, contractors and students
- inadequate staff–student supervision ratios
- breaches of the Code of Conduct, particularly if they are persistent
- feelings of discomfort about interactions between a staff member or volunteer and a student
- suspicions or beliefs that students are at risk of harm
- observations of concerning changes in behavior
- observations or concerns on grooming behaviors
- concerns about a physical environment that may pose a risk to a student (this includes health and hygiene issues)
- Student’s disclosures of abuse or harm, which must be reported to the police, DHHS, the CCYP and, where appropriate, any other regulator.

5. DUTY OF CARE

All School staff and volunteers must understand their role to keep children safe. Staff and volunteers have an obligation to avoid acts or omissions (failures) that could be reasonably foreseen to injure or harm students. Suspected child abuse must be reported to relevant authorities, the Principal and the Board of Directors.

6. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Criminal Offences

The Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) includes the following as criminal offenses reportable to the Police:

Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report this information to the police.

Failure to protect: People in authority at the School will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Mandatory Reporting: All staff who are mandatory reporters (teachers, the principal, nurses and school counsellors) must comply with their duties, as outlined in this policy and procedures.

Information must be disclosed to a police officer as soon as it is practicable to do so, unless the person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so.

A reasonable excuse would include:

- you reasonably fear for your safety or the safety of another person, except the person you believe committed, or was involved in, the sexual offence, and
- your failure to report is a reasonable response in the circumstances.

7. RELEVANT AUTHORITIES

7.1 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection (Transitioning to Department for Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) in 2021)

The DHHS (DFFH) 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 (DFFH) 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.

7.2 Child FIRST (In transition to Orange Door)

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 ensures that vulnerable children, young people and their families are linked effectively to relevant services.

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 (DFFS) 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 (DFFS) Child Protection and other services
- Identifying appropriate service responses for families.

Child FIRST as the access point for family services is in the process of transitioning to Orange Door, however at this stage, the referral is made to Child FIRST.

7.3 Victoria Police

Both DHHS (DFFS) and Victoria Police have statutory responsibilities under the CYFA in relation to the protection of children. DHHS (DFFS) 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.

Protocols between DHHS (DFFS) Child Protection and Victoria Police require that all reports received by DHHS (DFFS) Child Protection relating to physical abuse, sexual abuse or serious neglect must be reported to Victoria Police, as these reports may also constitute reports of criminal offences.

All allegations of sexual offences or child abuse should be reported to DHHS (DFFS) Child Protection or Victoria Police for investigation. Under no circumstances should school staff investigate an allegation themselves. School staff should only enquire sufficiently to form a reasonable belief that a child may be in need of protection.

7.4 Commission for Children and Young People

CCYP is an independent statutory body that promotes improvement in policies and practices affecting the safety and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people.

CCYP is responsible for administering the Reportable Conduct Scheme, which includes:

- Supporting and guiding organisations that receive allegations in order to promote fair, effective, timely and appropriate responses
- Independently overseeing, monitoring and, where appropriate, making recommendations to improve the responses of those organisations.

7.5 Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) is an independent statutory authority for the teaching profession, whose primary function is to regulate members of the teaching profession.

The School must immediately notify the VIT if it becomes aware that a teacher:

- Has been charged with, or convicted or found guilty of, certain criminal offences that accord with those relevant to Working with Children Checks (WWCC) or
- Has been given a negative notice in relation to the WWCC.

8. MANDATORY REPORTING

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYFA) (section 184) requires Mandatory Reporters to make a report to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) (Transitioning to Department of Families, Fairness and Housing in 2021) Child Protection when they believe that a child (aged under 17) is in need of protection from significant harm from physical injury or sexual abuse.

8.1 Who are Mandatory Reporters ?

Mandatory reporters are defined by the CYFA and include:

- Teachers
- The Principal
- Nurses
- School Counsellors
- Persons in religious ministry; and
- Medical practitioners

All School staff who have concerns that a student may be in need of protection or may have been the victim of a sexual offence, should notify a School Child Safety Officer or a member of the School's Leadership Team as soon as possible to discuss their concerns.

