

MANDATORY REPORTING

POLICY

Rationale:

- All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. As teachers, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidences involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact, and to report instances that we believe involve physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

Background:

- Schools must comply with the legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the **Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)**, the **Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)** and the recommendations of the **Betrayal of Trust Report**.
- To ensure that children's rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.
- Under the Ministerial Order 870, protecting children is everyone's responsibility – parents, communities, governments and business all have a role to play. In Victoria, a joint protocol, involving the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Child Protection, the Department of Education and Training (DET), the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and licenced children's services, exists to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- All school staff, as defined by Ministerial Order 870, within Victoria must understand and abide by the professional, moral and legal obligations to implement child protection and child safety policies, protocols and practices.
- A broad range of professional groups are identified in the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (CYFA) as mandatory reporters. Mandated staff members must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- The following professionals are prescribed as mandatory reporters under section 182 of the CYFA:
 - Primary and secondary school teachers and principals (including students in training)
 - Registered medical practitioners (including psychiatrists)
 - Nurses (including school nurses)
 - Police.
- There may be times when two or more mandated staff members, for example a teacher and a principal, have formed a belief about the same child on the same occasion. In this situation it is sufficient for only one of the mandated staff members to make a report. The other staff member is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all of the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member.

- Non-mandated staff members

Section 183 of the CYFA states that any person, who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, may report their concerns to Child Protection. This means that any person, including non-mandated school staff, is able to make a report to Child Protection when they believe that a child is at risk of harm and in need of protection, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

Implementation:

- *All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect (as per guidelines).*

Forming a belief on reasonable grounds

A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

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

Reporting a belief

Staff members, whether or not mandated, need to report their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to Child Protection.

Protecting the identity of the reporter

Confidentiality is provided for reporters under the CYFA. The CYFA prevents disclosure of the name or any information likely to lead to the identification of a person who has made a report in accordance with legislation, except in specific circumstances.

The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless:

- The reporter chooses to inform the child or family of the report
- The reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed

- A court or tribunal decides that it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child
- A court or tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to attend court to provide evidence.

Professional protection for reporters

If a report is made in good faith:

- It does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter
- The reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

This means that a person who makes a report in accordance with the legislation will not be held liable for the eventual outcome of any investigation of the report.

Failure to report

A failure by mandated professionals and staff members to report a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical or sexual abuse may result in the person being prosecuted and a court imposing a fine under the CYFA.

Making a report to Child Protection

The CYFA allows for two types of reports to be made in relation to significant concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child – a report to Child Protection or a referral to Child FIRST.

Child Protection	-Dept of Human Services - Child Protection	9479 6222
	- Barwon South-West Office – Geelong	1800 075 599
	-After Hours Emergency Service	131 278

Child FIRST	-Southern Grampians	1300 543 779
	-Warrnambool	1300 889 713

DET Emergency Management Services Unit		95896266
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Victoria Police		000
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A report to Child Protection should be considered if, after taking into account all of the available information, the staff member forms a view that the child or young person is in need of protection because:

- The harm or risk of harm has a serious impact on the child’s immediate safety, stability or development
- The harm or risk of harm is persistent and entrenched and is likely to have a serious impact on the child’s safety, stability or development
- The child’s parents cannot or will not protect the child or young person from harm.

Where during the course of carrying out their normal duties, a school staff member forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, the staff member must make a report to Child Protection regarding this belief and the reasonable grounds for it as soon as practicable.

Staff members may form a professional judgement or belief, in the course of undertaking their professional duties based on:

- Warning signs or indicators of harm that have been observed or inferred from information about the child
- Legal requirements, such as mandatory reporting
- Knowledge of child and adolescent development
- Consultation with colleagues and other professionals
- Professional obligations and duty-of-care responsibilities

Upon receipt of a report, Child Protection may seek further information, usually from professionals who may also be involved with the child or family, to determine whether further action is required.

In most circumstances, Child Protection will inform the reporter of the outcome of the report.

When the report is classified by Child Protection as a Wellbeing Report, Child Protection will, in turn, make a referral to Child FIRST.

Any person who is registered as a teacher under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, or any person who has been granted permission to teach under that Act, including principals, is mandated to make a report to Child Protection. In the course of undertaking their professional duties, mandated staff members are required to report their belief, when the belief is formed on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual abuse or physical injury.

