



MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY [2018]

RATIONALE

Protection for children and young people is based upon the belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God and that the inherent dignity of all should be recognised and fostered.

The Academy of Mary Immaculate is entrusted with the holistic education of the child, in partnership with parents, guardians and caregivers, who are the primary educators of their children.

We have a duty of care to students to take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that they can reasonably foresee would be likely to result in harm or injury to the student, and to work for the positive wellbeing of the child.

To that end, the College is committed to abiding by the professional, moral and legal obligations to implement child protection and child safety protocols and practices.

DEFINITIONS

Mandatory reporting is a legal requirement under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) to protect children from harm relating to physical injury and sexual abuse. The Principal, teachers, and support staff are mandatory reporters under this Act.

Child abuse can take many forms. The perpetrator may be a parent, carer, school 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.

Child abuse is defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.) to include:

- sexual offences
- grooming
- physical violence
- serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect

Family violence is defined under the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic.) to include behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness, or be exposed to the effects of family violence such as abusive, threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour.

A '**reasonable belief**' or a '**belief on reasonable grounds**' is not the same as having proof but is more than rumour or speculation

Grooming is designed to prepare or 'groom' a child for future sexual activity and is contained in Section 49B (2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.). The offence applies to communication with children **under 16 years**.

Duty of Care involves taking reasonable steps to protect children and young persons under their care and supervision from harm that is reasonably foreseeable (this duty applies to all school staff).

POLICY STATEMENT/GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.) introduced the seven Victorian Child Safe Standards which aim to create a culture where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice.

This policy is designed to enable Catholic schools to comply with Standard 5 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards: processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse, as well as the school specific requirements for procedures for responding to allegations of suspected abuse in Ministerial Order No. 870.

This policy sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation and regulatory guidance when there is a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed. It also provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report. All procedures for reporting and responding to an incident of child abuse are designed and implemented by taking into account the diverse characteristics of the Academy community.

This policy is designed to assist school staff (which includes volunteers, contractors, other service providers and religious leaders, including clergy) to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

Child protection reporting obligations fall under three separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements:

- the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
- the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.).

PROCEDURES

There are four main ways in which a school staff member may become aware that a child is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, abuse:

1. **Witnessing an incident:**

If you witness an incident where you believe a child has been subjected to abuse you must first take immediate action to protect the safety of the child or children involved and then go straight to the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

2. **Forming a suspicion:**

All suspicions that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused must be taken seriously, including suspicions that the abuse is taking or may take place outside school grounds or areas.

If your suspicion develops into a reasonable belief you must act and refer to the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

3. Receiving a disclosure about or from a current student:

All disclosures must be treated seriously.

You should immediately refer to the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

4. Receiving a disclosure about or from a former student:

If the former student is currently of school age and attending a Victorian school, you must immediately refer to the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

If the former student is no longer of school age or attending a Victorian school, you must still report the disclosure to [DHHS Child Protection](#).

Notes & Records

Staff members are to keep clear and comprehensive notes relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse using the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#).

For strategies on how to manage a disclosure refer to [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

3.2 The Four Critical Actions

There are Four Critical Actions which must be taken when responding to and reporting a child protection incident, disclosure or suspicion:

- 1. Responding to an Emergency**
- 2. Reporting to Authorities**
- 3. Contacting Parents/Carers**
- 4. Providing Ongoing Support**

Critical Action 1: Responding to an Emergency

This first step is only applicable if a child has **just been abused** or is at **immediate risk of harm**.

If this is not the case, go straight to **Critical Action 2: Reporting to authorities**.

If the child has **just been abused or is at immediate risk of harm** you must take reasonable steps to protect the child, including:

- separating the alleged victim and others involved, ensuring that if the parties involved are all present at the school that they are supervised separately by a school staff member
- arranging and providing urgent medical assistance where necessary, including administering first aid or calling 000 for an ambulance
- calling 000 for urgent police assistance if the person who is alleged to have engaged in the abuse poses an immediate risk to the health and safety of any person.

If the child protection incident has occurred at the school, school staff should also ensure that reasonable steps are taken to preserve the environment, the clothing and other items and prevent any potential witnesses from discussing the incident until the Police or relevant authorities arrive on the premises.

Critical Action 2: Reporting to Authorities

All forms and instances of suspected or alleged child abuse must be reported to the appropriate authority.

As soon as critical health and safety concerns have been addressed the staff member must take steps to report the child protection incident, suspicion or disclosure as soon as practicable.

