



Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Abuse Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all members of the school community understand their responsibilities in recognising, responding to, and reporting allegations, disclosures, or reasonable suspicions of child abuse or harm. This policy aims to provide clear guidance on the appropriate actions to take to protect the safety and wellbeing of students, in accordance with applicable child protection laws, mandatory reporting obligations, and the School's duty of care.

If you have a concern that a child or a young person is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all school activities, including:

- On-campus learning and extracurricular activities.
- Boarding and homestay environments.
- Online and digital communication spaces.
- Off-campus, including but not limited to activities, excursions, and camps.
- Engagement with external education providers.

POLICY STATEMENT

Ballarat Grammar is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all students, free from abuse and harm. These procedures outline the required actions for responding to and reporting allegations, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse in compliance with Ministerial Order 1359, the Victorian Child Safe Standards, and relevant State and Commonwealth laws.

This document provides a clear process for identifying, responding to, and reporting allegations of child abuse. It applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, third-party providers and visitors, ensuring that any concern regarding child safety is addressed promptly and appropriately.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of child abuse and related concepts can be found in the *Student Safety Definitions and Additional Resources* document. Child abuse includes physical violence, sexual abuse, grooming, emotional or psychological harm, neglect, and family violence.

Term	Definition
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – Child Protection.
MARAM	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management framework. It is an evidence-based system used primarily in Victoria, Australia, that guides organizations in identifying, screening, assessing, and managing the risk of family violence.
Reasonable Belief	‘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. A “reasonable belief” might be formed when: • A student tells you that they have been sexually abused; • A student tells you that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);





	- i.e. - someone who knows the student states that the student has been sexually abused; (any person telling you they believe that a student has been abused (sometimes the student may be talking about themselves)) or - Signs of sexual abuse lead to a belief that the student has been sexually abused.
SSR	Social Services Regulator.
VIT	Victorian Institute of Teaching.

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

All school staff and volunteers have a legal and ethical obligation to report suspected or disclosed child abuse. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action and legal consequences.

Staff must report concerns to:

- A Student Safeguarding Officer.
- The Principal, if appropriate.
- External authorities, as required (e.g., DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police, SSR).

MANDATORY REPORTING

All mandated staff members must make a report to Child Protection and/or Victoria Police as soon as practicable if, in the course of their professional duties, they form a reasonable belief that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse or sexual abuse and the child's parent/carer has not protected, or is unlikely to protect, the child from that harm. All staff must follow the PROTECT Four Critical Actions: Identify, Report, Support and Refer, and document all actions taken.

ABUSE RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

In addition to the above actions, any form of suspected child abuse must be reported to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) on (03) 9637 2806 or via email: vrqa.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au.

FAILURE TO PROTECT

This criminal offence is commonly known as "Failure to Protect", although its full title is "Failure by a person in authority to protect a child from a sexual offence". The Failure to Protect offence means that action must be taken:

- By any Staff, Volunteer, Third party provider or Contractor and an adult over the age of 18, who has the power or responsibility to do so.
- To protect students aged under 16.
- From a known substantial risk of the student becoming the victim of a sexual offence by an adult staff member, Volunteer or Contractor at the school.

Under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (Crimes Act) a person commits an offence if:

- The person occupies a position within or in relation to a relevant organisation.
- There is a substantial risk that a child under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the organisation.
- The person knows that the risk exists.
- By reason of their position, the person has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove that risk.
- The person negligently fails to reduce or remove that risk.





IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

If a student is at immediate risk of harm, staff must:

- Ensure the student's safety by separating them from the alleged perpetrator.
- Provide first aid, if required.
- Call 000 for urgent medical or police assistance.
- Preserve evidence if a crime is believed to have occurred.

INTERNAL REPORTING PROCESS

When a concern arises, staff must:

- Consult with a Student Safeguarding Officer to determine further action.
- Complete a Student Safety Report form and submit it to the Senior Student Safeguarding Officer.
- Ensure confidentiality as far as practicable throughout the reporting process.
- Document the concern in Synergetic (internal student management system – pastoral care document/docman).

