

Rationale

Bayside Christian College (College) has developed this policy to define the roles and responsibilities of Staff in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and to enable Staff to:

- identify the indicators where a child or young person may need protection
- make a report on a child or young person who may need protection
- comply with reporting obligations under child protection law and criminal law.

Policy Statement

The College:

- has zero-tolerance for child abuse
- actively works to listen to and empower students
- has systems to protect students from abuse, and will take all allegations and concerns seriously and respond to them consistently in line with the College's policies and procedures
- is committed to promoting cultural safety and a safe environment for all students, including those:
 - of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage,
 - from culturally, linguistically and/or gender diverse backgrounds, and
 - with a disability.

Application

Under legislation, certain people working at and for the College are deemed Mandatory Reporters. These include:

- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers, including the Principal
- Early childhood workers
- Staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT
- Registered doctors and nurses
- Registered psychologists
- School counsellors, which means a person who works (other than on a voluntary basis) to provide direct support to school students
- People in religious ministry.

This policy applies to not only Mandatory Reporters but all College staff, volunteers, contractors and any other members of the College community (collectively known as "Staff").

Definitions

Word/s	Definition
Child / Children / Young Person	An individual who is under the age of 18 years of age or who is enrolled as a student at Bayside Christian College
Child Abuse	<p>Any action or inaction towards a child that harms or puts at risk their physical, psychological or emotional health or development. Child abuse can be a single incident or incidents that occur over time. Forms of child abuse can involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical abuse • Sexual abuse • Grooming • Emotional or psychological harm • Neglect • Family violence • Online/cyber abuse
Child Safety	Encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.
College Environment	<p>Any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the College for use by a student during or outside College hours, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On College grounds; • Other locations owned or provided by the College for a student's use, including locations used for College camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events; • Online College environments including approved social media groups set up for College communication, email, the learning management system, and intranet systems.
Concerns and Complaints	<p>A concern refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.</p> <p>A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction to the College related to one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • services or dealings with individuals • allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, a volunteer or another individual associated with the College

Word/s	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person the conduct of a child or young person at the College the inadequate handling of a prior concern general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.
Harm	Damage to the health, safety and wellbeing of a Child, including as a result of Child Abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

Duty of care

Staff have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of students in their care. If a Staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of a student in their care it is important to take immediate action.

Anyone who believes, on reasonable grounds, that the safety of a student is at risk, must notify one of the College's Child Safety Champions or the Principal of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Forming a 'reasonable belief'

'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
- 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
- other circumstances lead you to suspect that a child has been abused.

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. Types of child abuse include:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse

- grooming
- emotional or psychological harm
- neglect
- family violence
- online / cyber abuse

There are many indicators of child abuse. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators over time, 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.

Mandatory reporting

All Staff must make a report to a Child Safety Champion if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a student has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse, and
- the student's parents/carers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

It is a criminal offence not to report in these circumstances.

The Child Safety Champion will engage Victoria Police and/or the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable in accordance with the Responding to Suspected and Reported Child Abuse.

Reporting Allegations to the Commission For Children and Young People (CCYP)

The Principal is to report **all** allegations to CCYP within 3 business days after becoming aware of the allegation.

Within 30 days after becoming aware of the allegation, the Principal is to provide:

- detailed information about the reportable allegation;
- information about proposed disciplinary or other action to be taken in response to the allegation;
- any written submissions made by the worker of volunteer about that disciplinary or other action.

After the investigation, the Principal must provide CCYP:

- a copy of the investigation findings and reasons;
- additional information about proposed disciplinary or other action to be taken in response to the allegation.

Related Documents

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the objectives and aims of all other College policies and procedures concerning the welfare and protection of the students of the College. These include, but are not limited to:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- Responding to Suspected and Reporting Child Abuse Procedure
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- College Grievance and Complaints Policy

Relevant Legislation

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (including Child Safe Standards)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (including reporting to Child Protection)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- The Victorian Institute of Teaching - Teaching Profession Code of Conduct

Approver College Board

Authoriser College Board

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
 - administering first aid
 - calling **000** for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
 - identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.
- Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / 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, 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 Incident Support and Operations Centre
- 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 1300 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 1300 782 978.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

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

- at risk 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 Incident Support and Operations Centre.
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or chairperson.

