



# Child Safety: Reporting Procedure

## Purpose

This procedure is designed to assist St Joseph's School Coleraine (St Joseph's) staff to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

## Scope

It is a shared and collective responsibility of all members of the school community to create a child safe culture and environment.

This procedure applies to all teachers, other staff members, volunteers, contractors, other service providers, parish priests, canonical and religious order administrators of Catholic schools within Victoria must understand and abide by the professional, moral and legal obligations to implement child protection and child safety policies, protocols and practices.

## Legislative Context

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* and the Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- VRQA Guidelines to Minimum Standards 2015

## Definitions

A complete list of definitions relevant to this procedure is contained within the Child Safe Policy.

## Actions

St Joseph's has a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices heard and where they are safe and feel safe.

Every person involved in St Joseph's has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they have 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.

St Joseph's will display the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) (Appendix 1) diagram in staff rooms and other strategic areas of the school, to ensure all school staff are aware of the actions to take as soon as they witness a child protection incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being, abused.

### **Types of Abuse and Indicators of Harm**

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. Therefore the legal obligations for reporting allegations of child abuse can vary depending on the circumstances of the incident.

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.

Family violence is defined under the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic.) to include behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness, or be exposed to the effects of family violence such as abusive, threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour. 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.

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 behavioural 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 behavioural 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 also often someone highly trusted within their families, communities, schools and/or other institutions, such as the Church.

For full definitions of all types of child abuse, a comprehensive list of the indicators of harm and advice on identifying perpetrators of child sexual abuse refer to the protocol [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

## Sources of Child Protection Reporting Obligations

Please refer to the below table for an outline of the four sources of child protection reporting obligations. For more information on each of the sources and requirements refer to the protocol [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

	Legislation Source	Requirements
1	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)	<p><b>Mandatory Reporting</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mandatory reporting is a legal requirement to protect children from harm relating to physical injury and sexual abuse. A child, for the purpose of the relevant parts of this Act, is any person 17 years of age or younger. <b>The principal, teachers, medical practitioners and nurses at a school are mandatory reporters under this Act.</b></li> <li>2. If, in the course of carrying out their duties, a mandatory reporter forms a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from physical harm or sexual abuse, and that the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child, they must report that belief to DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, including the information prescribed in the <a href="#">Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools</a>, (Appendix 2) as soon as possible after forming the belief.</li> <li>3. A subsequent report must be made on each occasion on which the mandatory reporter becomes aware of further reasonable grounds for the belief and even if the reporter knows that another report has been made concerning the same child and suspected abuse.</li> <li>4. The threshold for reporting child protection incidents, disclosures, concerns or suspicions has been set deliberately low by the joint protocol. This protocol focuses on <a href="#">Four Critical Actions</a> that all school staff must take if they form a suspicion or reasonable belief that child abuse has occurred, or that a child is at risk of suffering abuse.</li> </ol> <p><b>Reasonable Belief</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where school staff members are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. If a staff member has witnessed potentially abusive behaviour, has a suspicion or has received a disclosure of child abuse, they must determine whether these observations or receipt of such information has caused the staff member to form a 'reasonable belief'.</li> <li>2. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a</li> </ol>

		<p>reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.</p> <p>3. A 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused</li> <li>• any person tells you that they believe someone has been abused; this may include a child who is talking about themselves</li> <li>• you observe physical or behavioural indicators of abuse, as described in <a href="#">Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools</a></li> <li>• a child or young person exhibits sexually abusive or age-inappropriate behaviour(s)</li> <li>• professional observations of the child's behaviour or development cause you to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused.</li> </ul> <p>4. While any indicators of possible child abuse or neglect are concerning, it is important to understand that the presence of a number of indicators that suggest either physical or sexual abuse of a child may be sufficient to form a 'reasonable belief' in a mandatory reporter's mind which must be reported.</p>
2	Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)	<p><b>Failure to Disclose</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Any school staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to Victoria Police.</li> <li>2. Failure to disclose the information to the Police is a criminal offence under Section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) and applies to all adults (18 years and over) in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children.</li> <li>3. The obligation is to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable to do so, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.</li> <li>4. Refer to Appendix 3 for more information on when to report a concern that a child or a young person has been sexually abused, or is in need of protection from sexual abuse.</li> </ol> <p><b>Failure to Protect</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Any school staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer, sport coach or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under 16, who is in the care or</li> </ol>

