



St Peter's Lutheran School
Dimboola, Victoria
"Grow in Grace"

MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

PURPOSE

Children have the right to be physically and emotionally safe at all times. Children are the most vulnerable members of our community. They do not have the power to stop abuse. They rely on others to help them. Responsibility for making sure children are safe and their needs are met is shared between the family, the community and the State.

Child abuse damages children physically and emotionally. The initial effects and the long term consequences of child abuse impact on the individual, their family and the community at large.

Early identification and effective intervention can lessen the initial and long term effects of child abuse and promote recovery of the children and families concerned.

The School therefore endorsed the following, understanding that in Victoria, a child or young person is a person under 18 years of age.

GUIDELINES

Guiding Documents

- Lutheran Church of Australia: Safe Place Policy and Procedures
- Lutheran Church of Australia: Valuing Safe Communities Program
- Victorian Department of Education and Training: Child Protection - Reporting Obligations:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

Legislation

Both federal and state legislation is relevant to the concepts discussed in this policy. The legislation includes:

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- *Crimes Act 1958*
- *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- *Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001*

Previously mandatory reporting of child abuse only applied to specific groups of professionals who work with children (e.g. police, teachers and doctors). However, new requirements now apply to all adults, including volunteers.

The new Victorian offence for failure to report child sexual abuse came into effect on 27 October 2014. It requires that all adults who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 in Victoria must report that belief to police, unless they have a reasonable excuse (defined in the Act) for not doing so. The penalty for the offence is up to three years imprisonment.

• This policy refers to abuse and neglect of a child. **All adults** will be required to report to police if they know or reasonably believe that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16. It will be a criminal offence to fail to comply with this obligation (**Please refer to Appendix D- Betrayal of Trust; Failure to Disclose fact sheet**).

This reporting obligation is different to mandatory reporting obligations under child protection laws. It applies more broadly than to the professionals currently subject to mandatory reporting requirements under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

- You will **not** be required to report in circumstances where the information has been reported to police or DHS Child Protection already, a child disclosed the information in confidence in the course of a therapeutic relationship or you have a reasonable fear that the disclosure will place a person (other than the alleged perpetrator) at risk of harm.
- If a person 16 years or older provided you with the information and they do not have an intellectual disability and they do not want the information reported to the police, you will not be required to report to police.
- Your identity will remain confidential in most circumstances. A disclosure in good faith will not constitute unprofessional conduct or breach of professional ethics and will not give rise to legal liability.

• 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.

• All staff must be fully informed about their responsibilities and understand how to discharge them.

• Staff may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury, sexual abuse or neglect, and the child's parent/s or caregivers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect the child from such harm.
(Please refer to Appendix D- Betrayal of trust, Failure to disclose fact sheet)

- Proof is not required that abuse or neglect has occurred or is likely to occur. A belief is sufficient. It is the role of the Department of Human Services to determine whether that belief should be investigated.
- Indicators of abuse or neglect must be interpreted with regard to the individual child's or young person's normal level of functioning and developmental stage.
- Under no circumstances should a staff member undertake a physical examination of a student, in order to investigate a concern about abuse.
- Emotional abuse is most prevalent as a corollary of other forms of abuse or neglect. However, sometimes emotional abuse exists as the primary form of abuse or neglect. There are few physical indicators of such abuse or neglect. Emotional abuse can cause delay in physical, emotional and mental development.
- Neglect includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to such an extent that the child's health and development are impaired or placed at serious risk. A child is neglected if they are left uncared for over long periods of time or abandoned.
- A staff member does 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.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE? DEFINITIONS

Child abuse is an act by parents or caregivers which endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development. Child abuse is not usually a single incident, but takes place over time. Child abuse includes:

Physical injury which results from abuse or neglect.

Physical abuse refers to a situation in which a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child's parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment, or physically aggressive treatment of a child. Physical injury and significant harm to a child may also result from neglect by a parent or caregiver. The failure of a parent or caregiver to adequately ensure the safety of a child may expose the child to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations which result in physical injury and significant harm to the child.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse refers to a situation in which a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity, and the child's parent or caregiver has not protected the child. Physical force is sometimes involved. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity. It includes fondling of the child's genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object, or exposure of the child to pornography.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse referred to a situation in which a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name calling, put downs or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.