A Mandatory Reporter must make a report even if the Child Safety Officer does not share their belief that a report must be made.

8.2 What Constitutes a Mandatory Report ?

A mandatory report must be made when you form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection where the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of:

- physical injury; or
- sexual abuse; and
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

8.3 What is Reasonable Grounds ?

The concept of 'reasonable grounds' requires you to consider whether another person, when faced with similar information, would also draw the same conclusion. It does not mean reporters are required to be certain, but rather reporters should ensure their concerns are well founded and based on information from a reliable source.

The following may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

- A student states they have been physically or sexually abused
- A student states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused
- someone who knows the student states that the student has been physically or sexually abused
- A student shows signs of being physically or sexually abused
- The staff member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on a student's safety, stability or development
- The staff member observes signs of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision; or
- A student's actions or behavior may place them at risk of significant harm and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the student.

8.4 Making a Mandatory Report

All School staff and volunteers must adhere to:

- Four Critical Actions for Schools Responding to incidents, disclosures a suspicions of child abuse.As referred to in the Protect template as attached.

9. REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme seeks to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers. The scheme is established by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (the Act).

The Chair of Board is the Head of Entity for the School under the Scheme. The Head of Entity is responsible for fulfilling all legal obligations under the Scheme and is ultimately responsible for Board Victorian schools' compliance with the Scheme. The Chair of the Board authorises the School Principal to assist them in meeting their obligations under the Scheme.

The Principal is authorised to:

- notify and update the Commission of reportable allegations concerning the school's 'employees' as defined under the Scheme, which includes staff members, volunteers, contractors, office holders and ministers of religion;
- ensure investigations are undertaken into all reportable allegations made against 'employees'; and
- comply with all obligations of the head of organisation under the Scheme.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme imposes obligations on the School's Principal and the Senior Leadership Team. This includes requirements to:

- have in place systems to prevent child abuse and, if child abuse is alleged, to ensure allegations can be brought to the attention of appropriate persons for investigation and response
- ensure that the Commission is notified and given updates on the organisation's response to an allegation.
- The School Principal and the Senior Leadership Team need to adhere the following requirements:
 - Notify the Commission within 3 business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation.
 - Investigate an allegation – subject to police clearance on criminal matters or matters involving family violence. You must advise the Commission who is undertaking the investigation. You must manage the risks to children.
 - Within 30 calendar days must provide the Commission detailed information about the reportable allegation and any action you have taken.
 - Notify the Commission of the investigation findings and any disciplinary action the head of entity has taken (or the reasons no action was taken).

10. ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Where allegations involve the Principal or Business Manager the concerns must be immediately escalated to the Chair of the Board as the Head of Entity.

11. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Woodleigh School, the School Board, staff and volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children.

Specific roles and responsibilities relating to protection and reporting include:

11.1 Board

The School Board of Directors is Woodleigh School governing authority. The Board is responsible for endorsing this policy, ensuring this policy is reviewed and updated as needed and reviewing the School's compliance with this policy and child safety obligations.

11.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for the School's compliance with this policy.

11.3 Head of Wellbeing

The Head of Wellbeing is responsible for:

- being a first point of contact for all child protection concerns or queries for the wider community
- ensuring that other Child Safety Officers understand and comply with their key responsibilities
- ensuring that all Child Safety Officers undergo appropriate annual training in the School's child protection policies and procedures, their legal responsibilities, and how to appropriately respond to child protection concerns and incidents
- coordinating the School's response to child protection incidents in consultation with the Principal and the Heads of Campus
- developing an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse if a Child Safety Officer is not able to perform the role, for example if they are absent from the School or have a conflict of interest
- ensuring that the School's child protection policies and procedures are effectively implemented and communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

11.4 Child Safety Officers

The School has appointed eight Child Safety Officers across all of our campuses. They are provided annually with specialised training on child protection issues, mandatory reporting and their legal obligations. In working with all school staff and volunteers, they are known within our School as Child Safety Champions to raise the importance, profile and facilitate the embedding of a culture of child safety. Our Child Safety Officers are often the first point of contact for all staff, students, parents and carers to raise child safety or child abuse concerns. They work collaboratively with the Head of Wellbeing to ensure all concerns of child safety and child abuse are escalated, reported and responded.