Teachers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the principal. If a principal does not wish to make a mandatory report, this does not discharge the teacher's obligation to do so if they have formed a reasonable belief that abuse may have occurred. If the teacher's concerns continue, even after consultation with the principal, that teacher is still legally obliged to make a mandatory report of their concerns.

Information about the identity of a person making a report to Child Protection must be kept confidential unless the reporter consents to the disclosure of their identity. If the staff member wishes to remain anonymous, this information should be conveyed at the time that the reporter makes the mandatory report.

The role of school staff

School staff have a duty of care to protect and preserve the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people in their care and staff must always act in the best interests of those children and young people. If a staff member has any concerns regarding the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person it is important to take immediate action.

Note: The role of investigating an allegation of child abuse rests solely with Child Protection and/or Victoria Police.

The roles and responsibilities of staff in supporting children and young people who are involved with Child Protection may include acting as a support person for students, attending Child Protection case plan meetings, observing and monitoring students' behaviour, and liaising with professionals.

All reports, information sheets and notes from subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded, filed in the Principal's office and remain strictly confidential.

All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.

While only mandated by law to report incidents of physical and sexual abuse, and neglect; teachers are also encouraged to report incidents of emotional abuse or neglect.

Students, who disclose to staff a desire to harm themselves or others, must be reported by staff to the principal.

Confidentiality

Staff must respect confidentiality when dealing with a case of suspected child abuse and neglect, and may discuss case details and the identity of the child or the young person and their family only with those involved in managing the situation.

When a child or young person has moved to another school, professional judgement should be exercised as to what information needs to be passed on. This will be guided by usual procedures for passing on information about a child's general wellbeing or special needs, and the role of the school in any ongoing care plans.

Interviews at Victorian schools

Child Protection may conduct interviews of children and young people at school without parental knowledge or consent. However, a child will be interviewed at a Victorian school only in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the child's best interests to proceed in this manner. Child Protection will notify the school of any intention to interview a child or young person. This may occur regardless of whether the school is the source of the report to Child Protection. When Child Protection practitioners arrive at the school, the principal or their nominee should ask to see their identification before allowing Child Protection to have access to the child or young person.

Support persons

Children have the right to have a supportive adult present during interviews. If a child is too young to understand the significance of the interview, a staff member should make arrangements for a supportive adult to attend with the child.

A staff member may be identified as a support person for the child during the interview. Prior to the commencement of the interview, the Child Protection practitioner should always authorise the staff member to receive information regarding Child Protection's investigation.

This may occur verbally or in writing using the relevant Child Protection pro forma. Independent persons must refrain from providing their opinions or accounts of events during interviews. A principal or their delegate may act as an independent person when the child is to be interviewed, unless they believe that doing so will create a conflict of interest.

Advising parents, carers or guardians

Staff do not require the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to Child Protection, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so. It is the responsibility of Child Protection to advise the parents, carers or guardians of the interview at the earliest possible opportunity. This should occur either before, or by the time the child arrives home

Ensuring that a Child Protection interview takes place

The school does not have the power to prevent parents, carers or guardians from removing their children from the school and should not attempt to prevent the parents, carers or guardians from collecting the child. If a parent/carer or guardian removes a child before a planned interview has taken place, the principal and/or their nominee should contact Child Protection or Victoria Police immediately.

Staff Training

Staff will be informed of Mandatory Reporting requirements as part of their initial induction to the school and will be provided with supporting documentation in their staff handbook.

Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually and complete annual on-line Department professional learning.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle

• This policy was last ratified by School Council in....	September, 2019
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Cavendish Primary School is committed to Child Safety – We have a zero tolerance for child abuse.

References:

Child Protection

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection>

ChildFIRST

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children,-youth-and-families/family-and-parenting-support/how-to-make-a-referral-to-child-first>

DET

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

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

Protective concerns

You are concerned about a child because you have:

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

At all times remember to:

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

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

For further information refer to Protecting the safety Department of Education



Department of Human Services Child Protection, Victorian Schools

Supplementary information relating to this policy:

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Procedures

1. Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)

1.1 Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporting is a legal requirement under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)* (Act) to protect children from harm relating to physical injury and sexual abuse. A child, for the purpose of the relevant parts of the Act, is any person **17 years** of age or younger. School personnel mandated under this Act who, in the course of carrying out their duties, form a **reasonable belief** that a child is in need of protection from physical, emotional, psychological, developmental harm or sexual abuse, and that the **child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child**, must report that belief to DHHS Child Protection and the grounds for it as soon as possible after forming the belief. A subsequent report must be made on each occasion on which the mandatory reporter becomes aware of further reasonable grounds for the belief.