DHHS Child Protection is the Victorian government agency that protects children at risk of significant harm. All incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse must be reported to DHHS Child Protection except where the incident involves sexual abuse or grooming, in which case it **must be reported to the Police**.

Failure to report physical or sexual abuse of a child is a criminal offence. For more information, refer to the ***Failure to disclose*** section of this policy.

There are different reporting procedures and authorities who must be notified depending on whether the source of the suspected or alleged abuse came from within the school or within the family or community of the child.

The DHHS and DET have deliberately set a low threshold for the formation of a 'reasonable belief'.

The [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) requires all school staff to report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of abuse as soon as possible to the relevant authorities.

Critical Action 3: Contacting Parents/Carers

Where it is suspected that a child at the school has been, or is at risk of being abused, it is critical that parents/carers of the child are notified as soon as practicable after a report is made to the authorities.

The school must always seek advice from the Police or DHHS Child Protection, to ensure that it is appropriate to contact the parents/carers.

Advice from the **Police or DHHS Child Protection** will depend on a number of factors, including:

- whether the parents/carers of the child are alleged to have engaged in the abuse
- whether a disclosure to the parents/carers may result in further abuse to the child
- where the child is a mature minor (at least 17 years of age and assessed to be sufficiently mature and intelligent to make decisions for themselves) and has requested that their parents/carers not be notified – the school should insist that another responsible adult is notified in lieu of the parents/carers
- whether notifying parents/carers would adversely affect an investigation of the matter by external authorities.

Where the suspicion of abuse or risk of abuse has not yet warranted a reasonable belief, parents/carers should also be notified promptly after the school has carefully considered the factors listed above.

For detailed guidance on how to have this conversation with a parent or carer, refer to [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

Critical Action 4: Providing Ongoing Support

Staff members who witness a child protection incident, receive a disclosure or develop a suspicion of child abuse have a critical role to play in supporting students impacted by the child protection matter, to ensure that they feel supported and safe at the school.

Support provided to students at the school includes:

- regular communication with the student and their parents/carers where appropriate
- convening a Student Support Group of school wellbeing staff and teachers to plan, support and monitor affected students
- the development of Student Support Plans for students impacted by the incident to ensure appropriate levels of care and support are provided depending on their involvement.

You should contact the Catholic Education Melbourne's Student Wellbeing Information Line (9267 0228) for a description of the range of school-based support services that may be available.

Where external authorities are investigating a report of abuse or risk of abuse, it is the role of the principal to ensure that students are supported throughout interviews at the school. For more information on this topic, refer to [School Guidelines 2.19a: Police and DHHS Interview Protocols](#).

The school has a duty to ensure that school staff members are supported following the witnessing of an incident or disclosure, or who have made a report to external authorities about a reasonable belief of child abuse. Staff members requiring wellbeing support can contact the school's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider.

The school should conduct a review of the reporting process 4–6 weeks after a report has been made to identify if any follow-up support actions are needed. Refer to [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#) for more information.

Responding to Complaints or Concerns

The school may receive concerns or complaints about school staff management of a child protection incident. These concerns or complaints may be voiced by parents/carers or others within the school community.

The school should follow its internal complaints handling process to ensure that all concerns, complaints or feedback on school policies or processes are effectively captured and appropriately managed.

It is important that, as a first step, the school ensures that the complaint does not raise concerns that child abuse or a risk of child abuse has gone unreported.

If this is the case, the school should follow the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) to ensure that any new information received through a complaint or concern from a member of the school community is reported to authorities where required.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Appendices

- **Appendix 1: Response to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse**
- **Appendix 2: Making a Mandatory Report**
- **Appendix 3: Potential Consequences of Making a Report**

Other Resources

Catholic Education Melbourne

- [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#)
- [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#)
- Catholic Education Melbourne's School Guidelines
[2.19a: Police-and-DHHS-Interview-Protocols.aspx](#)
- [Catholic Schools Operational Guide](#) (CEVN website)
- [Privacy Compliance Manual](#) (CEVN website)
 - updated by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) Dec 2015
 - this manual may be used by schools and systems which are represented by the CECV.