Neglect

Neglect refers to a situation in which a child's parent or caregiver fails to provide the child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. See Appendix A for Recognition of Abuse and Neglect.

Mandatory Reporting

The teachers and principal of the School are 'mandated notifiers'. This means they must report child physical injury and sexual abuse. Teachers are among those professionals who are obliged to notify Protective Services if they form a belief, based on reasonable grounds, that a child has suffered or it likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents or caregivers have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type. (See appendix D)

A teacher's identity as a notifier will remain confidential unless:

- the teacher chooses to inform the child and/or family of the notification
- the teacher consents in writing that the teachers identity as the notifier be disclosed
- the court decides it needs this information in order to ensure the safety and well being of the child
- the court decided that it is satisfied that the interests of justice require that the evidence be given.

REASONABLE GROUNDS

A teacher has reasonable grounds to notify when:

- a child tells them they have been physically or sexually abused
- a child tells them that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (often a child is talking about themselves)
- when someone else tells them, such as a relative, friend, acquaintance, sibling of the child, that they know or believe that the child has been physically or sexually abused
- teacher's observations of the child's behaviour or development leads them to believe the child has been physically or sexually abused
- teachers observe physical signs of physical or sexual abuse.

IMPORTANT POINTS

- a) Teachers do not need to *prove* that abuse has taken place – one only needs reasonable grounds for the belief.
- b) Teachers do not need permission from parents or caregivers to notify, nor do you need to inform them that you are notifying.
- c) Teachers do not need permission to notify, but there are procedural guidelines or protocols to assist them in making a notification.

- d) If teachers make a notification in good faith, that this, they believe they have reasonable grounds for their belief, then they cannot be held legally liable regardless of the outcome of the notification.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Teachers may be reluctant to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect because they are afraid of the effect this may have on their relationship with the peers or family of the child involved. It is, of course, impossible to prevent parents and others from making – or indeed carrying out – threats of legal action for defamation. Additionally, if teachers make reports through the proper channels and with the best interests of the child in mind, they are also protected by common law as they are entitled to invoke the defence of qualified privilege. Please refer to Appendix D for facts regarding failure to disclose information.

Qualified privilege can be understood thus: if a person makes a statement that is possibly defamatory to another person with a 'like interest' but the first person has a legitimate interest, either legal or moral, in the situation, 'qualified privilege' protects the first person. So, if a teacher makes a bona fide statement to the school's principal or nominee or other authorities in relation to a situation that the teacher suspects exists and which the teacher considers may be harmful to the child, a valid defence exists under common law.

The defence of qualified privilege does not cover general discussion in the staff room, conversation with other parents or members of the general community. It is important that teachers use the proper channels of communication and otherwise maintain absolute confidentiality.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD TEACHERS TAKE?

As soon as teachers feel uneasy about a child or young person and suspect maltreatment, they have a responsibility to act constructively on their concern. As most child abuse and neglect is not identified on the basis of a single event it may be useful for teachers to keep brief written working notes on the basis of concern by citing direct observations, noting the dates, the presence of any physical or behavioural indicators, and injuries, if any, to assist in identifying any cumulative risk to a child/young person.

If a teacher determines that there is strong suspicion of child abuse and neglect, a decision about an appropriate course of action must be made.

In situations where a child/young person has disclosed sexual abuse, or probable non-accidental injuries are revealed/discovered, there is an expectation that Child Protection Services will be promptly contacted through the relevant regional office (see Appendixes a, b, or c or the Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78 (24 hours, 7 days a week, toll free within Victoria).

In other situations, where there is a basis for concern, teachers will seek advice and assistance from:

- a) The Principal and other teachers involved with the child and his/her family, the Student Welfare Coordinator and/or the School Support Centre, and other agencies as appropriate. For example; Local services such as Community Health Centres, Family Support Agencies or Sexual Assault Clinics. **Confidentiality must be maintained during this process.**
- b) In order to ensure that there is a central coordinating point in the school, the principal or nominee must be notified of any referrals to Child Protection Services (Department of Human

Services) and thereafter should assume the responsibility for the required communication and liaison with Child Protection Services. In most cases the principal's nominees will be the person making the referral.

