



Child Safety Policy

Ripplebrook Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

At Ripplebrook School has a commitment to a zero tolerance to child abuse.

We support and respect all children as well as our staff and volunteers. Ripplebrook Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people feel safe, and their voices are heard when decisions are made that affect their lives. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability and also vulnerable children. We want all children at this school to be safe, happy and empowered. Every person involved in Ripplebrook Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. We have legal and moral obligations, which we follow rigorously, to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety.

Purpose:

This policy guides our staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors connected to the school environment on how to behave with children in our school.

- To ensure all children feel safe and supported at school.
- To prevent child abuse by identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- To ensure that processes and procedures are in place to protect children from child abuse.
- To value and empower children in decision making processes.
- To ensure that all staff (including contractors), volunteers, visitors to the school and parents/carers, understand the school's child safety guidelines and how to behave appropriately with and towards children.
- To comply with Ministerial Order No. 870 and the Child Safety Standards
- To comply with reporting obligations under child protection law and criminal law.

Definitions:

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving:

- a sexual offence
- an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- the infliction on a child of:
 - physical violence or
 - serious emotional or psychological harm or
 - serious neglect of a child

School staff includes individuals working in a school environment who are:

- employed under Part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR Act)
- in the government teaching service; or
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act; or
- volunteers or contracted service providers (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

Child-connected work includes all work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

School environment includes any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

Definitions taken from the VRQA

website: <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes/Pages/default.html>

Guidelines:

Ripplebrook Primary School is committed to child safety. In its planning, decision-making and operations Ripplebrook Primary School will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;

7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
 8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
 9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
 10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.
- Ripplebrook Primary School, school council and leadership team will rigorously monitor the school's adherence to this child safety policy.
 - All of our staff (including contractors and volunteers) must agree to abide by the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.
 - Ripplebrook Primary School has specific policies and procedures in place to support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve our commitments.
 - Ripplebrook Primary School is committed to supporting and enabling our staff and volunteers through provision of regular training and education on child abuse risks.
 - Child Safety will be a standard agenda item for school council and school meetings.
 - Ripplebrook Primary School has procedures in place to enable all staff and volunteers as well as parents/carers and children, to raise any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.
 - The Principal will assume the role of the primary Child Safety Officer, acting as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety.
 - This policy covers all school environments both during and outside of school hours, including any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the School Council or the Principal.
 - In implementing the minimum child safe standards Ripplebrook Primary School will take account of the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable; and make reasonable efforts to accommodate these matters.
 - Ripplebrook Primary School is committed to lifelong learning by providing an inclusive, supportive and nurturing community in which diversity is valued and celebrated', underpins our commitment to child safety and the Child Safety Standards.
 - Ripplebrook Primary School will make reasonable efforts to communicate our child safety policies and procedures to the Ripplebrook Primary School community.

Staff and Volunteers:

This policy as well as our **Child Safety Code of Conduct** guides the school's staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation. Anyone who comes into direct contact with children as part of their paid or voluntary work at the school, must

agree to the school's **Child Safety Code of Conduct** which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Training and Supervision:

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Training includes developing skills to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse, promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, promote the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds and to develop their skills to make adjustments to provide a safe, inclusive environment for children with a disability and also vulnerable students.

New employees and volunteers will be regularly supervised. This is to ensure they understand the school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse. It is also for the purpose of checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate with reference to the school's **Child Safety Code of Conduct**.

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

Ripplebrook Primary School will take reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. When recruiting staff and volunteers we are aware that we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

- All people engaged in child-connected work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this check.
- When employing staff we carry out reference checks and police record checks.
- All teachers employed at this school must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Fair Procedures for Personnel

The safety and well-being of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it.

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints:

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers as well as parents/carers and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We are aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers reporting allegations of abuse or that for some communication in English may be a barrier. We will endeavour to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible. Ripplebrook Primary School has protocols and procedures in place to enable all staff and volunteers as well as parents/carers and children, to raise any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

Our school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations. We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour. We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see failure to disclose information below).

Fulfilling the role and responsibilities contained in the reporting procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligation to report to DHS/The Police or Child First, if a person reasonably believes that a child is being abused or at risk of abuse.

Staff will consult with the Principal or Acting Principal (if the Principal is away) when making a report. The Principal/Acting Principal will support the staff member through the reporting process. This does not absolve the staff member of their legal obligation to report.