Victorian Government

- [Ministerial Order 870: Child Safe Standards.](#)

Department of Education and Training

- [The School Policy Advisory Guide \(SPAG\)](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module](#)

Department of Health and Human Services

- [Child Protection](#)
- [Child FIRST](#)

Related legislation

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

Victoria Police

- [Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams \(SOCIT\)](#)

Department of Justice and Regulations

- [Failure to disclose offence](#)
- [Failure to protect offence](#)
- [Grooming offence](#)

Other resources

- [Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum](#)
- Parents, see: [Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum Parent Guides - Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment](#)

Catholic Education Melbourne August 2016 (updated)

Further information

Catholic Education Melbourne **Student Wellbeing Information Line: 03 9267 0228**
(9am–5pm daily)

The Student Wellbeing Information Line seeks to:

- address matters that impact on the wellbeing and educational outcomes of young people arising in Catholic school communities across the Archdiocese of Melbourne using a solution focused-framework
- act as a conduit between the school and the family to promote effective communication and resolution of enquiries
- empower and enhance the capacity, competence and confidence of stakeholders to address matters related to the wellbeing of young people.

DATE TO BE REVIEWED

Version	Author	Description of Changes	Release Date	Review Date
1	Paul Finneran		April 2018	December 2018

Appendix 1

RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE

Please note that if you are making a report to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police you must seek advice before contacting parents/carers as not to compromise any investigation or place a child at further risk.

STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE RESPONSE
Name:
Occupation:
Location/School Address:
Relationship to Child:

CRITICAL ACTION 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

If anyone is in immediate danger College staff should report immediately to Victoria Police on 000

RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY
Did the child receive 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 immediate danger? If a child is in immediate danger school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police on 000)

CHILD' INFORMATION

PERSONAL DETAILS	
Name:	Gender:
Year Level/Class	Date Of Birth:
Residential Address:	
Parents/Carers' Names:	
Parent/Carer Contact:	
Languages Spoken By Child:	
Disabilities, Mental Or Physical Issues:	

CHILD'S BACKGROUND
CULTURAL STATUS AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND (If the child is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, you must contact the Catholic 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 HISTORY OF SUSPECTED ABUSE (Prior to this incident, disclosure or suspicion of involvement with agencies)
FAMILY BACKGROUND
Family Composition (If Known) List Parenting Or Care Arrangements And Siblings Names And Ages
Any Other People Living With The Child (If Known):
Disability, Mental Or Physical Health Issues In Family (If Known):
Likely Reaction To Report Being Made (If Known)

DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION

GROUNDS 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 (Detail any disclosures 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:

ADDRESS:

CONTACT DETAILS:

CRITICAL ACTION 2: REPORTING

REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

Highlight the authorities you have reported to:

VICTORIA POLICE

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

CHILD FIRST

DECISION NOT TO REPORT

If you decided not to report, list your reasons here. Also include any follow up action undertaken by you below:

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR REPORT:

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 CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

Time:

Date:

Names:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

CRITICAL ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

ACTIONS TAKEN
<p>PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH PARENTS/CARERS (IF APPROPRIATE)</p> <p>School staff must consult with Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection to determine if 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)</p>
<p>HAVE YOU SOUGHT ADVICE FROM DHHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE? (Please highlight)</p> <p>NO</p> <p>YES</p> <p>IS IT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER? (Please highlight)</p> <p>NO</p> <p>YES</p> <p>LIST REASONS IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER</p>
<p>IF CONTACTING PARENT/CARER, PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:</p>
<p>Name Of Staff Member Making The Call:</p>
<p>Name Of Parent/Carer Receiving The Call:</p>
<p>DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:</p>

CRITICAL ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

PLANNED ACTIONS

INCLUDE DETAIL ON 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:

PROCESS OF REVIEW

Complete this section between 4-6 weeks after an incident, suspicion or disclosure of abuse in conjunction with your college leadership team.

SAFETY AND WELLBEING

CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE CHILD

IS THE CHILD SAFE FROM ABUSE AND HARM? (Please highlight one)

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? (Please highlight one)

NO

YES

If so, consider how these can be addressed 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? (Please highlight one)

NO

YES

If so have their wellbeing needs been met? (Please highlight one)

NO

YES

CURRENT WELLBEING OF IMPACTED STAFF MEMBERS

Does the staff member who made the report/witnesses an incident, formed a suspicion or received a disclosure require any support? (Please highlight one)

NO

YES

If so has this been received? (Please highlight one)

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? highlight yes or no to the following questions.
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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 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

Has the student been appropriately supported in any interviews? NO | YES

Have any complaints been received? NO | YES

Have the complaints been resolved? NO | YES

OTHER LEARNINGS:

Appendix 2 – Making a Mandatory Report

HOW TO MAKE A MANDATORY REPORT

The table below describes the information to include when making a **mandatory report** about child abuse or child protection concerns. If a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact the Police immediately.