1.2 Forming a 'reasonable belief'

When staff 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. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as 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.

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

- a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused

- a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused
- a child or young person exhibits sexually-abusive or age-inappropriate behaviours
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused
- signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

1.3 Types of child abuse and indicators of harm

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

There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert staff to the possibility of child abuse and neglect. While any indicators of possible child abuse or neglect are concerning, it is important to know which indicators **must** be reported.

It is **mandatory** to report concerns relating to:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse.

While not mandated, making a report to DHHS Child Protection may also be needed for:

- emotional abuse
- neglect
- medical neglect
- family violence
- human trafficking (including forced marriage)
- sexual exploitation (including pornography and prostitution)
- risk-taking behaviour
- female genital mutilation
- risk to an unborn child
- a child or young person exhibiting sexually-abusive behaviours.

1.4 Reporting child protection concerns

All school staff who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of:

- protection from physical harm or sexual abuse – **must** report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection
- protection from harm that is not believed to involve physical harm or sexual abuse – are encouraged to report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection
- therapeutic treatment – are encouraged to report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.

Child Protection is the Victorian Government Agency, provided by the DHHS, that protects children at risk of significant harm. Child Protection has statutory powers and can use these to protect children.

Child FIRST 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.

Mandatory reporters **must report their concern to DHHS Child Protection** if there is a reasonable belief that a child or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. Refer to:

It is essential to document the concerns and observations which contributed to the suspicion that a child is in need of protection. This information may be gathered over a period of time and should be treated confidentially and held securely.

It is recommended – not, however, a requirement – that concerns and observations regarding suspected physical injury or sexual abuse of a child are discussed with the principal or a senior school staff member and to ensure support is provided to all involved in matters of this nature. The confidentiality of these discussions must be maintained.

If more than one mandated reporter has formed a belief about the same child on the same occasion, it is sufficient for one professional to make a report. The other is obliged to ensure the report has been made and that all grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member (Section 184 (2)).

If one mandated reporter directs another mandated reporter not to make a report, and the one professional continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, then that professional is legally obliged to make a report to Child Protection.

The mandatory reporter 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 an adult and a child **under 16** then it must be reported to the police.

1.5 When to make a mandatory report

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p>Mandatory Reporting - DHHS Child Protection</p> <p>Mandatory reporters must make a report as soon as practicable if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.</p>	<p>Mandatory reporters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers registered to teach or who have permission to teach pursuant to the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006</i> (Vic.) • Principals of government schools • Registered medical practitioners • Nurses 	<p>DHHS Child Protection</p> <p>School Principal</p> <p>Victoria Police if a belief is formed that a crime has been committed</p>