Our Child Safety Officers can be contacted at any time to discuss your concerns and their name and contact details are provided regularly in our communications.

Minimbah Campus	Liane Clements Sarah Gow
Penbank Campus	Andrea Khoza Olivia Takacs Alison Behrend
Senior Campus	Donna Nairn

11.5 Staff, School Board members, External Education Providers, Contractors, Volunteers

Staff includes teaching, non-teaching, casual and emergency relief teaches, sporting coaches, tutors and instrumental music teachers. All staff, school Board members, external education providers, contractors and volunteers are required to be familiar with the content of this Child Protection Mandatory Reporting Policy & Procedures and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the Child Safety Officers.

12. SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Key principles that we must apply in the design of policy, procedure, interventions, support and reporting in our child protection program are to ensure we:

- promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and young people

- promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promote the safety of children with any form of disability

13. STUDENT AWARENESS

The School is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse. It is important all our students are educated on how to raise any concerns and we raise their awareness of child safety concerns and concerning behaviors to report. We have designed and are implementing a comprehensive child safety program curriculum with age appropriate education and awareness programs. This curriculum further supported by our actions and processes empower our students to have a voice and to take action for their own care.

14. POLICY BREACH

A breach of this policy or procedure may lead to disciplinary action which is outlined further in our:

- Consequence and Breach policy (*in development*)

All breaches, near misses and risks related to this policy should be reported to the Principal.

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Principal and Risk Manager and this may include independent audits and reviews.

15. FURTHER INFORMATION

Staff, students, parents and carers, external education providers, contractors, volunteers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact the Child Safety Officers who are named and contact information is provided on our website: <https://www.woodleigh.vic.edu.au/independent-creative-resilient/policies/child-protection-and-safety#policies>

16. SUPPORT FOR AFFECTED STUDENTS

Ensuring a student feels safe and supported following an incident is of critical important to our School. The School will work closely with the student, parents, carers, and our wellbeing team to provide all additional support services that are available. Each matter will be a case-by-case basis and an individual may be supported with:

- Referral to our School counselling team.
- Referral to external specialist agencies.
- Family counselling.
- Academic support

17. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This policy is to be reviewed, approved and endorsed at a minimum annually or when there is a change in circumstances.

Next review date is July 2022.

18. RELEVANT POLICY AND REFERENCES

This policy provides the overarching foundation for our Child Protection Program.

Key relevant policies to support our program include:

- Woodleigh School Child Protection and Safety Policy
- Woodleigh School Child Safety Code of Conduct