EXTERNAL REPORTING PROCESS

In accordance with legal obligations, reports must be made to the following agencies when required:

- In non-emergencies – the Victorian Police Triage Service 131 444 or Orange Door 1800 219 819
- Victoria Police (000) in cases of sexual abuse, physical assault, or immediate risk.
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) – Child Protection for cases of neglect, emotional harm, or family violence.
- Social Services Regulator (SSR) for reportable conduct allegations against school staff.
- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) if the concern involves a registered teacher.

IF SOMEONE HAS ALREADY MADE A REPORT

Once you form a reasonable belief that a child or a young person has been, or is at risk of being abused, your obligation to report is separate from the obligations or actions of other people. In instances where two staff members form different views about whether or not to make a report, if one staff member continues to hold a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection, then they should make a report.

However, there may be times when two or more school staff members, for example a teacher and a Principal, have formed a belief about the same child on the same occasion and based on the same information. In this situation it is sufficient that only one of the staff members make a report. The other person should ensure that the report has been made and that all the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other person. However, if either person becomes aware of new information, they must ensure that this new information is also reported.

MANAGING DISCLOSURES FROM STUDENTS

It is the role of school staff members to reassure and support a student who makes a disclosure of abuse. **However, staff members should never promise to keep any disclosures confidential as all disclosures of abuse must be reported.** The role of school staff remains the same if disclosures are made by a parent/ carer or a sibling, or if disclosures involve family violence.

When managing a discloser staff should:

- Listen to the student and allow them to speak.
- Stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the student's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the student or interrupt the student).
- Be gentle, patient, and non-judgmental throughout.
- Highlight to the student that it was important for them to tell you about what has happened.
- Assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred.





- Do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, “What happened next?” rather than “Why?”
- Be patient and allow the student to talk at their own pace and in their own words.
- Do not pressure the student into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals, and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times.
- Reassure the student that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do.
- Use verbal facilitators such as, “I see”, restate the student’s previous statement, and use nonsuggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the student talking in an open-ended way (“what happened next?”).
- Tell the student in age-appropriate language you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying “I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you”).

When managing a disclosure staff should avoid:

- Displaying expressions of panic or shock.
- Asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the student feel uncomfortable and may cause the student to withdraw).
- Going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority).
- Making any comments that would lead the student to believe that what has happened is their fault.
- Making promises to the student about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each student depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

The **Four Critical Actions** are the essential steps schools must take in response to a child safety or wellbeing concern or incident. These actions are:

1. **Identify:** Identify and recognise concerns, suspicions, disclosures or incidents of child abuse. Staff must act as soon as they witness an incident, receive a disclosure, or form a reasonable belief that a child has been or is at risk of being abused.
2. **Report:** concerns to the appropriate authority based on the source of harm.
3. **Support:** Provide immediate and ongoing support to the child or young person. This includes implementing wellbeing supports, safety planning and monitoring the student’s welfare following a disclosure, suspicion or incident.
4. **Refer:** Refer the child and/or family to appropriate internal and external services for further support where required.

It is important that you adapt to changing circumstances, such as when you identify new information or the risk to the student or family changes.

To adapt to changing circumstances, you may need to:

- Switch to a different source of abuse
- Change the order of the critical actions
- Undertake more than one of the critical actions at the same time
- Repeat one or more of the critical actions
- Repeat steps within a critical action – for example share information with Information Sharing Entities.

Further information can be found via [4 Critical Actions to identify and respond to child abuse | vic.gov.au](#). It’s important that staff access the most up to date information regarding these critical actions.