		<p>supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove that risk.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Failure to take reasonable steps to protect a child in the organisation from the risk of sexual abuse from an adult associated with the organisation is a criminal offence under Section 49C (2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.).</li> <li>3. In a school context, this will include the principal and the business manager and may also extend to school counsellors.</li> </ol> <p><b>Grooming</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The offence of grooming prohibits predatory conduct designed to prepare or 'groom' a child for future sexual activity and is contained in Section 49B (2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.). The offence applies to communication with children under 16 years.</li> <li>2. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails. The offence can be committed by any person aged 18 years or over. It does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.</li> </ol>
3	Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) when the school has taken action against a teacher.</li> <li>2. Ensure compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards as a requirement for Victorian school registration</li> </ol>
4	Duty of Care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School staff have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children and young persons under their care and supervision from harm that is reasonably foreseeable (this duty applies to all school staff). The question of what constitutes reasonable steps will depend on the individual circumstances of each case.</li> <li>2. A staff member may breach their duty of care towards a student if they fail to act in the way a reasonable or diligent professional would have acted in the same situation.</li> </ol>

### Reporting Obligation

	Obligation	Requirement
A	Sexual Abuse (including Grooming)	1. All adults must report sexual abuse including grooming to Victoria Police. See <a href="#">Four Critical Actions for Schools Responding to Student Sexual Offending</a>
B	Other Forms of Abuse	1. Teachers and Principals must report to the Department of Human Services

		2. Other adults should report concerns to and of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teacher</li> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Department of Human Services</li> </ul>
C	Allegations against Clergy, Religious or school staff members	1. If an allegation of any form of child abuse is made against a member of the clergy, religious or school staff member including a volunteer, visitor external provider notify Victoria Police and the Principal. 2. If the allegation is made against the Principal notify the Director of Catholic Education.

## Procedures

### 1. Responding to and Reporting Child Protection Concerns

The approach to respond and report child protection concerns incorporates the [\*Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse\*](#).

However, before the Four Critical Actions can be followed a school staff member must first be made aware of a child protection incident that will determine if they must take action to protect a child.

#### 1.1. Becoming Aware of a Child Protection Incident

There are four main ways in which a school staff member may become aware that a child is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, abuse:

Action	Steps
Witnessing an Incident	<p>If you witness an incident where you believe a child has been subjected to abuse you must first take immediate action to protect the safety of the child or children involved and then go straight to the <a href="#"><i>Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse</i></a>.</p>
Forming a Suspicion	<p>Suspicions that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused must be taken seriously, including suspicions that the abuse is taking or may take place outside school grounds or areas.</p> <p>If your suspicion develops into a reasonable belief you must act and refer to the <a href="#"><i>Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse</i></a>.</p>
Receiving a disclosure about or from a current student	<p>Disclosures must be treated seriously. You should immediately refer to the <a href="#"><i>Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse</i></a>.</p>

	receiving a disclosure about or from a former student.	<p>the former student is currently of school age and attending a Victorian school, you must immediately refer to the <a href="#">Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse</a>.</p> <p>the former student is no longer of school age or attending a Victorian school, you must still report the disclosure to <a href="#">DHHS Child Protection</a>.</p>

**NB:** Staff members are to keep clear and comprehensive notes relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse using the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template](#).

## 1.2. The Four Critical Actions

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 decide not to report.

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

	Action	Steps
1	Responding to an Emergency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If there is not risk of immediate harm go to Action 2.</li> <li>2. If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• separating alleged victims and others involved</li> <li>• administering first aid</li> <li>• calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns</li> <li>• identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.</li> </ol>
2	Reporting to Authorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 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.</li> </ol> <p>Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.</p>



		<p>2. Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?</p> <p><b>a. Within the School</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor or volunteer to Victoria Police.</li> <li>You must also report internally to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School principal and/or leadership team</li> <li>Diocesan education office.</li> </ul> </li> <li>All allegations of 'reportable conduct' must be reported as soon as possible to the Diocesan education office</li> </ul> <p><b>b. Within the Family or Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You must report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In need of protection from child abuse</li> <li>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.</li> </ul> </li> <li>You must also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.</li> <li>You must also report internally to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School principal and/or leadership team</li> <li>Diocesan education office.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>c. Other Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child FIRST</li> <li>DHHS Child Protection</li> <li>Victoria Police.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3	Contacting Parents/Carers	<p>1. The Principal must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not to contact the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a</li> </ul>



		<p>mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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).</li> <li>how to communicate with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.</li> </ul>
4	Providing Ongoing Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.</li> <li>Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support services.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>

### 1.3. Preparing to Make a Mandatory Report

The table below outlines steps you should take in preparing to make a mandatory report. The [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template](#) (Appendix 2) should be used to record as much information as possible. If a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact the Police immediately.