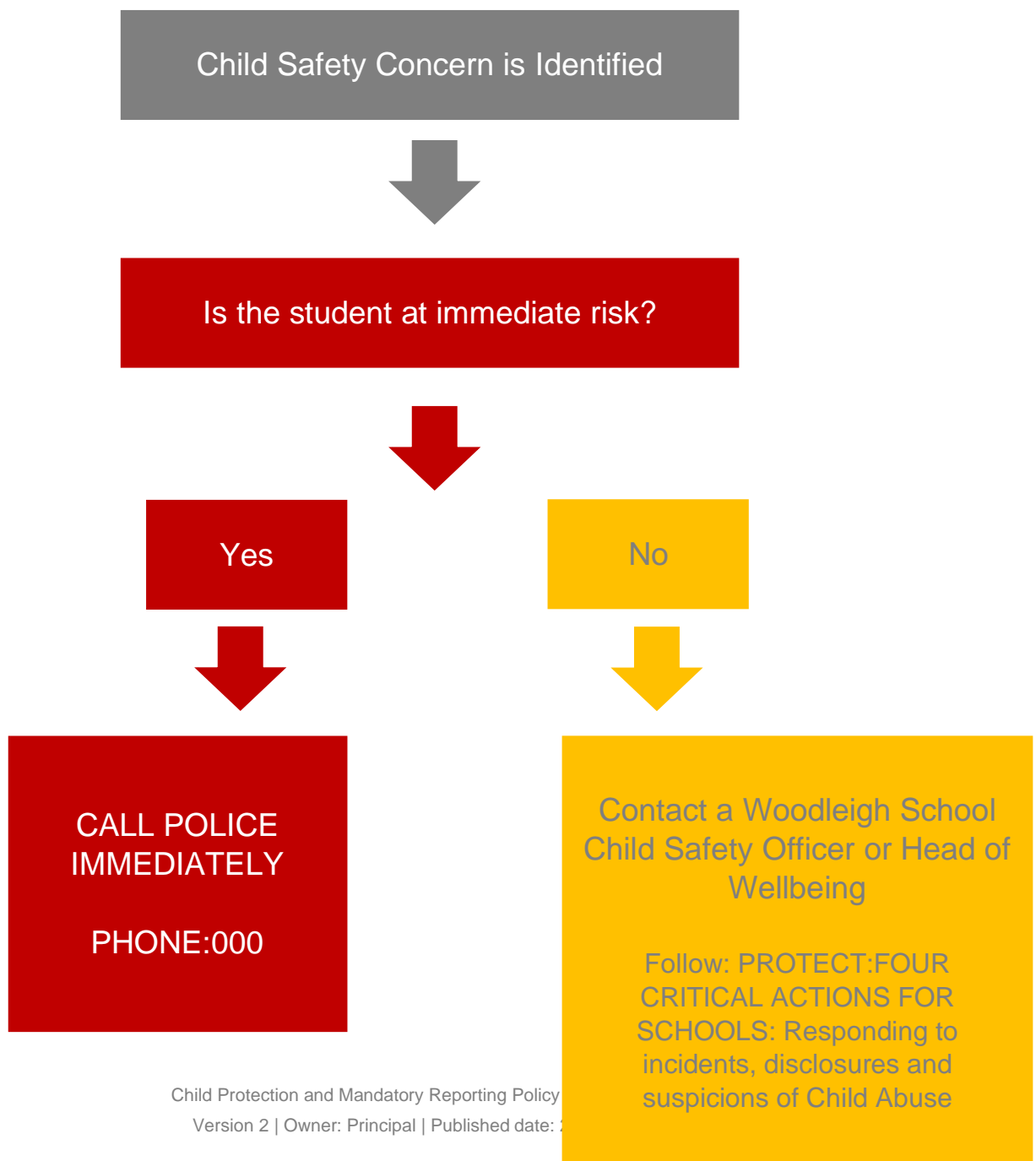
18.1 Related Legislative Instruments

The following legislation, standards and regulations apply and this policy aligns with these mandated requirements:

- Ministerial Order 870; Child Safe Standards
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic);
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic);

19. FLOWCHART TO GUIDE ON MANDATORY REPORTING PROCESS

The following flowchart supports our implementation of this policy.



20. HOW TO MAKE A REPORT

All staff must adhere to and follow:

- FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse (As attached)
- PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template (As attached)
- This policy: Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be called on 000.

Woodleigh School has appointed Child Safety Officers as a point of immediate contact for all staff in the School. Each Child Safety Officer is available to answer any questions with respect to our Child Protection and Child Safety Policy.

Child Safety Officers are selected based on a number of considerations, namely:

- their personal attitudes, experiences and beliefs, for example, a person who is non-judgmental, calm, resilient and demonstrates a high degree of integrity and respect for confidentiality
- their role within the School, experience working with complex student and family issues at the School and someone who is readily accessible and available to all members of the School community

Child Safety Officers or the Head of Campus or Head of Wellbeing can be the first point of contact for reporting child protection issues within the School.