LIASING WITH AUTHORITIES

There may be times when DFFH or Orange Door or other agencies contact the school for further information about a student or case. If this occurs, please do the following:

- Refer to Senior Student Safeguarding Officer or Head of School

If an interview is requested, please check the following is considered:

- A support person (Wellbeing)
- If they have an additional need, they must have a Disability Support Person
- If they are culturally or linguistically diverse, they should have a CALD support person

The interview should not proceed until we have the right support people in the room. If it must proceed this should be confirmed in writing by the agency that we are working with.

DUTY OF CARE

All school staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect children and young people in their care from harm that is reasonably foreseeable.

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse can take many forms. The perpetrator may be a parent, carer, staff member, volunteer, another adult or even another child. The nature of child abuse is complex. The abuse may occur over time, and potential risk indicators are often difficult to detect. Therefore, the legal obligations for reporting allegations of child abuse can vary depending on the circumstances of the incident.

Child abuse is defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) as any act committed against a child involving sexual offence, grooming offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958, the infliction on a child of physical violence and/or serious emotional or psychological harm and the serious neglect of a child.

SIGNS OF HARM

It is critical to be able to recognise the physical or behavioural signs of child abuse. In many circumstances, they may be the only indication that a child is subject to abuse. As a staff member, you may be the best-placed or the only adult in a position to identify and respond to suspected abuse. If physical or behavioural indicators lead you to suspect that a child has or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, regardless of the type of abuse, you must respond as soon as practicable by following the Four Critical Actions for responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse found in the 'further resources' of this Procedure.

Physical signs of abuse or neglect may include, but are not limited to, bruises, burns, sprains, bites, cuts, fractures, frequent hunger, malnutrition, poor hygiene, and inappropriate clothing.

Behavioural signs of abuse (physical, sexual and emotional) or neglect may include, but are not limited to, wariness or distrust of adults, fear of parents/guardians and of going home, fear when other children cry/shout, excessive friendliness to strangers, being very passive and/or compliant, having/claiming to have headaches and/or stomach pains, displaying sexual behaviour that is unusual for the child's age, frequent rocking, sucking and biting, having difficulty sleeping, being withdrawn, aggressive and/or demanding, being highly anxious, having delayed speech, acting like a much younger child, and often being tired and falling asleep.

FAMILY VIOLENCE (MARAM)

Staff must use MARAM processes to identify and respond to family violence. Using the Family violence identification tool ensures staff are meeting their service's MARAM responsibilities. All staff can use the Family violence identification tool to record information if they:

- Receive a disclosure of family violence
- Observe signs of trauma that may indicate a child or young person is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, family violence.





Staff must act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as there is an incident, a disclosure or a suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being, abused. The family violence identification tool can be used in conjunction with the Four Critical Actions to ensure steps are followed to prioritise safety and support risk evaluation.

The school has MARAM nominated Staff: Christian Walters, Olivia Bugden who staff can speak to for support with using the MARAM framework/ tools and that can support staff and families.

FAMILY VIOLENCE SCREENING TOOL

Schools must use MARAM processes to identify and respond to family violence, including asking screening questions. Using the [Family violence screening tool \(DOCX\)](#) ensures the School is meeting their MARAM responsibilities.

MARAM nominated staff can use the Family violence screening tool if they:

- Receive a disclosure of family violence
- Observe:
 - signs of trauma that may indicate a child or young person is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, family violence
 - family violence risk factors
 - narratives (for example, statements or stories) or behaviours that indicate an adult is using family violence
 - have completed or received a completed Family violence identification tool (DOCX) and/or Family violence screening tool from a colleague, including a primary school nurse, or received an email referral from a primary school nurse.

The Family violence screening tool will guide nominated staff through the decision-making process to determine how to respond.

If nominated staff receive a Family violence identification tool from another staff member, including a primary school nurse, or an email referral from a primary school nurse, they should refer to the information in the tool/email to support their engagement with the victim survivor.

Nominated staff can ask screening questions directly of a child or young person and/or adult victim survivor – if safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so.