Step	Description
1. Keep Notes	<p>Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour)</li> <li>the source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person)</li> <li>the actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with the principal, report to DHHS Child Protection, etc.).</li> </ul>

2. Discuss Concerns	<p>Due to the complexity of child abuse incidents, disclosures and suspicions, it is recommended that concerns and observations regarding suspected physical or sexual abuse of a child are discussed with the principal or a member of the Leadership Team and/or Catholic Education Ballarat.</p> <p>This is not a legal requirement, however will help to ensure support is provided to all involved in matters of this nature. The confidentiality of these discussions must be maintained.</p> <p>You should then make your own assessment about whether you are required to make a report about the child or young person and to whom the report should be made.</p> <p><b>It is important to remember that the duty to report abuse or suspicions of abuse exists even if the principal, member of the Leadership Team or a representative of Catholic Education Ballarat advises you not to proceed with reporting suspected abuse.</b></p>
3. Gather & Document Information	<p>Gather the relevant information necessary to make the report using the template <a href="#">Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template</a>. This should include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full name, date of birth and residential address of the child or young person</li> <li>• the details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns</li> <li>• your involvement with the child or young person</li> <li>• details of any other agencies which may be involved with the child or young person.</li> </ul> <p>It is critical that completing the template does not impact on reporting times – <b>if a child is in immediate danger school staff need to report the matter immediately to the Police.</b></p>
4. Make the Report	<p>Make a written record of the report including the following information:</p> <p>the date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported the name and position of the person who made the report and the person who received the report.</p> <p>The information initially recorded in <a href="#">Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template</a> and any additional information provided to either the Police or DHHS Child Protection is to be stored securely and maintained for a <b>minimum of seven (7) years</b> by the school, to ensure that records are accessible upon request by external authorities investigating the matter.</p>
5. Document Written Records of Report	<p>Make a written record of the report including the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported</li> <li>• the name and position of the person who made the report and the person who received the report.</li> </ul> <p>The information initially recorded in the <a href="#">Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template</a> and any additional information provided to either the Police or DHHS Child Protection is to be stored securely and maintained for a <b>minimum of seven (7) years</b> by the school, to ensure that records are accessible upon request by external authorities</p>

	investigating the matter.
6. Additional Steps for Overseas Students	Where a child protection incident, disclosure or suspicion involves an international student at the school and the school has issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter for that student (thereby assuming responsibility for the child's accommodation, support and general welfare) the school will also need to contact the VRQA.

## ChildFIRST

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 to or seeking advice from ChildFIRST.

ChildFIRST is the Family Information Referral Support Team run by a registered community service in a local area that can receive confidential referrals about a child of concern. It does not have any statutory powers to protect a child but can refer matters to family services.

You should make a report to ChildFIRST if:

- you have a significant concern for a child's wellbeing
- your concerns are about circumstances that have a low-to-moderate impact on the child
- the child's immediate safety is not compromised
- you and the school have discussed the referral to Child FIRST with the child's parents/carers, and all parties are supportive of this decision.

Where you believe that the child's parents/carers will not be supportive of the referral, you may refer the matter to DHHS Child Protection.

If you are unsure of what action to take in response to your concerns about a child, speak to the principal or a member of the school's Leadership Team, or contact DHHS Child Protection or ChildFIRST for further advice.

## Making Additional Reports

After you have made a report, you may continue to suspect that a child is at risk and in need of protection. Any further observations should continue to be recorded and a report made on each separate occasion where a belief has been formed – on reasonable grounds – that a child is likely to be at risk and in need of protection.

If there is any suspicion that this relates to a sexual offence involving a person over 18 and a child under 16 then it must be reported to the Police.

Where a staff member is aware that another staff member has formed a reasonable belief about the same child on the same occasion, or based on the same indicators of abuse, and has made a report to the appropriate authority, the first staff member need not make a further report.

