

## CHILD SAFETY POLICY

### PURPOSE

At Tecoma Primary the safety of every one of our children is a main priority. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and school volunteers. We have a commitment to **zero tolerance of child abuse**. Staff at our school have a responsibility to respond to the safety, care and welfare of students, in all school environments and outside of school hours. This is a commitment which is led by our School Council, School Leadership team, all staff and is shared openly and transparently with all members of our school community.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, and will follow this rigorously, at all times.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

At Tecoma Primary School staff take part in regularly training and education about child abuse risks. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

### OBJECTIVE

#### Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our school. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance at Tecoma Primary School, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome here.

In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

#### In Ministerial Order No. 870 Child abuse is listed as:

- a) any act committed against a child involving –
  - (i) a sexual offence; or
  - (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- b) the infliction, on a child of –
  - (i) Physical violence; or
  - (ii) Serious emotional or psychological harm
- c) Serious neglect of a child.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all students, teachers, parents, volunteers and any other adults who enter our school when students are present.

## **POLICY**

### **Guidelines for Implementation**

#### **Our staff and volunteers**

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children at our school. All of our staff, School Councillors and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the school's code of conduct. A signed copy of the agreement will be kept on file at school, in accordance with privacy legislation.

#### **Training and supervision**

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Tecoma Primary School understands that child safety is the responsibility of everyone.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to:

- develop their skills to protect children from abuse;
- and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds,
- and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees take part in induction activities and are assigned a mentor, to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to Tecoma Primary School's Code of Conduct to understand appropriate behaviours further).

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

#### **Recruitment**

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We carry out reference checks and ensure all teaching staff are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. All other personnel working in our school (maintenance, cleaner, gardener, plumber, etc) must hold a valid Working with Children's Check.

All people engaged in child-related work, including office staff, integration aides and volunteers, are required to hold a valid Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. When working in the classroom, all volunteers should be within the line of sight of DET employees.

### Fair procedures for personnel

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

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

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we, as an organisation, take.

### Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it. The storage of all personal information will adhere to all aspects of privacy legislation and requirements from DET.

### Legislative responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.<sup>1</sup>
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.<sup>2</sup>

All staff at Tecoma Primary School must complete annual Mandatory Reporting training. These are completed at the beginning of every school year through the **Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and other Obligations eLearning Module**. This ensures all staff are aware of their responsibilities, as all staff who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.<sup>3</sup>

### Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors

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<sup>1</sup> A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information on reporting obligations can be found at

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

<sup>2</sup> Further information about reporting child abuse in schools can be found at

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/report.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](https://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first)  
[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first](https://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first)

that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

### **Allegations, concerns and complaints**

At Tecoma Primary School we take all allegations seriously and have practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations. We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident.

### **Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:**

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed<sup>4</sup>
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Staff at Tecoma Primary School will follow the guidelines from **PROTECT**

[https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5\\_SchoolsGuide.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf) and their action will be as outlined in the four Critical Actions for Schools, outlined below:

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<sup>4</sup> For example behaviour, please see Child Safe Standards

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

## 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 offenders
- minimising risk and
- calling **000 for urgent medical aid or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police

Where necessary you may also need to restrict 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 Contact Branch  
DET Security Services Unit  
Diocesan education office
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**  
School principal and/or leadership team  
Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**  
School principal and/or school chaplain  
Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 762 976

All allegations of reportable conduct **must** be reported as soon as possible to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**  
Employee Contact Branch
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**  
Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**  
Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 762 976

**WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY**

**DIHS CHILD PROTECTION**  
You **must** report to DIHS 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 led, or is likely to lead, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

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

You **must** also report **internally** to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**  
School principal and/or leadership team  
DET Security Services Unit
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**  
School principal and/or leadership team  
Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**  
School principal and/or chaplain

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

- Child FIRST/The Change Door (in circumstances where the family are open to seeking support)
- DIHS Child Protection
- Victoria Police

**3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS**

Your principal **must** consult with DIHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- not to contact** the parents/carers (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 parent/carer and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- how to communicate** with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety

**4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT**

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a **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**

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 or believe that you are aware 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. The relevant authorities to investigate and take action.