Staff should not seek the views and wishes of a child, young person or family member in the following circumstances:

- If it is unsafe. For example, if it is likely to jeopardise a child's wellbeing or safety or place another person at risk of harm. Or if timeliness is an issue, such as when there is an immediate risk.
- If it is unreasonable. For example, if the relevant family member does not have a relationship with the school. Or if you are unable to contact them.
- If it is inappropriate. For example, if a young person is living independently and their family members no longer have access to their personal information.

The Family violence screening tool is intended to be used as a living document, as family violence is defined by a pattern of behaviour, meaning it is likely to require ongoing support. Nominated staff can use the Family violence screening tool to record and collate new observations they make over time.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

Ballarat Grammar provides a range of supports for students are affected by student safety concerns, including:

- Counselling and wellbeing services.
- Referral to external child protection agencies.
- Confidential staff debriefing sessions.
- Sexual abuse prevention programs based on students age and development.





COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CARERS

Decisions about informing parents will be made in consultation with Child Protection or Victoria Police to ensure student safety. In some cases, parental notification may be delayed preventing further risk.

RECORD KEEPING

All Student Safety Reports must be accurate, confidential, and securely stored in accordance with the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) Recordkeeping Standards including minimum retention periods.

POLICY COMPLIANCE AND REVIEW

All staff, volunteers and those engaged by Ballarat Grammar are expected to enact this policy in support of student and community learning, health, safety and wellbeing. Any breach of a Student Safety program document is a student safety incident that must be reported internally. Any breach that meets the threshold for external reporting must also be reported to the relevant external authority.

This procedure is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with updated legislation and best practices. The Senior Student Safeguarding Officer oversees the review and implementation of any necessary updates. The school Board approves and endorses this policy.

GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMUNICATIONS

All documentation within the Governance Framework will be communicated throughout the school including, but not limited to, internal communications such as Nexus posts, staff emails, staff inductions and documentation distribution.

Document Owners are responsible for identifying and managing information-related risks and issues for their assigned information entities and for escalating these to Approval Authorities accordingly. Owners of Governance Documents are accountable for their respective procedures, manuals and work instructions in alignment with their position descriptions.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- Templates:
 - [Adult engaged by independent school](#)
 - [Student to student template](#)
 - [In the family template](#)
 - [In the community template](#)
- [Child Protection and Child Safe Standards \(PROTECT\)](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse](#)
- [Adapt to Changing Circumstances](#)
- [MARAM Family Violence Intervention](#)
- [Social Services Regulator](#)





Office Use Only

Document Control / History	
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Supporting Documents	
- Betrayal of Trust Report - Betrayal of Trust - Child Safe Standards - CCYP The 11 Child Safe Standards - IDG-003 Privacy Policy - IDG-002 ICT Acceptable Use - SSS-001 Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Support Policy - SSS-002 Student Safety Program Reference Guide - SSS -003 Student Safety Definitions and Additional References - SSS-004 Student Safety and Wellbeing	- SSS-005 Code of Conduct – Student Safety - SSS-006 Student Duty of Care - SSS-007 Student Safety and Risk Management Procedure - SSS-008 Professional Boundaries Guidelines - SSS-009 Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Abuse - SSS-025 Restraint Guidelines - SSS-026 Discipline Policy

Student Lifecycle / Pillars / Values / IDEALS / IB PYP Attributes					
Student Lifecycle	Student Lifecycle Subsection	Pillars	Values	IDEALS	IB PYP Attributes
- Student Recruitment - Delivery of Education Programs - Graduation & Community	- Marketing & Advertising - Enrolments & Offers - Finance - Teaching & Learning - Assessment - Experiences - Careers / Work Experience - Graduation - Old Grammarians / Alumni	- Governance & Leadership - Legislative & Regulatory Compliance - Complaints & Compliments - People & Culture - Finance - Community Engagement / Foundation - Property & Maintenance	- Integrity - Aspiration - Courage - Compassion - Responsibility - Hope	- Internationalism - Democracy - Environmentalism - Adventure - Leadership - Service	- Inquirers - Knowledgeable - Thinkers - Communicators - Principled - Open Minded - Caring - Risk Takers - Balanced - Reflective

