

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Item 4.3.2



Child Protection Policy

Date Jan 2024

Review Jan 2025

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide clear guidelines to employees, contractors and other visitors to the School regarding expectations when interacting with students and other children.

Lauriston Girls' School is committed to fulfilling its duty of care to all students and specifically students under the age of 16 in relation to the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) which was amended in 2014 to include offences of: (1) failing to disclose a sexual offence; (2) grooming for sexual conduct; and (3) failing to protect a child from sexual offence. This policy is underpinned by the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).

Application

Through the application of this policy, the School aims to:

- Ensure all reasonable steps are taken so that students are safe from abuse, including sexual abuse, and they feel safe at all times.
- Enable School Council members, all persons in positions of authority, care or supervision, all employees of the School and where applicable, students of 18 years or over to understand their role and responsibility in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people under the age of 16 in accordance with the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).
- Ensure all members of the School community aged 18 and over understand their reporting obligations in accordance with the Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic).
- Provide clear guidelines to employees, contractors and visitors to the School regarding expectations when interacting with students and other children.

The procedures outlined in this policy apply to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or other persons while connected to a school environment.

Policy Requirement

This policy requires individuals understand the requirements of State and Federal Legislation regarding the Protection of Children against sexual abuse. It also requires individuals to demonstrate a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to prevent incidents which may expose a student or another child to harm in accordance with the school's Mandatory Reporting Policy.

The School recognises that children and students have a right to be treated with dignity and respect, free from emotional and physical danger, abuse (including sexual abuse) and neglect.

In addition, the policy is intended to protect the reputation and wellbeing of supervising adults from allegations or misunderstandings. It applies to both the workplace behaviour and behaviour expected outside the workplace while in the employment of the School.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



If further explanation of any of the instructions provided here is required, it should be sought from the Heads of School, the Director of the Lauriston Institute or the Principal.

As an overarching principle, the Principal must be kept informed of any issues relating to potential or actual risk to the protection of children and students and/or reputational risk to supervising adults or the School at all times.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Principal will:

- Ensure that all staff members, volunteers, students aged 18 and over, School Council members and the School parent community are aware of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) and have access to a copy of this policy;
- Ensure that all adults within the School community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child under 16 years to the police; and
- Provide support for staff in undertaking their responsibility in this area.

All staff members will:

- Be aware of the School's Child Safe Policy, Child Protection Policy and the Mandatory Reporting Policy;
- Report any reasonable belief of child abuse (including sexual abuse) to the police or fulfil their obligation as Mandatory Reporters (if applicable); and
- Provide an educational environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Parents/Caregivers/Volunteers/Students 18 years and over will:

- Be aware of this School's Child Safe Policy, Child Protection Policy and the Mandatory Reporting Policy; and
- Understand their obligations to report reasonable belief of child sexual abuse to the police.

1. Protection of Children against Sexual Abuse: Specific Offences

Failure to Disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-minded responsibility. The 'failure to disclose' offence imposes a clear legal duty upon all adults aged 18 and over to report child sexual abuse to police

Definition: Under Section 327 of the Crimes Act, any person (including any staff member) of or over the age of 18 years whether in Victoria or elsewhere who has information that leads the person to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child under 16 years of age by another person of or over the age of 18 years must disclose that information to police, as soon as it is practicable to do so.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection).

Forming a 'Reasonable Belief'

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

Procedure for Protection of Children against Sexual Abuse: Specific Offences

Any adult aged 18 or over who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria or elsewhere by an adult against a child who is under 16 years of age must report that information to Victoria Police on 000, Malvern Police Station (03 8823 560) for the Armadale campus and Mansfield Police Station (03 5775 555) for the Howqua campus

An adult will not be guilty of an offence if they do not report in the following circumstances:

- The victim is 16 years of age or older and does not have an intellectual disability that limits his/her capacity to make an informed decision; and he/she does not want the information reported to the police.
- The victim has disclosed the information in confidence in the course of a therapeutic relationship with you as a registered medical practitioner or counsellor.
- The victim turned 16 years of age before 27 October 2014.

Reasonable excuses for failing to comply with the requirement include:

- A reasonable belief that the information has already been reported to police or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection) disclosing all information.
- A reasonable belief that the disclosure will place someone (other than the alleged perpetrator) at risk of harm.