However, if the first staff member has formed a reasonable belief of abuse or a significant risk of abuse to the child based on different observations, further indicators or additional information, a further report must be made to the appropriate authority detailing this additional information.

#### 1.4. Potential Consequences of Making a Report

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

Requests for Information	<p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Child FIRST and/or the Police may request information about the child or family for the purpose of investigating a report and assessing the risk to the child or young person.</p> <p>In certain circumstances, DHHS Child Protection can also direct school staff to provide information or documents about the protection or development of the child. Such directions should be in writing and only be made by authorised persons within DHHS Child Protection. Refer to <a href="#">Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools</a>.</p>
Witness Summons	If DHHS Child Protection makes a Protection Application in the Children's Court of Victoria, any party to the application may issue a Witness Summons to produce documents and/or to give evidence in the proceedings.

### 1.5. Responding to a Complain or a Concern about the Management of a Child Protection Incident

The school may receive concerns or complaints about school staff management of a child protection incident. These concerns or complaints may be voiced by parents/carers or others within the school community.

The school should follow its internal complaints handling process to ensure that all concerns, complaints or feedback on school policies or processes are effectively captured and appropriately managed.

It is important that, as a first step, the school ensures that the complaint does not raise concerns that child abuse or a risk of child abuse has gone unreported.

If this is the case, the school should follow the above process to ensure that any new information received through a complaint or concern from a member of the school community is reported to authorities where required.

## 2. Professional Learning

All staff will undertake the following:

When	Description
Beginning of each school year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-commit to the St Joseph's Child Safety Code of Conduct for working with children</li> <li>Be given an opportunity to re-familiarise themselves with the Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools resource and its implications</li> <li>Receive any updates on all areas related to duty of care, mandatory reporting and the child safe standards</li> <li>Receive training on their obligations and responsibilities in regard to witnessing an offence, forming a suspicion or receiving a disclosure</li> <li>Review the role the school's Child Protection Officer</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and clarify their duty of care obligations in relation to the criminal offences of failure to disclose, failure to protect and grooming</li> </ul>
throughout the school year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to undertake appropriate updates/training in areas of child safety</li> <li>Engage in staff meetings that further build their understanding of duty of care staff and how it applies to child safety, including their obligations with regards to identifying and responding to all forms of abuse. This will include references to the <i>Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools</i> resource</li> <li>Annual briefing session on St Joseph's Child Safety Code of Conduct for working with children</li> <li>Induction of new staff on student safety policies and procedures</li> <li>All staff (mandated and non-mandated) will undertake annually the (DET) Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module by the last day of Term 1. A record of staff completion will be updated in the school document management system.</li> </ul>

## Supporting Documents

### Internal Documents

- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Risk Register
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Risk Management Framework
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy

### External Documents

- [PROTECT Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#)
- [An Overview of the Child Safe Standards \[DHHS\]](#)
- [A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation \[CCYP\]](#)
- Empowerment and participation of children ([CCYP - Tip Sheet for Child Safe Organisation](#))
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016, [Commitment Statement to Child Safety: A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools](#).
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2013, [Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013](#), CECV.
- Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, [The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](#), Vatican.
- Parliament of Victoria, Family and Community Development Committee, 2013, [Betrayal of Trust](#)

## Responsibility

<b>Approval Authority</b> Responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this policy	<b>Policy Sponsor</b> Responsible for maintaining the content of this policy as delegated by the Approval Authority	<b>Administration</b> Responsible for the administration support for the maintenance of this policy as directed by the Policy Sponsor
Governing Authority	Principal	Compliance and Risk Manager

## Promulgation

This procedure will be communicated throughout the St Joseph's school community in the form of:

- policies section of the St Joseph's website;
- policy library section of the St Joseph's intranet; and
- distribution of email to all staff.

## Implementation

This procedure will be implemented throughout St Joseph's via:

- policy library section of the St Joseph's intranet;
- staff briefing session; and
- training sessions.

## Records Management

<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Minimum Retention Period</b>
PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools	Permanent Retention



## FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

# Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

### 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
  - calling **000 for urgent medical aid**
  - 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 or 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 Security Services Unit
- 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 **1800 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 **1800 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 Security Services Unit
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
  - School principal and/or leadership team
  - Diocesan education office.
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
  - School principal and/or chairperson.

### YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

- 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.

\*A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables a school to act in a timely and effective manner.

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

- 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.