Depending on the severity and urgency of the matter any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels which may include:

- The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) – Child Protection
- Victoria Police

Legislative responsibilities - This school takes its legal responsibilities seriously including:

FAILURE TO DISCLOSE OFFENCE

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (ie persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable to do so, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 by another person aged 18 years or over.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000 or local police station) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

"Reasonable belief" is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

"Reasonable excuse" is defined by law and includes (a) fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation) or (b) where the information has already been disclosed, for example, through a mandatory report to DHHS.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Failure to disclose offence](#).

FAILURE TO PROTECT OFFENCE

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include principals, assistant principals and campus principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (ie persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Failure to protect offence](#).

Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

Child Abuse:

Ripplebrook Primary School takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to respond quickly and thoroughly. Such issues can be reported to:

- The Principal
- The Child Safety Officer- Principal
- Teachers at the school.

Our staff have been trained to deal appropriately with allegations, as well as how to support or assist children who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse. In such situations the school will follow actions outlined in the Child Protection Reporting Policy. This policy outlines our clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a young person who might be in need of protection.

The DET guide 'Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools' includes comprehensive, detailed guidance and support for all staff.

First and foremost, we will ensure that children are safe from harm after which we will follow the procedures outlined in this document. This process includes making appropriate reports, following up and ensuring that children and any others involved receive appropriate support. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using the Child Safety Incident Report form. All information is considered confidential and written reports will be held securely.

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported to DHHS Child Protection/Police/Child FIRST Report depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

We each have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose/protect). If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- A child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim, is observed
- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- Observing suspicious behaviour.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

MANDATORY REPORTING

Principals, registered teachers, registered medical practitioners, nurses and all members of the police force are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic).

Mandatory reporters are required by law to make a report to DHHS as soon as practicable if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form the **reasonable belief** that a child or young person is in need of protection as a result of physical injury, sexual abuse, emotional harm or psychological harm and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child from that abuse.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at **Ripplebrook Primary School** to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a **reasonable belief** that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the ***Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module*** annually. We also require/encourage **all other staff** to undertake this module, even where they are not mandatory reporters.

For more information about Mandatory Reporting see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#)*.

CHILD IN NEED OF PROTECTION

Any person can make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to report their concerns to DHHS or Victoria Police, and discuss their concerns with the school leadership team.

For more information about making a report to DHHS, see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Child Protection – Making a Report and Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#)*.

At **Ripplebrook Primary School** we also encourage all staff to make a referral to **DHHS Child FIRST** when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing but do not believe that the child needs protection. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST see the *School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#)*.

REPORTABLE CONDUCT

Our school must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (9637 2594) if we become aware of an allegation of 'reportable conduct'.

There is an allegation of reportable conduct where a person has formed 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;
- behaviour causing significant emotional or physical harm to a child; or

- significant neglect of a child, or misconduct involving any of the above.

The Department, through the Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

Our principal must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former teachers, contractors, volunteers (including parents), allied health staff and school council employees.

If school staff become aware of reportable conduct by any person in the above positions, they should notify the school principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the principal, they should notify the Regional Director.

For more information about Reportable Conduct see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)*.

RESPONSIBILITY:

The Principal is responsible for overseeing and monitoring school compliance with the mandatory policy and procedures.

PRIVACY

Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements (see RIPPLEBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL Privacy Policy)

Risk Management:

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, Ripplebrook Primary School proactively manages risks of abuse to children by removing and reducing these risks and follows the Child Safety Standards.

The school has risk management strategies to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child abuse risks which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

The school's risk management includes:

- The Child Safety Code of Conduct – outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour with respect to child safety and child abuse. The Child Safety Code of Conduct is publically available.
- Appointing a Child Safety Officer
- Screening as part of the staff recruitment process
- Working With Children checks, Police Record checks, reference checks
- Sign in processes at the school office
- On and off site supervision of children during recess and lunch breaks as well 15 minutes before and after school – staff carry mobile phones
- ICT Acceptable Use Agreement for students
- Teacher supervision of student internet usage

- Protocols to ensure children do not move around the school individually during class time
- Out of bounds areas in the school to ensure that children are not placed at risk
- Staff and volunteer training
- Child safe environments information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors
- Adequate monitoring of visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors
- Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module

References

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandard.s.aspx>

<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafesafe/Pages/default.html>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/spag.aspx>.