- c) In situations in which the investigation of the Child Protection Services results in action being taken in the Children's Court to protect the child/young person, school personnel may be required to prepare a report for the court and/or give evidence. Under such circumstances the Principal or nominee should co-ordinate the school's response and the general procedures for teacher replacement will apply.
- d) Where the child/young person being placed under a court order which Child Protection Services supervises, the allocation Child Protection worker will liaise with school personnel as appropriate regarding the schools ongoing contribution to the support of the child/young person and the management of the case.
- e) Teachers must respect confidentiality when dealing with a case of suspected child abuse and neglect, and must only discuss case details and the identity of the child/young person and his/her family with those with a bona fide involvement in the management of the situation.
- f) There may be situations in which a teacher believes that the circumstances in the school do not lend themselves to compliance with the protocol, and that an alternate course of action must be taken to protect the child/young person and/or the teachers confidentiality. In such circumstances he/she may exercise his/her right pursuant to the Community Services Act 1970, to contact CSV Protective Services directly as a private citizen.

In addition, the Department of Education and Training has created a flowchart for mandatory reporting: Step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child First (Refer to Appendix E).

APPENDIX A

HOW TO NOTIFY

1. Any teacher who forms belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child has been abused or neglected will discuss such concerns with the Principal, or other designated person, if the Principal is unavailable. During such discussions a decision would be made to do one or more of the following:

- notify the Department of Health & Human Services Child Protection (make a mandatory report) by phoning 95896266.
- contact the Department of Health & Human Services ChildFIRST and make a referral
- consult further either with regional staff or the centrally located Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit on 9637 2934 or 9637 2487
- monitor the student/s over a pre-determined period and review their circumstances
- keep detailed and accurate notes, that include the following:
 - A description of the concerns (eg; physical injuries, student behaviour)
 - Source of these concerns (eg; observation, report from a child or another person)
 - Actions taken as a result of the concerns (eg; consultation with principal, report to DHHS)

2. A Report may be made by the Principal or the teacher who has formed a belief of abuse or neglect. If another mandated reporter reports on behalf of another mandated reporter, the teacher who has formed a belief, is legally obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all grounds for their own belief were included.

3. A teacher may make a Mandatory Report independently and without discussing it with anyone, or when a Principal disagrees with the teachers' beliefs.
4. The report must be made to the Department of Health & Human Services Child Protection. It should be made on the same day as the belief is formed or a disclosure has been made. Further reports can be made if the teacher becomes aware of further reasonable grounds that continued abuse or neglect has or will occur.
5. Full and thorough notation of any information will be systematically recorded and kept for future reference in a secure place within the school.
6. After making a mandatory report to the Department of Health & Human Services or the Police relating to an allegation or a disclosure of sexual assault, notify immediately the Department of Education's Emergency & Security Management Unit.

APPENDIX B

PROTOCOL FOR RECEIVING DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

When a child or young person tells a teacher they have been abused, they may be feeling scared, guilty, ashamed, angry, and powerless. Teachers, in turn, may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger and sometimes disbelief. However, it is important for teachers to remain calm and in control of their feelings in order to reassure the child that something will be done to keep him or her safe.

Teachers can show their *care and concern* for the child by:

- Listening carefully to what they are saying
- Telling the child they believe them
- Telling them it is not their fault and they are not responsible for the abuse
- Letting the child know that they will make a report to the appropriate authorities so that they can help stop the abuse
- Telling the child they are pleased they told them.

If teachers suspect abuse, but the child has not told anyone, be aware of the emotional distress that the child may be experiencing. Approach the child in a caring and sensitive manner and assure them that they are willing to listen and to help if there is a problem. Teachers will not be helping the child if they:

- Make promises they cannot keep, such as promising that they will not tell anyone
- Push the child into giving details of the abuse. A teacher's role is to listen to what the child wants to tell them and not to conduct an investigation (beware of asking any direct questions of the child as this may prejudice any subsequent investigation)
- Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child with others not directly involved in helping the child.