Legislative Context
- Betrayal of Trust Report - Betrayal of Trust - Child Safe Standards CCYP The 11 Child Safe Standards - Children Youth & Families Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 legislation.vic.gov.au - Child Wellbeing & Safety Act 2005 (Vic) Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 legislation.vic.gov.au - Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) Crimes Act 1958 legislation.vic.gov.au - Education & Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) Education and Training Reform Act 2006 legislation.vic.gov.au - Education & Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic) Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 legislation.vic.gov.au - Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 Federal Register of Legislation - Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 - Education & Care Service National Law Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 legislation.vic.gov.au - Family Violence Protection Act 2008 Family Violence Protection Act 2008 legislation.vic.gov.au - Ministerial Order 1359 ministerial-order-1359-975 - National Code of Practice for Providers of Education & Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018) Federal Register of Legislation - National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 - National Quality Standard (NQS) National Quality Standard ACECQA - Notifiable Data Breaches Scheme About the Notifiable Data Breaches scheme OAIC - Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) Federal Register of Legislation - Privacy Act 1988 - Worker Screening Act 2020 Worker Screening Act 2020 legislation.vic.gov.au

Regulatory Context





VRQA	CRICOS / National Code / ESOS Act	ACECQA / Department of Education	International Baccalaureate	Other
- Education & Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) – Section 4.3.1 - Education & Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic) – Part 2A - VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards for School Registration - Victorian Child Safe Standards – Standards 7, 8, 9 - Ministerial Order No: 1359 – Clauses 11, 12, 13 - Child, Youth & Families Act 2005 (Vic) - Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)	- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 – Section 19(2) - National Code of Practice for Providers of Education & Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018) – Standards 5	- National Quality Framework (NQF) - Education & Care Service National Law Act 2010 - Education & Care Services National Regulations 2011 - National Quality Standard (NQS) – Quality Area 2	International Baccalaureate Programme Standards – Standard A	- Child Wellbeing & Safety Act 2005 (Vic) - Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) – Section 49M - Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) - Notifiable Data Breaches Scheme - Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic) - Social Services Reportable Conduct Scheme



Appendix A Student Safety Reports in a Compliant and Consistent Manner

	Actions	Responsibility	Steps
A	Responding to an emergency on school campuses or in School activities where a student has just been abused or is at immediate risk of harm	Any person at the scene	1. Separate the alleged victim(s) and other(s) involved if safe to do so. 2. Administer first aid if required and qualified to do so. 3. Call 000 4. Preserve any item that may amount to evidence of the abuse (scene of the incident, clothing and other physical items). 5. Take reasonable precautions to prevent discussion of the incident between those involved in the alleged incident (including any other children who may have witnessed the incident). 6. If the incident is taking place in an online environment, disengage online and immediately call 000.
B	Responding to an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse	Any member of the school community over 18 years	1. You must act in accordance with this Procedure if you form a suspicion or reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed the child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse)
C	Mandatory reporting to authorities by designated professionals where through the course of their profession or employment a reasonable belief is formed that a child is at significant risk of harm and in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.	- Designated professionals under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005. The following are mandatory reporters in Victoria: - o registered medical practitioners - o nurses - o midwives - o registered teachers and early childhood teachers - o early childhood workers - o school counsellors	1. Any designated mandatory reporter who, through the course of their profession or employment, forms a reasonable belief that a child may be at significant risk of harm and in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse has a legal obligation to report their belief to DFFH child protection. 2. Mandatory reporting obligations cannot be delegated and should another person be nominated by the school to report to DFFH, the mandatory reporter maintains an obligation to ensure this has occurred. The obligation to report remains with the designated professional and cannot be overruled by the school, even if more senior staff do not share the same reasonable belief as the designated professional. 3. A report must be made as soon as reasonably possible and any further incidents which reinforce this belief must also be reported.