**CONTACT**

**DIHS CHILD PROTECTION**  
AREA  
North Division 1300 666 977  
South Division 1300 666 765  
East Division 1300 240 331  
West Division Rural 1800 875 589  
West Division (Metrolink) 1300 666 977

**AFTER HOURS**  
After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 76

**CHILD FIRST**  
[www.childfirst.org.au](http://www.childfirst.org.au)  
1800 666 977

**ORANGE DOOR**  
[www.orange-door.org.au](http://www.orange-door.org.au)  
1800 666 977

**VICTORIA POLICE**  
000 or your local police station DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT  
(03) 9589 6366

**STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT**  
(03) 9651 3622

**EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH**  
(03) 9637 2936

**DIOCESAN OFFICE**  
Melbourne 03 9597 1029  
Nelson 03 5327 7126  
Sun 03 5622 0680  
Bairnsdale 03 5463 2377

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA**  
(03) 9625 7280

**THE LOCKOUT**  
The LOCKOUT has a service directory, information, and resources based guidance to help you respond to family violence. [www.lockout.org.au](http://www.lockout.org.au)

Family violence victimisation cases can be referred to 1800 (Re)spice for counselling, information and a referral service 1800 757 732

Staff will use the PROTECT Recording Template (Appendix A) to record any Allegations of abuse reported by a child.

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- The PROTECT website  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on **4<sup>th</sup> April, 2019** and is scheduled for review in **March, 2022**.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN AN ALLEGATION OF CHILD ABUSE IS MADE

The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children<sup>5</sup> to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

At Tecoma Primary School we have a Child Safety Policy and a Child Safety Code of Conduct in place to ensure all staff know their obligation and the legal requirements of keeping children safe at our school.

This resource is designed to provide guidance on what to do if a child discloses an incident of abuse, or if a parent/carer raises a concern or allegation of abuse which may have taken.

### **If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you:**

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
  - Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
  - Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
  - Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your school (such as Principal/Assistant Principal), or the police.
  - Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
  - Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
  - Complete the *PROTECT Recording your Actions: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse* form (Appendix A)
  - As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to your Principal/Assistant Principal, police or child protection (DHS).
  - Principal/Assistant Principal to provide support to the staff member involved in the disclosure
  - Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.
- All records need to be stored in the confidential file in the Assistant Principal's office.

### **If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in your school or raises a concern:**

- Explain that the school has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details. These notes will be attached to the report if necessary, and therefore destroyed if not needed.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the school's Principal/Assistant Principal, the police or child protection (DHS).
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, using the *PROTECT Recording your Actions: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse* form (Appendix A)
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

You need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

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If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, you will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters.

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

### Legal responsibilities

While the child safe standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

The **failure to disclose** criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another).

While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities.

**Mandatory reporters** (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

The **failure to protect** criminal offence (commenced on 1 July 2015) applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

# PROTECT

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Education  
and Training



## Recording your actions:

## Responding to suspected child abuse

### A template for Victorian schools

#### When to use this template:

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

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

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

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

#### Why record this information?

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

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

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

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

## STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE RESPONSE

NAME:

OCCUPATION:

LOCATION (SCHOOL ADDRESS):

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

### 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 **reasonable belief**, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (eg. 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 discretionary (not threshold) threshold, which requires investigation and due action.

### 1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

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

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

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

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

### 2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health/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 Security Services Unit
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
  - School principal and/or leadership team
  - Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
  - School principal and/or school chaplain
  - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 762 317**

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 762 317**

#### WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

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

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

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

You **must** also report **internally** to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
  - School principal and/or leadership team
  - DET Security Services Unit
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
  - School principal and/or leadership team
  - Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
  - School principal and/or chaplain

**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 Helpline/Change One (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support)
- DHHS Child Protection
- Victoria Police

### 3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

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

- not to contact** the parents (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 parent/carer and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably, or the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).
- how to communicate** with all relevant parties with regards abuse for their safety.