APPENDIX C

ROLE OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES

After teachers have discussed their concerns with a protective worker at the local office they will let you, as a mandated notifier, know if the matter is going to be investigated further. If Protective Services initiates an investigation, the teacher as a mandated notifier, will also be informed of the outcome of the notification. Protective Services role is to:

- Provide advice where there is concern that a child or young person may be abused or neglected
- Investigate matters where child abuse and neglect is suspected
- Ensure that support is offered to the family to minimise the risk of harm to the child
- Take matters before the Children's Court if the child's safety cannot be ensured within the family
- Supervise children on legal orders granted by the Children's Court.

In all cases of sexual abuse and serious physical abuse, protective workers must consult with the Police. The role of the Police is to:

- Deal with criminal matters which arise in child abuse and neglect investigations
- Investigate and enforce Intervention Orders under the *Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987*. Intervention Orders remove abusers from the home, which allows children to remain safely at home
- Assist protective workers where there are concerns about the safety of workers and family members
- Activate a criminal investigation whenever reasonable grounds exist for believing that a child has been physically or sexually abused.

APPENDIX D

BETRAYAL OF TRUST- FAILURE TO DISCLOSE

BETRAYAL OF TRUST: FACTSHEET

The new 'failure to disclose' offence

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. Accordingly, a new criminal offence has been created in Victoria that imposes a clear legal duty upon all adults to report information about child sexual abuse to police.

Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

1. What is a 'reasonable belief'?

A 'reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof. 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 when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

2. Are there any excuses for not reporting child sexual abuse to police?

A person will not be guilty of the offence if he or she has a **reasonable excuse** for not disclosing the information. A reasonable excuse includes:

- fear for safety
- where the information has already been disclosed.

➤ Fear for safety

A reasonable excuse exists in cases where a person has a reasonable fear for their own safety or the safety of another person (such as a child or another family member) and they do not report to police due to those circumstances.

This defence may apply, for example, if a mother decides not to disclose information about her partner sexually abusing her child due to fear of violence to her or her child.

The person's fear must be subjectively reasonable, that is, it must be reasonable from the perspective of that person in those circumstances. This recognises that the person in question is best placed to judge whether their safety is in danger.

The court or jury will consider whether it was reasonable for the person not to report in the circumstances.

➤ Where the information has already been disclosed

It is a reasonable excuse to not disclose where a person believes on reasonable grounds that the information has already been disclosed to police and they have no further information to add.

BETRAYAL OF TRUST: FACTSHEET

- client legal privilege
- journalist privilege
- religious confessions.

For example, if a priest obtains information made in good faith through a rite of confession (as long as the admission is not given for a criminal purpose), the priest is exempt from disclosing.

➤ **The information is confidential communication**

A registered medical practitioner or counsellor is not required to disclose information to police if the information is obtained from a child whilst providing treatment and assistance to that child in relation to sexual abuse. However, under the mandatory reporting obligations, a registered medical practitioner would still be required to report to DHS if they form a reasonable belief that a child has been sexually abused and is in need of protection. This exemption is not designed to prevent the reporting of child sexual abuse, but rather to protect the registered medical practitioner or counsellor from criminal liability.

If an adult provides information to a medical practitioner or counsellor regarding the sexual abuse of a child, the medical practitioner or counsellor would be required to disclose that information to police unless another exemption applies.

➤ **The information is in the public domain**

A person does not have to disclose to police if they get the information through the public domain, or form the belief solely from information in the public domain such as television or radio reports.

➤ **Where police officers are acting in the course of their duties**

A police officer acting in the course of their duty in respect of a victim of child sexual abuse is exempt from the offence.

5. If it is going to be compulsory for everyone to report child sexual abuse, why are there exemptions?

We need to ensure that in creating this legal obligation, we do not put children and their families at even greater risk of harm, especially those who may be experiencing family violence.

6. Won't child sexual abuse continue to occur if exemptions are allowed?

There is currently no requirement for people to report child sexual abuse to police, so introducing this new legal obligation is a big step towards preventing child sexual abuse in our community and ensuring people understand that it is a community-wide responsibility.

Certain exemptions are required to avoid any unintended consequences of this new obligation. It is not intended, for example, that this offence criminalise victims of family violence who don't report due to fear for their own or someone else's safety.