		○ registered psychologists ○ people in religious ministry	
D	Reporting to authorities where a reasonable belief is formed that a child is in need of protection	• Any member of the school community over 18 years	1. <u>Staff members</u> who witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has or is at risk of being abused, even if unsure or have not witnessed the child abuse directly, must report to a Student Safeguarding Officer or the Principal as soon as reasonably possibly 2. <u>Students</u> who witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has or is at risk of being abused, even if unsure and have not witnessed the child abuse directly, must report to a school staff member in the first instance. The staff member must report the matter to a Student Safeguarding Officer or the Principal. 3. On receipt of a report, the Safeguarding Officers must report the incident to the Senior Student Safeguarding Officer and to relevant authorities. 4. If the suspected abuse is alleged against a school staff member, volunteer, contractor or officeholder, then it must be reported to SSR. 5. If the suspected abuse is of a sexual nature (including grooming), then it must be reported to Victorian Police. 6. If the suspected abuse comes from within the family or outside community, then the suspected abuse must be reported to DFFH Child Protection if a child is considered to be: a. In need of protection from child abuse; b. 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.
E	Reporting to authorities where a reasonable belief is formed that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16	• Any member of the school community over 18 years	1. <u>Staff members</u> who have a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 must report to a Student Safeguarding Officer or the Principal as soon as reasonably possibly. 2. <u>Students</u> who have a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 must report to a school staff member in the first instance. The



			staff member must immediately report to a Student Safeguarding Officer or the Principal - On receipt of a report, the Safeguarding Officers must commence the reporting process, including reporting to police. - An adult who has a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 must report this to Victoria Police in person or by telephone unless they have a reasonable excuse not to do so or an exemption applies - A reasonable excuse not to report to Victoria Police includes: - a fear for the safety of the victim or another person (except the alleged perpetrator) as a result of the disclosure; or - a reasonable belief that the information has already been disclosed to police (e.g. through a mandatory report made to DFFH). - Exemptions from reporting to Victoria Police are as follows: - if the victim is 16 years or older at the time of providing the information and has requested confidentiality (except where the victim has an intellectual disability); - if the person comes into possession of the information when they were a child; - if the information is privileged (e.g. client legal privilege, journalist privilege); - if the information is a 'confidential communication'; - if the information is in the public domain; - if the person is a police officer acting in the course of his/her duty in respect of the victim of the alleged sexual offence; or if the victim of the alleged sexual offence turned 16 years before 27 October 2014. - A disclosure made in good faith does not constitute unprofessional conduct or breach of professional ethics and the person making the disclosure will not be subject to liability in respect of it.
F	Contacting parents / guardians / carers	Principal	The Principal or their delegate must consult with DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police



		Senior Student Safeguarding Officer	to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise: - not to contact the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the student is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted) - to contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion) - how to communicate with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.
G	Removing someone from the school community who poses a substantial risk	- Principal - Director People & Culture	- If there is a substantial risk that an adult within the school community may commit child abuse or a sexual offence against a child under 16, the school will take action to remove or reduce that risk. - If a school employee poses a substantial risk then action may be taken in accordance with the school's Staff Code of Conduct and employment conditions. The Director, People and Culture shall ensure that any employment action taken by the school against an employee complies with existing employment laws, including relevant legislation, industrial agreements and employment contracts. - If a student poses a substantial risk then action may be taken in accordance with Student Discipline processes - Persons in positions of authority within the school who negligently fail to take reasonable action to protect a school from a known threat of abuse may face prosecution under 'Failure to Protect' laws.
H	Investigating allegations against a school staff member, volunteer, contractor or officeholder	- Principal - Senior Student Safeguarding Officer - Student Safeguarding Manager - People and Culture team	- From 1 July 2017 allegations of child abuse against a school staff member, volunteer, contractor or officeholder are subject to the Victorian reportable conduct scheme. - When the details of an allegation of child abuse against a school staff member, volunteer, contractor or officeholder then it shall cause the allegation to be reported to the Principal (or the Board Chair if the allegation is against the Principal) as soon as possible.