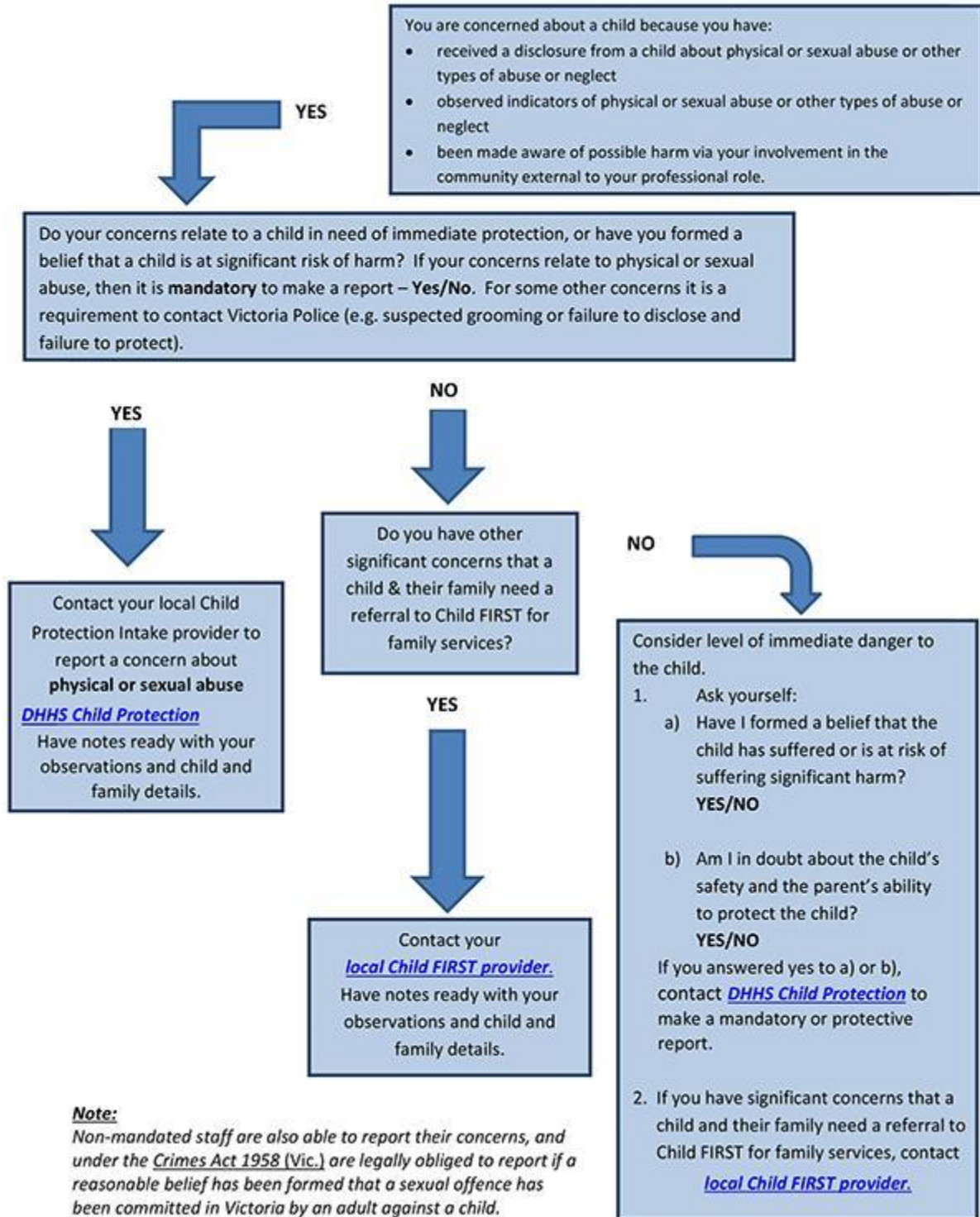
1.6 When a report may be required, though not mandated

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p>Child in need of protection</p> <p>Any person may make a report if they</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers registered to teach 	<p>DHHS Child Protection</p>

<p>believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection for any of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child. • The child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child. • The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. • The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. • The child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. <p>The child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parents are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care.</p>	<p>or who have permission to teach pursuant to the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006</i> (Vic.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals of government schools • Registered medical practitioners • Nurses • Any other school staff • Any other person 	<p>School Principal</p> <p>Victoria Police if a belief is formed that a crime has been committed</p>
<p>Child in need of therapeutic treatment</p> <p>Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child who is 10 years of age or over, but under 15 years of age, is in need of therapeutic treatment because he or she has exhibited sexually-abusive behaviours. Contact Child FIRST if there is no significant concern about the immediate safety of the child.</p>	<p>Any person</p>	<p>Contact DHHS Child Protection or Child First</p> <p>School Principal</p>
<p>Significant concerns about wellbeing of a child</p> <p>School staff can seek advice from or make referral to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST if they have a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child and where the immediate safety of the child is not compromised.</p> <p>The staff member should share relevant information with Child FIRST to help them</p>	<p>Any person</p>	<p>Contact DHHS Child Protection or Child First</p> <p>School Principal</p>

complete their assessment of the referral.

1.7 Flowchart – Responding to a possible mandatory reporting concern



2. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)

Three new criminal offences have been introduced under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*:

- Failure to disclose, which requires adults to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child
- Failure to protect, which applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but failed to do so
- Grooming, which targets communication with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.

2.1 Failure to disclose

Any 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 police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence under **section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Victoria)** and applies to **all adults** in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children. 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.