If an adult that reasonably believes that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 by another adult, then they must call Victoria Police on [000](tel:000), Malvern Police Station (03 8823 560) for the Armadale campus and Mansfield Police Station (03 5775 555) for the Howqua campus.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



2. Failure to Protect Offence

Section 49C of the Crimes Act states that it is a criminal offence in Victoria for a person in authority to fail to protect a child under the age of 16 from criminal sexual abuse. This applies where there is substantial risk that a child under the care, supervision or authority of an organisation (including schools) will become a victim of a sexual offence by an adult associated with the School. The person in a position of authority may be guilty of an offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Definition

If a person associated with the School who by reason of their position has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a child will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the School, they must not negligently fail to reduce or remove the risk. That is, as soon as a person in authority becomes aware of a risk of child sexual abuse, they will be under a duty to take steps to remove or reduce that risk.

Power or Responsibility

A person who has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk will include the Principal, School Council members and senior staff, as well as teachers by virtue of their responsibilities. Any member of staff or person associated with the School who knows of a substantial risk that a child will become a victim of a sexual offence should notify the Principal as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Substantial Risk

There are a number of factors that may assist in determining whether a risk is a substantial risk. These include:

- the likelihood or probability that the child will become the victim of a sexual offence
- the nature of the relationship between a child and the adult who may pose a risk to the child
- the background of the adult who may pose a risk to the child, including any past or alleged misconduct
- any vulnerabilities particular to a child which may increase the likelihood that they may become the victim of a sexual offence
- any other relevant fact which may indicate a substantial risk of a sexual offence being committed against a child.

When determining whether a risk is substantial, the courts will consider a variety of factors, which may include those listed above. The courts will consider all the facts and circumstances of the case objectively, and will consider whether a reasonable person would have judged the risk of a sexual offence being committed against the child abuse as substantial. It is not necessary to prove that a sexual offence, such as indecent assault or rape, was committed

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



The following are examples of where there may be substantial risk for a student:

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

Becomes aware / knows

A person is generally taken to 'know' that there is a risk if he or she 'is aware' that it exists or will exist in the ordinary course of events. This is more than merely holding a tentative belief or suspicion.

However, it is expected that a person in authority will take steps to follow up on a suspicion or belief that children in their organisation were at risk of harm.

Procedure for Failure to Protect Offence

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- 1 **Any member of staff or person associated with the School who knows of a substantial risk that a child will become a victim of a sexual offence notify the Principal as soon as is reasonably practicable.**
 - 2 **Principal becomes aware of risk of sexual abuse to a child in school from an adult aged 18 years or over associated with the School community.**
 - 3 **Principal takes immediate action to reduce or remove the risk to the child. Such an action might include: if the adult concerned is a staff member, immediately standing that person down or otherwise removing their access to students while an investigation is underway.**
 - 4 **Notify Police and/or other authorities.**
Refer to Critical Incident Management Policy. Seek guidance from Police.
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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



Support and Protection of Students:

In all instances, the school will protect, support or assist children who disclose abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse by:

- Ensuring that the student does not have contact with the staff member or person associated with the School who is alleged to have committed any of the specific offences noted in this policy until the allegation is resolved;
- The provision of counselling by the School Psychologist with the agreement of parents;
- The provision of the School wellbeing support network including the School Psychologist, School Nurse, Year Level Coordinators, House Coordinators and Tutors;
- Family counselling with the School Psychologist or an external psychologist, where recommended;
- Modifications to the academic program where appropriate;
- Modifications to the school timetable and attendance where appropriate.

3. Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporting involves informing the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection) of conduct involving a child 17 years and under that would constitute physical or sexual abuse. In the case of students who are over the age of 18, the required contact point will be the Police.

The protection of children is regulated by the Children, Youth and Families Act 2015. Section 182 specifies that a person registered under the Education Training and Reform Act 2006 or who has been granted permission to teach under that Act is designated as a mandatory reporter.

As such, it is an offence on behalf of an individual teacher (or other mandatory reporters) and/or the School to fail to notify the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection) of concerns if they have formed the belief on reasonable grounds that:

- A child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury and the child's parents have not been protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;
- A child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant hardship as a result of sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type.
- If the individual teacher or the School notifies the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection) in good faith, based on having reasonable grounds for forming the view that the child is at risk, it will not be considered unprofessional conduct by the teacher or School.
- In every case, where it may be necessary to report a matter to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection) or the Police, the Principal must be notified as a matter of urgency; she will assist the teacher or other employee in making the report and ensure that they are provided with support.