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:

OTHER CONCERNS

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold **significant concerns** for their wellbeing you **must** still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from:

- Child FIRST/The Orange Door
- In circumstances where the family are open to receiving support
- DHHS Child Protection
- Victoria Police.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

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

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.

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

You **must** act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or abuse (eg. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse), or is at risk of being abused.

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

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.

CONTACT	
DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA	DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
North Division 1300 664 977	North Division 1300 664 977
South Division 1300 655 795	South Division 1300 655 795
East Division 1300 980 391	East Division 1300 980 391
West Division (Rural) 1800 075 589	West Division (Rural) 1800 075 589
West Division (Metro) 1300 664 977	West Division (Metro) 1300 664 977
AFTER HOURS	AFTER HOURS
After hours, weekends, public holidays: 13 12 78	After hours, weekends, public holidays: 13 12 78
CHILD FIRST	CHILD FIRST
https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-first-and-support-centre	https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-first-and-support-centre
ORANGE DOOR	ORANGE DOOR
https://www.sic.abuse/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html	https://www.sic.abuse/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html
VICTORIA POLICE	VICTORIA POLICE
000 or your local police station	000 or your local police station
DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE	DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE
1800 126 126	1800 126 126
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT	INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT
1800 126 126	1800 126 126
EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH	EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH
(03) 9637 2585	(03) 9637 2585
DIOCESAN OFFICE	DIOCESAN OFFICE
Melbourne (03) 9687 0228	Melbourne (03) 9687 0228
Bellarat (03) 5337 7195	Bellarat (03) 5337 7195
Sale (03) 5822 6600	Sale (03) 5822 6600
Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377	Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA	INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA
1800 782 978	1800 782 978
THE LOOKOUT	THE LOOKOUT
The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: https://www.lookout.org.au	The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: https://www.lookout.org.au
Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to 1800 Respect for counselling, information and a referral service: 1800 737 732.	Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to 1800 Respect for counselling, information and a referral service: 1800 737 732.

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Student Sexual Offending

PROTECT

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA
State Government | Education and Training

CECV
Central Education and Community Services

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

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

- You **must** act by following the 4 critical actions as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion that a student is a victim of a student sexual offending and/or a student has engaged in sexual offending
- You **must** act even if you are unsure and have not directly observed student sexual offending (e.g. if a victim, or another person tells you about the offence)
- You **must** use the **Responding to Student Sexual Offending Template** to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

1 IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

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

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

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

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

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report incidents, suspicions and disclosures of student sexual offending as soon as possible:

VICTORIA POLICE

All instances on **000**

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

If you believe that:

- the victim's parent/carers are unable or unwilling to protect the child
- the student who is alleged to have engaged in the student sexual offending is:
 - aged over 10 and under 15 years and may be in need of therapeutic treatment to address these behaviours
 - may be displaying physical and behavioural indicators of being the victim of child abuse*.

INTERNALLY

ALSO report internally to:

- School Principal and/or leadership team** (all instances)
- Government Schools:** DET Security Services Unit
- Catholic Schools:** Diocesan education office

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your Principal **must** consult with **Victoria Police** or **DHHS Child Protection** to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers of all impacted students. They may advise:

- not to contact the parents/carers** (e.g. in circumstances where contacting the parents/carers is likely to adversely affect a **Victoria Police** investigation or where the student is a mature minor and has requested that their parent/carer not be notified)
- to contact the parents/carers** and provide agreed information (this should be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for students who are victim to a student sexual offence AND students who have engaged in a sexual offence. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.

This support should include the development of a **Student Support Plan** in consultation with wellbeing professionals, outlining support strategies. Strategies may include the development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA

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**

AFTER HOURS

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

CHILD FIRST

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA POLICE
000 or contact your local police station

DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT
(03) 9589 6266

STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT
(03) 9651 3622

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

(03) 9637 2595

DIOCESAN OFFICE
Melbourne **(03) 9267 0228**
Ballarat **(03) 5337 7195**
Sale **(03) 5622 6600**
Sandhurst **(03) 5443 2377**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA
(03) 9825 7200