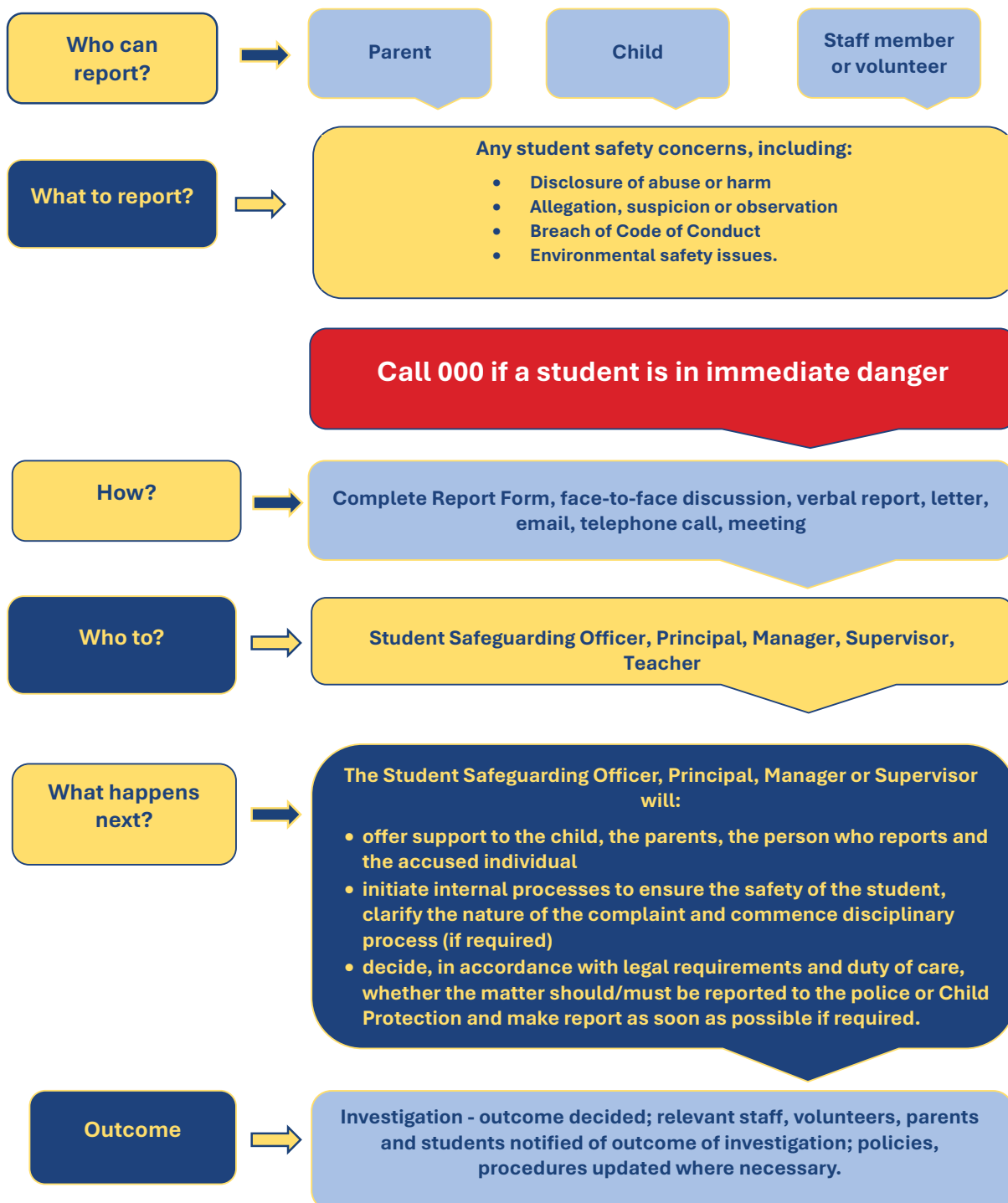
			- The Principal or their delegate will report the allegation on behalf of the Principal to the Social Services Regulator and ensure appropriate investigation of the allegation as directed by the Regulator, unless it is subject to police investigation. - Within 30 days of the initial report to the Commission, the Principal or their delegate will update the Regulator with further details of the allegations and investigation. - At the conclusion of the investigation, any findings and reasons for the outcome of an investigation shall be reported to the Principal, and the matter closed with the SSR.
I	Providing on-going support	- Senior Student Safeguarding Officer - Wellbeing team	- If a student is impacted by suspected abuse, and it is deemed appropriate in the circumstances, the Senior Student Safeguarding Officer shall: - establish regular communication between staff and the child's parent/guardian/carer (if this is appropriate) to discuss a student's progress, wellbeing, and the effectiveness of planned strategies - provide referral to Student Wellbeing team (if this is appropriate) where additional culturally or developmentally appropriate support may be required. - convene a Student Support Group to plan on-going monitoring, support, and follow-up of the Student's health and wellbeing (Student Support Groups usually comprise wellbeing staff, teachers, allied health professionals and where appropriate the student and/or their parent/carer) - develop and implement a Student Support Plan, which documents the planned support strategies and includes timeframes for review (where possible, these support strategies should be informed by allied health and wellbeing professionals with expertise in addressing child abuse and trauma)
J	Students logging a complaint or concern	All students	At any point, a student may log a complaint and / or a concern