‘Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools’

‘Protecting children from abuse: for parents and carers’

Related Policies

- Child Protection Reporting Policy
- Child Protection Step by Step Guide
- Child Safety Incident Report form
- 4 Actions
- On-Site Supervision Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Critical incident Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Excursions/Incursions Policy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- Visitors and Volunteers Policy
- Working with Children Policy

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Child Safety Reporting Procedures / Supporting Students

Appendix B - Four Critical Actions for Schools

Appendix C – A Step by Step Guide to making a Report

Appendix D – Ripplebrook Primary School Incident Record Proforma following 4 Critical Steps

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last ratified by School Council on 14 November 2018

Due for review in NOVEMBER 2019 (unless required to change earlier due to legislation)

Appendix A

CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCEDURES AT RIPPLEBROOK PS SUPPORTING STUDENTS

For students

- All student should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.
- If a student does not know who to approach at Ripplebrook Primary School they should start with their classroom teacher
- Students are also made aware that they can speak with any staff member that they feel comfortable speaking with. This may include another classroom teacher, the school chaplain, a support staff member or the Principal.

Disclosures made by students to any person

If a child discloses abuse to you:

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to your Principal or nominee, police or child protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.
- If the child agrees, have a second person as a witness present for the report.
- If a student makes a disclosure to any person connected to the school environment, including staff, visitors, volunteers or other community members, the person to whom the disclosure is made must: speak to the principal or a member of the school improvement team (leadership team) that prompt action can be taken which, depending on the disclosure, may involve contacting Victoria Police and/or DHHS (Child Protection) and the DET regional office/SEIL for advice..

- At Ripplebrook Primary School, the Principal will be responsible for ensuring that there is a prompt response to the disclosure and that the child is appropriately supported.
- If the principal/other nominated staff member responsible above is unavailable, the SEIL may be contacted for advice.

Duty of care and ongoing support for students

- Fulfilling the requirements in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of abuse.
- All staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students so it is important that staff take all reasonable steps and that they ensure that the Principal or other appropriate staff member is aware of the concerns that may be the subject of any reports, mandatory or otherwise, so that appropriate supports can be put in place for the student affected both immediately, if required, and until any allegations or concerns are resolved.
- The Chaplain, Well-Being Team coordinator and the Principal will provide extra support to the child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse. The Principal may contact the SSS team for advice and further support.

For staff – mandatory reporting

- All staff at our school should speak to the Principal, member of the leadership team or School Chaplain if they form the *reasonable belief* that a child or young person is in need of protection as a result of physical injury, sexual abuse, emotional harm or psychological harm and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child from that abuse.
- In circumstances where a principal disagrees that a report needs to be made but the staff member has formed a 'reasonable belief' that the child is in need of protection, the staff member must still contact DHHS Child Protection to make the report.
- If you are a mandatory reporter you have an obligation to ensure that a report has been made in instances where another mandated reporter has undertaken to make the report. This may be done by making the report together.

General procedures

- Our school will follow the *Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse* - https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf.
- All staff at our school who believe that a child is in need of protection, even if it doesn't meet the threshold required for mandatory reporting, should in the first instance, speak to the Principal, member of the leadership team or the School

Chaplain or should make the required reports to DHHS and/or Victoria Police as necessary.

- All staff who have made reports, mandatory or otherwise, to any agencies should ensure that they keep a confidential, secure record of the report made including the date, time, person spoken to at the agency and a brief file note of the information discussed. There is a template provided in this policy for use. The Department's reporting template for mandatory reports may also be used. It is available at:
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/PROTECT_Schoolstemplate.pdf
- At our school the Principal will be responsible for monitoring overall school compliance with this procedure.

For school visitors, volunteers and school community members

- All community members aged 18 years or over should be aware of the legal obligations – see *Failure to disclose offence* above, in this Policy.
- Any person can make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. For contact details see *Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse* - https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf
- There is no requirement for community members to inform the school if they are making a disclosure to the Victoria Police. However, where a community member is concerned about the safety of a child or children at the school, and where disclosure of that concern will not compromise any potential police investigation, the community member should report this concern to the principal so that appropriate steps to support the student can be taken.