For further information about the ‘failure to disclose’ offence, see: **section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Victoria)**

2.2 Failure to protect

Any 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 supervision of the organisation must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove that risk. 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 contained in **section 49C (2) of the Crimes Act 1958(Vic.)**. In a school context this will include the principal and the business manager and may also extend to School Counsellors, heads of departments and heads of school.

For further information about the ‘failure to protect’ offence, see: **section 49C (2) of the Crimes Act 1958(Vic.)**

2.3 Grooming

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**. 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. For further information about the ‘grooming offence’, see: and the.

For more information about managing and responding to the risk of abuse, see: **section 49B (2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)**.

2.4 When to report criminal offences

This table sets out when to report a concern that a child or a young person has been abused, or is in need of protection.

Types of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
Reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16.	Any person aged 18 or over	School Principal
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	All school staff as defined by Ministerial Order 870	DHHS Child Protection Victoria Police

information to police.

You will not be guilty of an offence if you 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 DHHS Child Protection disclosing all of the information
 - a reasonable fear that the disclosure will place someone (other than the alleged perpetrator) at risk of harm.

3. How to make a report for mandatory reporting and criminal offences

The following information provides practical guidance in relation to record-keeping for both mandatory reporting and criminal offences.

3.1 Making a report

In case of emergency or if a child is in life-threatening danger contact Triple Zero (000).

Additionally, to report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHHS Child Protection, call the local Child Protection Intake Provider (1300 664 977). If after hours call the **Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78**.

The table below describes the information to include when making a mandatory report about child abuse or child protection concerns.

Step	Description
1.	Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour)

- the source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person)
- the actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with the principal, report to DHHS Child Protection etc.).

2. Discuss your concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the principal, a member of the school leadership team or member of the wellbeing team.

The individual staff member should then make their own assessment about whether they should make a report about the child or young person and to whom the report should be made.

3. Gather the relevant information necessary to make the report. This should include the following information:

- full name, date of birth and residential address of the child or young person
- the details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns
- the individual staff member's involvement with the child or young person
- details of any other agencies which may be involved with the child or young person.

4. Make a report to the relevant agency:

- To report concerns which are life-threatening phone 000
- To find the nearest Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team contact your local police station. Visit the for local contact numbers.
- To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHHS Child Protection:
- Call your local Child Protection Intake provider immediately on 1300 664 977
- For After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services, call 13 12 78.

**Non-mandated staff members who believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection are able to report their concerns to Child Protection.

5. Make a written record of the report including the following information:

- 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.

6. Notify relevant school staff of a report to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.

- School staff should advise the principal or a member of the leadership team or wellbeing team if they have made a report.
- School leadership or wellbeing staff can seek further assistance by contacting the school contact Student Support Services Officer

7. In the case of international students, the principal must notify the International Education Division of the Department of Education and Training on (03) 9637 2990 to ensure that appropriate support is arranged for the student.

In the case of Koorie students, the principal must notify the Regional Office (as appropriate) to ensure the regional Koorie support officer can arrange appropriate support for the student.

3.2 Potential consequences of making a report

This table describes the 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">• the reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or parent of the report• the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed• 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• a court or tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to provide evidence.
Professional Protection	<p>If a report is made in good faith:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• it does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter• the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.
Interviews	<p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria 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">• 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• DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria 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• When DHHS Child Protection practitioners/Victoria 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• When a child or young person is being interviewed by DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, school staff must arrange to have a supportive adult present with the child or young person. <p>For more information on these requests and school responsibilities: see the Department of Education & Training website: .</p>
Support for the child or young person	<p>The roles and responsibilities of staff members in supporting children who are involved with DHHS Child Protection may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• acting as a support person for the child or young person• attending DHHS Child Protection case-planning meetings• observing and monitoring the child's behaviour liaising with professionals.
Requests for	<p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Child FIRST and/or Victoria Police may request information about the child or family for the purpose of investigating a report</p>

Information

and assessing the risk to the child or young person.

In certain circumstances, DHHS Child Protection can also direct school staff and Department 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: see the Department of Education & Training website:

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: see the Department of Education & Training website:

3.3 Related resources

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

- www.vrqa.vic.gov.au

Department of Education and Training

- [Responding to Allegations of Sexual Abuse](#)
- www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/childsafestandards

Related legislation

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001 (Vic.).

Department of Health and Human Services

- <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>