Mandatory Reporters:

People who must make mandatory reports are:

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



- teachers and school principals
- doctors, nurses and midwives
- out-of-home care workers (excluding volunteer foster carers and kinship carers)
- early childhood teachers and workers
- registered psychologists
- youth justice workers
- school counsellors
- people in religious ministry.

| Mandated Reporter | Not a Mandated Reporter |
|--|---|
| fulfil obligations under the Children, Youth and Families Act (2005) | Notify supervisor, Principal or her delegate |
| Notify supervisor, Principal or her delegate | Refer to Mandatory Reporting Policy |
| Refer to Mandatory Reporting Policy and make a report with the Principal or her delegate | Make a report with the support of the Principal or her delegate |

4. Grooming

Section 49B of the Crimes Act relates to the offence of 'Grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years'. The offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity. The offence can be committed by any person aged 18 years or over.

Definition

The offence of grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. The offence applied where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's engagement in or involvement in sexual conduct, whether with the groomer or another adult.

Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity. For example, grooming may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

The sexual conduct must constitute an indictable sexual offence. This includes offences such as sexual penetration of a child, indecent assault and indecent act in the presence of a child. It does not include summary offences, such as indecent behaviour in public.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



Procedure Grooming

Should any member of the School community aged 18 and over become aware of grooming behaviour by a person aged 18 years or over, they should notify the police and/or the Principal immediately.

It is the responsibility of the Principal and /or others associated with the School with authority or responsibility, to take action upon becoming aware of grooming behaviour to protect (so as to reduce or remove a substantial risk) in accordance with the 'failure to protect' offence.

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- 1 Any member of School community aged 18 years or over forms a reasonable belief of Grooming taking place.**
 - 2 Member of School community notifies the police and/or Principal or other senior staff member.**
 - 3 Take steps to protect child including reduction or removal of risk.**
 - 4 Subject to guidance from the Police, follow School policies on Critical Incident Management.**
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5. General Expectations

It is expected that every employee will:

- Take all reasonable steps to avoid placing themselves, students or other children in circumstances which may reasonably be considered a risk to their safety or wellbeing;
- Consider what they do and say in terms of the potential for (in interacting with a child or student) misunderstanding, allegations, misinterpretation or innuendo;
- Avoid being alone (without reasonable visibility from outside the room) with a child or student;
- Comply fully with preventative supervisory practices;
- Take an active role to ensure the protection of students and other children on LGS premises and elsewhere;
- Report any conduct or event which poses a risk to the safety and wellbeing of a student, child, supervising adult or the School to the Principal or Head of School without delay;
- Maintain strict confidentiality of information relating to events or individuals in regard to allegations of unwelcome or inappropriate conduct (except to report it as required to managers or external authorities);
- Fully cooperate with any investigation, formal or informal, which occurs as a consequence of allegations or misunderstandings regarding conduct being brought to the School's attention;
- Refrain from activities, conduct or communication involving children or students that would reasonably be seen to have a negative impact on the reputation of the School or students of the School.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy

In order to comply with the terms of an employment contract, Legislation and other regulations regarding the Protection of Children, employees, contractors and volunteers are expected to follow the Code of Conduct.