Appendix B

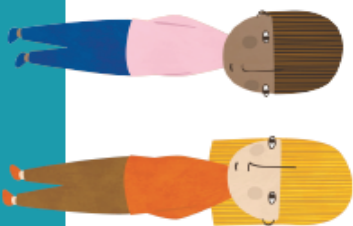
FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

PROTECT



Education and Training



YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

- As a school staff member, you play a critical role in protecting children in your care.
- You must act by following the 4 critical actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
 - You must act if you form a suspicion/reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
 - You must use the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

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

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

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

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

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

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

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

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

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

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

You must also report internally to:

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

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

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

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

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

You must also report to:

- School Principal and/ or leadership team
- Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
You must also report to:
 - School Principal and/ or chairperson

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

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 parent/ 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).

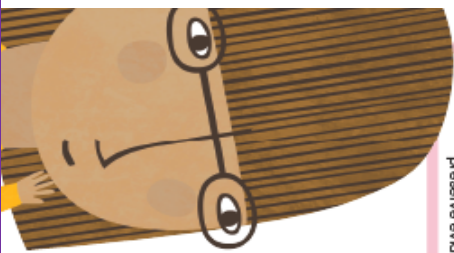
4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

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

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

CONTACT

- DHHS CHILD PROTECTION**
AREA
North Division 1300 664 9777
South Division 1300 655 795
East Division 1300 360 391
West Division (Rural) 1800 07 5 599
West Division (Metro) 1300 664 9777
- DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT**
(03) 9589 6266
- STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT**
(03) 9637 2934
- EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH**
(03) 9637 2595
- DIOCESAN OFFICE**
Melbourne (03) 9267 0228
Ballarat (03) 5337 7135
Sale (03)5622 6600
Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA**
(03) 9825 7200
- AFTER HOURS**
After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78
- CHILD FIRST**
www.dhs.vic.gov.au
- VICTORIA POLICE**
000 or your local police station



Appendix C

A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST

Protective concerns

You are concerned about a child because you have:

- received a disclosure from a child about abuse or neglect
- observed indicators of abuse or neglect
- been made aware of possible harm via your involvement in the community external to your professional role.

At all times remember to:

- record your observations
- follow appropriate protocols
- consult notes and records
- consult with appropriate colleagues if necessary
- consult with other support agencies if necessary

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
<p>RESPONDING TO CONCERNS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If your concerns relate to a child in need of immediate protection; or you have formed a belief that a child is at significant risk of harm*. Go to Step 4 2. If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services. Go to Step 3 3. In all other situations Go to Step 2. <p>* Refer to Appendix 2: Definitions of child abuse and indicators of harm in the Protocol – <i>Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people</i></p>	<p>FORMING A BELIEF ON REASONABLE GROUNDS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the level of immediate danger to the child. Ask yourself: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Have I formed a belief that the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm? YES / NO b) Am I in doubt about the child's safety and the parent's ability to protect the child? YES / NO 2. If you answered yes to a) or b) Go to Step 4 3. If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services. Go to Step 3 	<p>MAKING A REFERRAL TO Child FIRST</p> <p>Child Wellbeing Referral</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact your local Child FIRST provider. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See over for contact list for local Child FIRST phone numbers. 2. Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details. 	<p>MAKE A REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION</p> <p>Mandatory/Protective Report*</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact your local Child Protection Intake provider immediately. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See over for contact list for local Child Protection phone numbers. • For After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services, call 131 278. <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>

For further information refer to *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people – A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools*



Appendix D

Child Safety Standards Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE RESPONSE

Name:

Occupation:

Location (School Address):

2260 Westernport road
Ripplebrook 3818

Relationship to Child:

CRITICAL ACTION 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

If anyone is in immediate danger school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police on 000.

RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

Did the child require First Aid?
Provide details if 'Yes'.

Who administered this? (Name and Title)

Did the child require further immediate medical assistance?

Current location and safety status:

E.g. Are all impacted students safe and not in any immediate danger?
If a child is in immediate danger school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police on 000

CHILD'S INFORMATION

PERSONAL DETAILS	
Name:	Gender:
Year level/class:	Date of birth:
Residential address:	
Parent/Carer Name/s:	
Parent/Carer Contact:	
Language(s) spoken by child:	
Disabilities, Mental or Physical Health Issues:	

CHILD'S BACKGROUND
Cultural status and religious background: <i>If the child is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, government schools must contact their Koorie engagement support officer to arrange culturally appropriate support. If the child is an international student you must notify the international education division on (03) 9637 2990</i>
Any known previous history of suspected abuse: (Prior to this incident, disclosure or suspicion or involvement with agencies):

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Family Composition (if known):

List parenting or care arrangements and sibling names and ages

Any other people living with the child (if known):

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Disability, Mental or Physical Health Issues in family (if known):

Likely reaction to a report being made (if known):

DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION

Grounds for your belief that a child has been, or is at risk of abuse

Indicators or instances which led you to believe that a child/children are subject to child abuse, or at risk of abuse:

Detail any disclosures or incidents or suspicions (including names, times and dates documenting a child's exact words as far as possible). Include specific detail here on what led you to form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused.