### 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 led 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 **Support 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 of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

### CONTACT

#### DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

**AREA**  
North Division **1300 664 9777**  
South Division **1300 635 795**  
East Division **1300 360 361**  
West Division (Rural) **1800 075 599**  
West Division (Metrol) **1300 664 9777**

**AFTER HOURS**  
After hours, weekends, public holidays **13 12 78**

#### CHILD FIRST

<https://enfocead.hv.vic.gov.au/learnand-supportteams>

#### ORANGED OOR

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

#### VICTORIA POLICE

**000** or your local police station  
**SECURITY SERVICES UNIT**  
**(03) 9589 6266**

#### STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT

**(03) 9651 3622**

#### EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

**(03) 9637 2595**

#### DIO CESAN OFFICE

Melbourne **(03) 5267 0228**  
Ballarat **(03) 5337 7185**  
Sale **(03) 5622 6600**  
Shepparton **(03) 5443 2377**

#### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

**VICTORIA**  
**(03) 9625 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 **240 Respect** for counselling information and a referral service: **1800 737 732**



## Appendix 2

# PROTECT



Education  
and Training



## RECORDING YOUR ACTIONS: RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

### A TEMPLATE FOR VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

#### WHEN TO USE THIS TEMPLATE

School staff should use this template to document any incident, disclosure or suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, including exposure to family violence. This template should be used in conjunction with the following: [Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

Completing this template should not impact on reporting times. If a child is in immediate danger, school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police.

Whilst you may need to gather the information to make a report, remember it is not the role of school staff to investigate abuse, leave this to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection.

This template should also be used if you make a decision not to report, to record your rationale for this decision and any other related follow up actions you take to support the child.

#### WHY RECORD THIS INFORMATION?

When completing this template your aim should be to provide as much information as possible. This information will be critical to any reports and may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of court proceedings. These notes may also later assist you if you are required to provide evidence to support any decisions.

It is a requirement under **Ministerial Order No. 870- Child Safe Standards- Managing the risk of child abuse in schools** for schools to keep clear and comprehensive notes on all observations, disclosures and other details that led them to suspect the abuse.

# RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE

*IF YOU ARE MAKING A REPORT TO DHHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE YOU MUST SEEK ADVICE BEFORE CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS SO AS NOT TO COMPROMISE ANY INVESTIGATION OR PLACE A CHILD AT FURTHER RISK – THIS IS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL IN INSTANCES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE.*

## STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE RESPONSE

NAME:

OCCUPATION:

LOCATION (SCHOOL ADDRESS):

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

## CRITICAL ACTION 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

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

See Action 1 of **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.**

## RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FIRST AID? PROVIDE DETAILS IF 'YES'.

WHO ADMINISTERED THIS? (NAME AND TITLE)

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FURTHER IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE?

CURRENT LOCATION AND SAFETY STATUS:

*E.G. ARE ALL IMPACTED STUDENTS SAFE AND NOT IN ANY IMMEDIATE DANGER?*

*IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER SCHOOL STAFF SHOULD REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO VICTORIA POLICE ON 000*

## CHILD'S INFORMATION

### PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME:

GENDER:

YEAR LEVEL/CLASS:

DATE OF BIRTH:

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:

PARENT/CARER NAME/S:

PARENT/CARER CONTACT:

LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN BY CHILD:

DISABILITIES, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES:

## CHILD'S BACKGROUND

### CULTURAL STATUS AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

*IF THE CHILD IS OF ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BACKGROUND, GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS MUST CONTACT THEIR KOORIE ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT OFFICER, AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS MUST CONTACT THE DIOCESAN EDUCATION OFFICE TO ARRANGE CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE SUPPORT. IF THE CHILD IS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT YOU MUST NOTIFY THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION DIVISION ON (03) 9637 2990*

ANY KNOWN PREVIOUS HISTORY OF SUSPECTED ABUSE (INCLUDING EXPOSURE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE) 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

### GROUND'S FOR YOUR BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN, OR IS AT RISK OF ABUSE

INDICATORS OR INSTANCES WHICH LED YOU TO BELIEVE A CHILD/CHILDREN ARE SUBJECT TO CHILD ABUSE, OR AT RISK OF ABUSE INCLUDING EXPOSURE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE:

*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:



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

NAME:

GENDER

DATE OF BIRTH:

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

*NOTING 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 DISCUSSIONS WITH ANY OF THE ABOVE AUTHORITIES:

DATE:

TIME:

AUTHORITY:

OUTCOMES FROM THE REPORT:

## REPORTING INTERNALLY

### PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

TIME:

DATE:

NAMES:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS TO EITHER OF THE FOLLOWING:

**GOVERNMENT SCHOOL STAFF** MUST REPORT TO SECURITY SERVICES UNIT AND ALSO TO THE EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH IF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION INVOLVES A STAFF MEMBER, CONTRACTOR OR VOLUNTEER

**CATHOLIC SCHOOL STAFF** MUST REPORT TO THEIR CATHOLIC DIOCESAN EDUCATION OFFICE

TIME:

DATE:

NAMES:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

### CRITICAL ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

See Action 3 of **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse**

#### ACTIONS TAKEN

**PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH PARENTS/CARERS (IF APPROPRIATE):**

*SCHOOL STAFF MUST CONSULT WITH VICTORIA POLICE AND/OR DHHS CHILD PROTECTION TO DETERMINE IF IT IS APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENTS, IF IT IS, PARENTS MUST BE CONTACTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (PREFERABLY ON THE SAME DAY OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION). THIS IS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL IN INSTANCES OF SUSPECTED FAMILY VIOLENCE.*

HAVE YOU SOUGHT ADVICE FROM DHHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE?

- ☐ NO
- ☐ YES

IS IT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER

- ☐ NO
- ☐ YES

LIST REASONS IF IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER:

IF CONTACTING PARENT/CARER, PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

NAME OF STAFF MEMBER MAKING THE CALL:

NAME OF PARENT/CARER RECEIVING THE CALL:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

## CRITICAL ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

See Action 4 of **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse**

### PLANNED ACTIONS

*INCLUDE DETAIL OF WHAT FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS HAVE OCCURRED TO SUPPORT THE STUDENT (FOR EXAMPLE, REFERRAL TO WELLBEING PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER SPECIALISED SERVICES, THE CONVENING OF A STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORT PLANS);*

FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

SUPPORT:

REFERRALS(S):

# PROCESS OF REVIEW

COMPLETE THIS SECTION BETWEEN 4-6 WEEKS AFTER AN INCIDENT, SUSPICION OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE IN CONJUNCTION WITH 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 ACTIONS.

## SAFETY AND WELLBEING

### CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE CHILD

IS THE CHILD SAFE FROM ABUSE AND HARM – INCLUDING EXPOSURE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE?

- ☐ 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

## OTHER LEARNINGS

## Appendix 3

### Reporting Criteria – Failure to Disclose

In accordance with the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.), this table sets out when to report a concern that a child or young person has been sexually abused or is in need of protection from sexual abuse.



Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p><b>Reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16.</b></p> <p>Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to Victoria Police.</p> <p>You will not be guilty of an offence if you do not report in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The victim is 16 years of age or older and does not want the information reported to the Police. However, this exception does not apply where the victim is aged under 16 years or is aged over 16 years and has an intellectual disability and does not have the capacity to make an informed decision about whether or not to report.</li> <li>The victim has disclosed the information in confidence in the course of a therapeutic relationship with you as a registered medical practitioner, counsellor or in religious confession to a member of the clergy. A 'counsellor' is a person who is treating a person for an emotional or psychological condition.</li> </ul> <p>Please note that under the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i> (Vic.) the exceptions to making a disclosure under the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic.) may be overridden.</p> <p>The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) <a href="#">Privacy Compliance Manual</a> (updated by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV): Dec 2015) also provides details relating to the role of school counsellors and their obligations to pupils, the school at which the pupils are enrolled and the parents of those pupils (refer to Section 26).</p> <p>Where it is necessary for school counsellors to directly pass on information, which relates to the wellbeing of a student at a school, this information must be conveyed to a person (i.e. school principal) who has a legal obligation to receive it without betraying confidence (Section 26.3).</p> <p>A mandatory report may then need to be made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The victim turned 16 years of age before 27 October 2014.</li> </ul> <p>Reasonable excuses for failing to comply with the requirement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a reasonable belief that the information has already been reported to the Police or DHHS Child Protection disclosing all of the information</li> <li>a reasonable fear that the disclosure will place someone (other than the alleged perpetrator) at risk of harm.</li> </ul>	Any person aged 18 or over	Victoria Police