### 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 **First Critical Action** every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

### CONTACT

<b>DHHS CHILD PROTECTION</b> <b>AREA</b> North Division <b>1300 664 8777</b> South Division <b>1300 664 795</b> East Division <b>1300 240 375</b> West Division (Rural) <b>1800 275 589</b> West Division (Metrol) <b>1300 664 8777</b>  <b>AFTER HOURS</b> After hours, weekends, public holidays <b>13 13 76</b>  <b>CHILD FIRST</b> <a href="http://www.childfirst.vic.gov.au/">www.childfirst.vic.gov.au/</a> advice and support service  <b>ORANGE DOOR</b> <a href="http://www.orange-door.vic.gov.au/">www.orange-door.vic.gov.au/</a> advice and support service	<b>VICTORIA POLICE</b> <b>000</b> or your local police station <b>DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT</b> <b>(03) 9589 6396</b>  <b>STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT</b> <b>(03) 9551 2622</b>  <b>EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH</b> <b>(03) 9527 2039</b>  <b>DIOCESAN OFFICE</b> Melbourne <b>(03) 9587 1200</b> Bairnsdale <b>(03) 5337 703</b> Traralgon <b>(03) 5627 6880</b> Ballarat <b>(03) 5663 2377</b>	<b>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA</b> <b>(03) 9425 7300</b>  <b>THE LOOKOUT</b> The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence-based guidance to help you respond to family violence. <a href="http://www.the-lookout.org.au/">www.the-lookout.org.au/</a> Family violence information services can be referred to <b>1800 Respect</b> for counselling, information and a referral service <b>1800 757 752</b>
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**PROTECT** **VIC** **EDUCATION** **STATE** **VIC** **4** **CECV**

## Critical action 1: immediate response to an incident

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

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

### RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

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

WHO ADMINISTERED THIS? (NAME AND TITLE)

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FURTHER IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE?

CURRENT LOCATION AND SAFETY STATUS:

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

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

### Child's information

#### PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME:

GENDER:

YEAR LEVEL/CLASS:

DATE OF BIRTH:

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:

PARENT/CARER NAME/S:

PARENT/CARER CONTACT:

LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN BY CHILD:

DISABILITIES, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES:

## CHILD'S BACKGROUND

### CULTURAL STATUS AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

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

ANY KNOWN PREVIOUS HISTORY OF SUSPECTED ABUSE (INCLUDING EXPOSURE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE) PRIOR TO THIS INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OR INVOLVEMENT WITH AGENCIES:

## FAMILY BACKGROUND

### FAMILY COMPOSITION (IF KNOWN):

*LIST PARENTING OR CARE ARRANGEMENTS AND SIBLING NAMES AND AGES*

ANY OTHER PEOPLE LIVING WITH THE CHILD (IF KNOWN):

## FAMILY BACKGROUND

DISABILITY, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES IN FAMILY (IF KNOWN):

LIKELY REACTION TO A REPORT BEING MADE (IF KNOWN):

### Details of the incident, disclosure or suspicion

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

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

*DETAIL ANY DISCLOSURES OR INCIDENTS OR SUSPICIONS (INCLUDING NAMES, TIMES AND DATES DOCUMENTING A CHILD'S EXACT WORDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE). INCLUDE SPECIFIC DETAIL HERE ON WHAT LED YOU TO FORM A REASONABLE BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN, OR IS AT RISK OF BEING ABUSED.*

ANY PHYSICAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

ANY BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

ANY PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR OR PRIOR CONCERNS LEADING UP TO AN INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION:

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

NAME:

GENDER

DATE OF BIRTH:

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

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

ADDRESS:

CONTACT DETAILS:

### Critical action 2: reporting

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

#### REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

TICK THE AUTHORITIES YOU HAVE REPORTED TO:

- ☐ VICTORIA POLICE
- ☐ DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
- ☐ CHILD FIRST
- ☐ DECISION NOT TO REPORT

IF YOU'VE DECIDED NOT TO REPORT, LIST YOUR REASONS HERE. ALSO INCLUDE ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY YOU BELOW:

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

DATE:

TIME:

AUTHORITY:

OUTCOMES FROM THE REPORT:

## REPORTING INTERNALLY

### PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

TIME:

DATE:

NAMES:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

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

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

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

TIME:

DATE:

NAMES:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

## Critical action 3: contacting parents/carers

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

## ACTIONS TAKEN

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

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

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

☐ NO

☐ YES

IS IT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER

## TECOMA PRIMARY SCHOOL

☐ NO

☐ YES

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

IF CONTACTING PARENT/CARER, PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

NAME OF STAFF MEMBER MAKING THE CALL:

NAME OF PARENT/CARER RECEIVING THE CALL:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

### CRITICAL ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

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

#### PLANNED ACTIONS

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

FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

SUPPORT:

REFERRALS(S):

# **PROCESS OF REVIEW**

*COMPLETE THIS SECTION BETWEEN 4-6 WEEKS AFTER AN INCIDENT, SUSPICION OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE IN CONJUNCTION WITH YOUR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM.*

*THIS WILL SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL TO CONTINUE TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN YOUR CARE AND TO REFLECT ON YOUR PROCESSES AND THE NEED FOR ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS.*

## **SAFETY AND WELLBEING**

### **CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE CHILD**

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

- ☐ NO
- ☐ YES

*IF NOT, CONSIDER THE NEED TO MAKE A FURTHER REPORT*

DOES THE CHILD HAVE ANY WELLBEING ISSUES THAT ARE NOT CURRENTLY BEING ADDRESSED?

- ☐ NO
- ☐ YES

*IF SO, CONSIDER HOW THESE CAN BE ADDRESSED AND CAPTURED WITHIN A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN*

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

ARE THERE ANY OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE?

- ☐ NO
- ☐ YES

IF SO, HAVE THEIR WELLBEING NEEDS BEEN MET?

- ☐ NO
- ☐ YES

*IF SO, CONSIDER HOW THESE CAN BE ADDRESSED AND CAPTURED WITHIN A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN*

### **CURRENT WELLBEING OF IMPACTED STAFF MEMBERS**

DOES THE STAFF MEMBER WHO MADE THE REPORT/ WITNESSED THE INCIDENT, FORMED A SUSPICION OR RECEIVED A DISCLOSURE REQUIRE ANY SUPPORT?

- ☐ NO
- ☐ YES

IF SO, HAS THIS BEEN RECEIVED?

- ☐ NO
- ☐ YES

## REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN

**HAVE SCHOOL STAFF FOLLOWED THE FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS: RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURES OR SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE?**

WAS AN APPROPRIATE DECISION MADE IN RELATION TO WHEN TO ACT?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

COULD THE SUSPECTED ABUSE HAVE BEEN DETECTED EARLIER?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

### ACTION 1

DID THE SCHOOL TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION IN AN EMERGENCY?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

### ACTION 2

WAS A REPORT MADE TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES AND INTERNALLY?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

WERE SUBSEQUENT REPORTS MADE IF NECESSARY?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

### ACTION 3

DID THE SCHOOL CONTACT THE PARENTS/CARERS ASAP?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

HAVE THE PARENTS CONTINUED TO BE ENGAGED IF APPROPRIATE?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

### ACTION 4

HAS THE SCHOOL PROVIDED ADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

HAS A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN BEEN ESTABLISHED, IMPLEMENTED AND REVIEWED?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

HAS A STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP BEEN ESTABLISHED?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

WAS THE STUDENT APPROPRIATELY SUPPORTED IN ANY INTERVIEWS?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS BEEN RECEIVED?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

HAVE THE COMPLAINTS BEEN RESOLVED?

- ☐ NO  
☐ YES

## OTHER LEARNINGS