Any physical indicators of abuse:

Any behavioural indicators of abuse:

Any patterns of behaviour or prior concerns leading up to an incident, disclosure or suspicion:

**DETAILS OF PERSONS ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTED THE ABUSE
(IF KNOWN)**

Name:

Gender

Date of Birth:

Relationship to child:

Nothing if they are within the school or within the family and community (this will impact on who you report to)

Address:

Contact Details:

CRITICAL ACTION 2: REPORTING

See Action 2 of Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

Tick the authorities you have reported to:

- Victoria Police
- DHHS Child Protection
- Child First
- Decision not to report

If you've decided not to report, list your reasons here. Also include any follow-up actions undertaken by you below:

Provide details of your internal discussions to either of the following:

Government school staff must report to security services unit and also to the employee conduct branch if the incident, disclosure or suspicion involves a staff member, contractor or volunteer.

Date:

Time:

Authority:

Outcomes from the report:

REPORTING INTERNALLY

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Time:

Date:

Names:

Discussion Outcomes:

Provide details of your internal discussions to either of the following:
Government school staff must report to security services unit and also to the employee conduct branch if the incident, disclosure or suspicion involves a staff member, contractor or volunteer

Time:

Date:

Names:

Discussion Outcomes:

CRITICAL ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

ACTIONS TAKEN

Provide details of your discussion with Parents/Carers (if appropriate):
School staff must consult with Victoria Police and/or DHHS child protection to determine if it is appropriate to contact parents, if it is, parents must be contacted as soon as possible (Preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

Have you sought advice from DHHS child protection or Victoria Police?

No Yes

Is it appropriate to contact parent/carer

No Yes

List reasons if it is not appropriate to contact Parent/Carer:

If contacting Parent/Carer, provide the following details:

Name of staff member making the call:

Name of Parent/Carer receiving the call:

Discussion Outcomes:

CRITICAL ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

PLANNED ACTIONS

Include detail on what follow-up actions have occurred to support the student (for example, referral to wellbeing professionals and other specialised services, the convening of a student support group and development of support plans):

Follow up actions

Support:

Referrals:

PROCESS OF REVIEW

COMPLETE THIS SECTION BETWEEN 4-6 WEEKS AFTER AN INCIDENT, SUSPICION OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE IN CONJUNCTION WITH YOUR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM.
THIS WILL SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL TO CONTINUE TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN YOUR CARE AND TO REFLECT ON YOUR PROCESSES AND THE NEED FOR ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTION.

SAFETY AND WELLBEING

CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE CHILD

Is the child safe from abuse and harm?

No Yes

If not consider the need to make a further report

Does the child have any wellbeing issues that are not currently being addressed?

No Yes

If so, consider how these can be addressed and captured within a student support plan

CURRENT WELLBEING OF OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE

Are there any other children who may be impacted by the abuse?

No Yes

If so have their wellbeing needs been met

No Yes

If so, consider how these can be addressed and captured within a student support plan

CURRENT WELLBEING OF IMPACTED STAFF MEMBERS

Does the staff member who made the report/ witnessed the incident, formed a suspicion or received a disclosure require any support?

No Yes

If so has this been received?

No Yes

REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN

*Have school staff followed the four critical actions for schools:
Responding to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse?*

Was an appropriate decision made in relation to when to act?

No Yes

Could the suspected abuse have been detected earlier?

No Yes

Action 1

Did the school take appropriate action in an emergency?

No Yes

Action 2

Was a report made to the appropriate authorities and internally?

No Yes

Were subsequent reports made if necessary?

No Yes

Action 3

Did the school contact the parents/carers asap?

No Yes

Have the parents continued to be engaged if appropriate?

No Yes

Action 4

Has the school provided adequate support for the student?

No Yes

Has a student support plan been established, implemented and reviewed?

No Yes

Has a student support group been established?

No Yes

Was the student appropriately supported in any interviews?

No Yes

Have any complaints been received?

No Yes

Have the complaints been resolved?

No Yes