6. Four Critical Steps

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

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

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

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

| 1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY | 2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES | 3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS | 4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| <p>If there is no risk of immediate harm go to Action 2</p> <p>If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.</p> | <p>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.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="background-color: #00796b; color: white;">WITHIN THE SCHOOL</th> <th style="background-color: #00796b; color: white;">WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY</th> <th style="background-color: #00796b; color: white;">OTHER CONCERNS</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <p>VICTORIA POLICE</p> <p>You must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.</p> <p>You must also report Internally to:</p> <p>GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or leadership team Employee Conduct Branch DET Incident Support and Operations Centre. <p>CATHOLIC SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or leadership team Diocesan education office. <p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or school chairperson Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 782 978. <p>All allegations of 'reportable conduct' must be reported as soon as possible to:</p> <p>GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee Conduct Branch <p>CATHOLIC SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diocesan education office <p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 782 978. </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <p>DHHS CHILD PROTECTION</p> <p>You must report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>VICTORIA POLICE</p> <p>You must also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.</p> <p>You must also report Internally to:</p> <p>GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or leadership team DET Incident Support and Operations Centre. <p>CATHOLIC SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or leadership team Diocesan education office. <p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or chairperson. </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <p>If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act. 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This may include making a referral or seeking advice from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child FRST/The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support) DHHS Child Protection Victoria Police. | <p>Your 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"> not to contact the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted) to contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion) how to communicate with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety. | <p>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.</p> <p>Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| WITHIN THE SCHOOL | WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY | OTHER CONCERNS | | | | | | | |
| <p>VICTORIA POLICE</p> <p>You must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.</p> <p>You must also report Internally to:</p> <p>GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or leadership team Employee Conduct Branch DET Incident Support and Operations Centre. <p>CATHOLIC SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or leadership team Diocesan education office. <p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or school chairperson Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 782 978. <p>All allegations of 'reportable conduct' must be reported as soon as possible to:</p> <p>GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee Conduct Branch <p>CATHOLIC SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diocesan education office <p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 782 978. | <p>DHHS CHILD PROTECTION</p> <p>You must report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>VICTORIA POLICE</p> <p>You must also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.</p> <p>You must also report Internally to:</p> <p>GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or leadership team DET Incident Support and Operations Centre. <p>CATHOLIC SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or leadership team Diocesan education office. <p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principal and/or chairperson. | <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child FRST/The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support) DHHS Child Protection Victoria Police. | | | | | | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">CONTACT</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <p>DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA</p> <p>North Division 1300 664 977 South Division 1300 655 795 East Division 1300 360 391 West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599 West Division (Metro) 1300 664 977</p> <p>AFTER HOURS After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 1278</p> <p>CHILD FIRST https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-team</p> <p>ORANGE DOOR https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html</p> </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <p>VICTORIA POLICE 000 or your local police station</p> <p>DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE 1800 126 126</p> <p>INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT 1800 126 126</p> <p>EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH (03) 9637 2595</p> <p>DIOCESAN OFFICE Melbourne (03) 9267 0228 Ballarat (03) 5337 7135 Sale (03) 5622 6600 Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377</p> </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA (03) 9825 7200</p> <p>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</p> <p>Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to 1800 Respect for counselling, information and a referral service: 1800 737 732.</p> </td> </tr> </table> | | | | <p>DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA</p> <p>North Division 1300 664 977 South Division 1300 655 795 East Division 1300 360 391 West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599 West Division (Metro) 1300 664 977</p> <p>AFTER HOURS After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 1278</p> <p>CHILD FIRST https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-team</p> <p>ORANGE DOOR https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html</p> | <p>VICTORIA POLICE 000 or your local police station</p> <p>DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE 1800 126 126</p> <p>INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT 1800 126 126</p> <p>EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH (03) 9637 2595</p> <p>DIOCESAN OFFICE Melbourne (03) 9267 0228 Ballarat (03) 5337 7135 Sale (03) 5622 6600 Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377</p> | <p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA (03) 9825 7200</p> <p>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</p> <p>Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to 1800 Respect for counselling, information and a referral service: 1800 737 732.</p> | | | |
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7. Record Keeping

As set out in the Records Management Policy, Lauriston Girls' School must create full and accurate records of school functions and activities, including records relating to the handling of incidents, complaints and investigations.

Long-term records of incident, complaints and investigations which include records that document allegations and the response to allegations of staff or volunteer misconduct in school setting, in cases

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



where the allegations involve students (excluding cases of child sexual abuse) will be retained for 75 years after the action was completed.

For cases of child sexual abuse the records will be:

- Stored securely so that they cannot be lost, damaged, altered or tampered with over time.
- Stored confidentially so that privacy is protected and only authorised people are aware of them and can access and use them for legitimate purposes.
- Retained for as long as they might reasonably be needed for current or possible future legal proceedings, in such a way that they can be accessed and used for authorised purposes.
- Ensure that contextual information is retained with the records, so that future users are able to understand them and that they can be used to provide good evidence.

The Principal is responsible for making, securing and retaining records of the complaint or concern and the response of the school's services.

The School has a system and process for managing electronic and hardcopy records to ensure the authenticity, security, reliability and accessibility of those records.

All records are stored in safe and secure locations to ensure their integrity and accessibility. Permanent records are stored in conditions that ensure their long-term preservation.

Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse Template

IF YOU ARE MAKING A REPORT TO DFFH 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:

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



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:

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



PERSONAL DETAILS

PARENT/CARER NAME/S:

PARENT/CARER CONTACT:

LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN BY CHILD:

DISABILITIES, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES:

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



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

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



FAMILY BACKGROUND

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):

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



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 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:

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



GROUND FOR YOUR BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN, OR IS AT RISK 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:

NOTING IF THEY ARE WITHIN THE SCHOOL OR WITHIN THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY (THIS WILL IMPACT ON WHO YOU REPORT TO)

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



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

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
- DFFH CHILD PROTECTION
- Orange Door
- 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:

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS WITH ANY OF THE ABOVE AUTHORITIES:

DATE:

TIME:

AUTHORITY:

OUTCOMES FROM THE REPORT:

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



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:

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



REPORTING INTERNALLY

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



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 DFFH 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 DFFH 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:

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



ACTIONS TAKEN

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



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):

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



PLANNED ACTIONS

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



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

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



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

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



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

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection Policy



REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN

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OTHER LEARNINGS

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