If you have any concern that a child may be experiencing any form of abuse, whether or not you have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that the abuse has occurred, you should immediately raise your concerns with the Principal or your Head of Campus or the Head of Wellbeing, or one of the Child Safety Officers. If the concern relates to the Principal, report to the Chair of the Board on chair@woodleigh.vic.edu.au

Please be aware that consulting with a Child Safety Officer does not change any obligation you have under legislation to report to an external authority.

The School has a duty of care to support any community member who is involved in any child protection matter. This includes extra considerations required for vulnerable or at risk students and staff. Support may consist of counselling, extra training, documents translated, documents and training made age appropriate or in the case of reporting allowing a support person to attend any interviews. No community member will be disadvantaged in being able to report a child protection matter.

21. COMMUNITY AWARENESS

To ensure that the School Community is aware of our position on child protection and reporting:

This Child Protection: Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse is published via:

- School website
- School Student and Parent Portal (*in development*)
- School Policy portal and;

- Available by request.

Training will also be provided to staff on the commencement of their employment then annually or when there is a change in policy or procedures.

All staff mandatory training Department of Education and Training –Protecting Children Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations online module.

Student’s Curriculum delivers age appropriate training to students on the PROTECT processes.

Child Safety Officers are available to respond to questions or concerns.

22. DOCUMENTATION

Staff, volunteers, and community members must keep clear and comprehensive notes and use the PROTECT templates to report all information relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse. This information may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of court proceedings. Your notes may also assist you later if you’re required to provide evidence to support your decisions regarding the handling of child protection incidents.

When an incident of suspected child abuse occurs, consider all of the following:

- environment: do not clean up the area and preserve the sites where the alleged incident occurred
- clothing: take steps to ensure that the person who has allegedly committed the abuse and the child who has allegedly been abused remain in their clothing. If this is not possible, ensure the clothes are not washed, handled as little as possible and stored in a sealed bag.
- other physical items: ensure that items such as weapons, bedding and condoms are untouched
- potential witnesses: reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent discussion of the incident between those involved in the alleged incident

23. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Anyone who has access to information regarding a case of suspected child abuse must keep such information confidential and secure and must only disclose or discuss this information with those involved in managing the situation.

Reports or referrals made to DHHS (DFFS) Child Protection or Child FIRST are confidential and the reporter’s identity is generally protected by law. Exceptions include if:

- the reporter chooses to inform the child or family of the report
- the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child
- a court or tribunal decides the reporter is required to attend court to provide evidence.

The identity of the person who makes a report to the Police, including reports under section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence), will remain confidential unless:

- the person themselves discloses their identity or they consent in writing to their identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary in the interests of justice for the person’s identity to be disclosed. A person who makes a Mandatory Report in accordance with the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), or a report under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (Reportable Conduct Scheme) will not be held liable for the eventual outcome of any investigation.

If a report is made in good faith, it does not constitute a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter and the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

Personal information is information, or an opinion, about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:

- whether the information, or opinion, is true or not
- whether the information, or opinion, is recorded in a material form or not.

The Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) only applies to personal information that is captured in a record.

The School securely stores documentation associated with an allegation of abuse or neglect of a student or young person by having:

- hard-copy documentation stored in a locked filing cabinet (or similar); and
- electronic documentation stored in a password-protected folder (or similar).

Effective child protection record keeping is one of the School's key strategies in the management of its child protection obligations, including the fulfilment of our duty of care.

It is through such record keeping that the School can ensure that, should there ever be a need for evidence of our child safe culture or precautions and preventative measures taken in response to the risk of child abuse, our experience is well documented and available.

24. THE PROTECT TEMPLATE

The protect template is attached here or found on the DET Webiste at the following address:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx?Redirect=1>