For example, women in family violence situations may have a reasonable fear for the safety of their child or another family member, especially in cases where threats have already been made. They may fear that making a report to police will escalate the situation, putting their child or another family member at even greater risk of harm – or even death.

Preventing the sexual abuse of children is a community responsibility. Other people connected with the child will still be required to make a report, unless they have a reasonable excuse not to do so.

BETRAYAL OF TRUST: FACTSHEET

7. Won't this offence discourage people from seeking help where they have experienced child sexual abuse?

The law will not require a medical practitioner or counsellor to disclose information to police when it has been obtained from a victim during treatment for sexual abuse.

Disclosures for the purpose of obtaining legal advice will also be protected by client legal privilege. There are also other exemptions which have been listed above.

8. The offence requires 'any adult' to report suspected child sexual abuse. Isn't this too broad? Won't it lead to people reporting unfounded suspicions?

The offence requires a person to report to police where they have information that leads them to form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under 16. Under the offence, people will not be expected to disclose unfounded suspicions as a suspicion does not constitute a 'reasonable belief'.

The failure to disclose offence is a big step towards preventing child sexual abuse in our community and ensuring people understand that protecting children and preventing sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility.

9. How will I be protected if I make a disclosure to police?

Your identity will remain confidential unless:

- you disclose it yourself or you consent in writing to your identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary in the interests of justice for your identity to be disclosed.

10. Will any person who knows of child sexual abuse happening in the past be required to report?

A person who knows of child sexual abuse having occurred in the past will not have to report to police unless the victim is still a child when the offence comes into effect.

11. What is the penalty for failing to disclose child sexual abuse?

The maximum penalty is three years imprisonment.

12. When will the failure to disclose offence take effect?

27 October 2014.

13. How do I contact Victoria Police to make a report?

If you want to report a child in immediate risk or danger of sexual abuse please call [Triple Zero \(000\)](tel:000). Alternatively, you can [contact your local police station](#).

If you or someone you know has experienced child sexual abuse in an institutional context, we encourage you to contact Victoria Police's Sano Taskforce via email at sanotaskforce@police.vic.gov.au

APPENDIX E

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	RESPONDING TO CONCERNS	STEP 2	FORMING A BELIEF ON REASONABLE GROUNDS	STEP 3	MAKING A REFERRAL TO Child FIRST	STEP 4	MAKE A REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION
	<p>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*.</p> <p>Go to Step 4</p> <p>2. If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services.</p> <p>Go to Step 3</p> <p>3. In all other situations</p> <p>Go to Step 2.</p> <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>1. Consider the level of immediate danger to the child.</p> <p>Ask yourself:</p> <p>a) Have I formed a belief that the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm? YES / NO and</p> <p>b) Am I in doubt about the child's safety and the parent's ability to protect the child? YES / NO</p> <p>2. If you answered yes to a) or b) Go to Step 4</p> <p>3. If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services.</p> <p>Go to Step 3</p>		<p>Child Wellbeing Referral</p> <p>1. Contact your local Child FIRST provider.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See over for contact list for local Child FIRST phone numbers. <p>2. Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details.</p>		<p>Mandatory/Protective Report*</p> <p>1. Contact your local Child Protection Intake provider immediately.</p> <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>* <i>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</i></p>

For further information refer to *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people – A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools*

Contact Numbers

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Eastern	(03) 9265 2400
Northern	(03) 9488 9488
Western	(03) 9291 6500
Southern	(03) 9794 3555

RURAL REGIONS	
Barwon South Western	5225 2000
Gippsland	5227 0400
Grampians	5337 8444
Hume	5761 2100
Loddon Mallee	5440 3111

Office for Children and Licensed Children's Services:

METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Eastern	(03) 9265 2400
Northern	(03) 9422 5333
Western	(03) 9275 7000
Southern	(03) 9998 9555

RURAL REGIONS	
Barwon South Western	5225 2000
Gippsland	5227 0400
Grampians	5337 8444
Hume	5761 2100
Loddon Mallee	5440 3111

Important information for government schools

Principals of Victorian Government schools must report all incidents to the Emergency and Security Management Unit on 03 9599 6266.