Appendix B: Student Safety Reporting Process

Note: Reporting an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse internally does not release you from other legal and regulatory obligations you may have

- Adapted from "A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation" <http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/>





Appendix C: Responding to Concerns About a Student

What to do if you are concerned about a student

You should immediately raise your concerns with a Student Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Student Safeguarding Officer, preferably face to face, but via email or call if you are unable to do so. The SSO or dSSO will decide if the concern does not include a safeguarding issue. They may consult with the SSSO/ HoS/ Principal/ Deputy Principal.

Pastoral Concern

This will be referred to the Co-Head of Year/ Year Level Leader/ Relevant staff. Concern and notes around the decision made should be recorded on Pastoral Notes by reporting staff member. Follow-up will be directed by the relevant staff member or the reporting staff member.

Safeguarding Concern

This will be allocated to a SSO or dSSO they will work with the reporting staff member to ensure that the PROTECT framework is followed.

Identify Support Refer Report

Interview

Interview relevant students and staff. Students should write statements including:
Who? Where? When? What? Including what was said and done by them and others.

Investigate

Don't assume sides or behaviour
Ask questions calmly
Ask for clarification or detail if required
Ask for evidence (online/ screenshots, etc)
Listen
Be non-judgmental

Communicate

Take time to plan and communicate with relevant staff
Make decisions around who will communicate with parents/ guardians
Communicate with all stakeholders in a timely manner.

Safety Support Meeting

A meeting should be held with relevant staff and, if necessary, the Student Safeguarding Manager and Senior Student Safeguarding Officer to plan on how best to support the student and access help. It is at this meeting that risk assessments will be conducted and decisions made on next steps, including reporting and referral to external agencies.

Support

Consult with the student about options available for support.

- School Psychologists
- Referral to external agencies
- Communication with parents
- Regular check ins with trusted adult
- Protective factors available
- Behaviour Support Plans
- Individual Wellbeing Plans
- Safety plans

Document

Use the following resources to help document:

- School notebooks
- PROTECT Templates
- Family Violence Identification Tool
- Family Violence Risk Assessment Tool
- Child Safety Reporting Form

Any confidential documentation should be scanned and uploaded to DOCman on Synergetic and stored under Heads of School. Please also make a note in Userforms Pastoral Notes giving brief overview of action.

Reporting

Non-Emergencies should be referred to Police 131444 but this can be dependent on the nature of the safety concern or abuse identified. Please refer to PROTECT framework for more