Victorian Government schools should contact the Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit (SCIAU), Student Wellbeing Division, for advice and support when responding to allegations of student sexual assault or inappropriate sexual behaviours.

The SCIAU can be contacted on 03 9637 2924 or 03 9637 2487.

Victorian Government School Principals should refer to the flowchart – Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault Compulsory Actions for Principals at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/childprotection/childprotection.htm>

Department of Human Services Child Protection

METROPOLITAN REGIONS		METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Intake Unit	Regional Office	Intake Unit	Regional Office
Eastern	1300 360 391	Box Hill	(03) 9843 6000
North and West	1300 664 977	Preston	1300 664 977
		Footscray	1300 360 462
Southern	1300 655 795	Dandenong	(03) 9213 2111

RURAL REGIONS		RURAL REGIONS	
Intake Unit	Regional Office	Intake Unit	Regional Office
Barwon South Western	1800 075 599	Geelong	(03) 5226 4540
Gippsland	1800 020 202	Traralgon	(03) 5277 2500
Grampians	1800 000 551	Balارات	(03) 5333 6530
Hume	1800 650 227	Wangaratta	(03) 5722 0555
		Wodonga	(02) 6055 7777
Loddon Mallee	1800 675 598	Bendigo	(03) 5434 5555

After hours Child Protection Emergency Services (AHCPEs)	
Statewide number for all emergency child protection matters outside of normal business hours (24 hours, 7 days a week):	131 278

Victoria Police	000
-----------------	-----

Catholic Education Offices	
Catholic Education Office, Melbourne	(03) 9267 0228
Catholic Education Office, Ballarat Diocese	5337 7135
Catholic Education Office, Sale Diocese	5622 6600
Catholic Education Office, Sandhurst Diocese	5443 2377

Independent Schools Victoria	
Other	(03) 9825 7200
Victorian Aboriginal Education Association, Inc.	(03) 9483 0800
Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit	(03) 9247 6666
Centre Against Sexual Assault	1800 806 292
Gatehouse Centre, Royal Children's Hospital (for specialist counselling and medical assistance)	(03) 9345 6391
Child Safety Commissioner	(03) 8603 5884
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency	(03) 8388 1855

CHILD FIRST

Local Catchment Area	Contact
Barwon South Western	Greater Geelong, Queenscliff, Surf Coast 1300 551 948
Western	Colac – Obway, Corangamite 5232 5500
	Warrambool, Moyne, Glenelg, Southern Grampians 1300 889 713
Gippsland	East Gippsland 5252 0052
	Wellington 5244 7777
	La Trobe, Baw Baw 1800 339 100
	South Gippsland, Bass Coast 5662 5150
Grampians	Northern Grampians, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Yarrambat, Honsham 1800 195 114
	Ararat, Pyrenees, Hepburn, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Moorabool 1300 783 341
Hume	Wodonga, Twong, Indigo 1800 705 211
	Alpine, Benalla, Mansfield, Wangaratta 1800 705 211
	Greater Shepparton, Strathbogie, Moira 1300 854 944
	Mitchell, Murrindindi 1800 663 107
Loddon Mallee	Greater Bendigo, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander 1800 260 338
	Buloke, Goonawarra, Swan Hill, Mildura 1800 625 533
Eastern Metropolitan	Yarra Ranges, Knox, Maroondah 1300 369 146
	Monash, Whitehorse, Manningham, Boroondarra 1300 762 125
North and West Metropolitan	Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Baryule, Yarra and Darebin (03) 9450 0955
	Brimbank, Melton 1300 138 180
	Hume, Moreland 1300 786 433
	Hobson's Bay, Maribymong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley and Wyndham 1300 786 433
Southern Metropolitan	Casey, Cardinia, Greater Dandenong (03) 9705 3939
	Aboriginal children and families (Casey, Cardinia and Great Dandenong) (03) 9794 5973
	Frankston, Mornington Peninsula 1300 722 383
	Kingston, Bayside, Glen Eira, Stonnington, Port Phillip 1300 367 441

References:

- Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault – procedures for Victorian Government Schools
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide
- DEECD 'Child Protection – Mandatory Protection' Policy at:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

This policy was reviewed in February 2021 and is scheduled for review in 2024.