Making a Mandatory Report	
Step	Description
1. Keep Notes	<p>Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour) • the source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person) • the actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with the principal, report to DHHS Child Protection, etc.).
2. Discuss Concerns	<p>Due to the complexity of child abuse incidents, disclosures and suspicions, it is recommended that concerns and observations regarding suspected physical or sexual abuse of a child are discussed with the principal or a member of the Leadership Team and/or Catholic Education Melbourne's Student Wellbeing Information Line.</p> <p>This is not a legal requirement, however will help to ensure support is provided to all involved in matters of this nature. The confidentiality of these discussions must be maintained.</p> <p>You should then make your own assessment about whether you are required to make a report about the child or young person and to whom the report should be made.</p> <p>It is important to remember that the duty to report abuse or suspicions of abuse exists even if the principal, member of the Leadership Team or a representative of Catholic Education Melbourne advises you not to proceed with reporting suspected abuse.</p>
3. Gather & Document Information	<p>Gather the relevant information necessary to make the report. This should include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full name, date of birth and residential address of the child or young person • the details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns • your involvement with the child or young person • details of any other agencies which may be involved with the child or young person.

	<p>This information should be collected and documented using the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools (see Appendices 1 of Mandatory Reporting Policy). The template is to be used to record as much information as possible to provide when you make your report to either the Police or DHHS Child Protection.</p> <p>It is critical that completing the template does not impact on reporting times – if a child is in immediate danger school staff need to report the matter immediately to the Police.</p>
<p>4. Make the Report</p>	<p>To report concerns which are life-threatening phone 000 or the local police station.</p> <p>Where the source of the abuse comes from within the school; that is, the suspected or alleged abuse involves a staff member, volunteer or contractor at the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact the Police. The Police will, in this case, contact DHHS Child Protection when appropriate. • you must also report internally to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The principal, or the Leadership Team if the principal is involved in the allegation ○ Catholic Education Melbourne’s Student Wellbeing Information Line (9267 0228). <p>Where the source of the suspected or alleged abuse comes from within the child’s family or community, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report sexual abuse and grooming to the Police • report the matter to DHHS Child Protection if you consider the child to be in need of protection due to child abuse, or has been, is being or is at risk of being harmed due to any form of abuse. If after hours call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78. • report internally to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the principal, or a member of the Leadership Team if the principal is unavailable ○ Catholic Education Melbourne’s Student Wellbeing Information Line (9267 0228)
<p>5. Document Written Records of Report</p>	<p>Make a written record of the report including the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported • the name and position of the person who made the report and the person who received the report. <p>The information initially recorded in the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools and any additional information provided to either the Police or DHHS Child Protection is to be stored securely and maintained for a minimum of seven (7) years by the school, to ensure that records are accessible upon request by external authorities investigating the matter.</p>

6. Additional Steps for Overseas Students	Where a child protection incident, disclosure or suspicion involves an international student at the school and the school has issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter for that student (thereby assuming responsibility for the child's accommodation, support and general welfare) the school will also need to contact the VRQA.
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Child FIRST

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 to or seeking advice from Child FIRST.

Child FIRST is the Family Information Referral Support Team run by a registered community service in a local area that can receive confidential referrals about a child of concern. It does not have any statutory powers to protect a child but can refer matters to family services.

You should make a report to Child FIRST if:

- you have a significant concern for a child's wellbeing
- your concerns are about circumstances that have a low-to-moderate impact on the child
- the child's immediate safety is not compromised
- you and the school have discussed the referral to Child FIRST with the child's parents/carers, and all parties are supportive of this decision.

Where you believe that the child's parents/carers will not be supportive of the referral, you may refer the matter to DHHS Child Protection.

If you are unsure of what action to take in response to your concerns about a child, speak to the principal or a member of the school's Leadership Team, or contact DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST for further advice. For more information refer to [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

MAKING ADDITIONAL REPORTS

After you have made a report, you may continue to suspect that a child is at risk and in need of protection. Any further observations should continue to be recorded and a report made on each separate occasion where a belief has been formed – on reasonable grounds – that a child is likely to be at risk and in need of protection.

If there is any suspicion that this relates to a sexual offence involving a person over 18 and a child under 16 then it must be reported to the Police. For more information, refer to the **Failure to disclose** section of this policy.

Where a staff member is aware that another staff member has formed a reasonable belief about the same child on the same occasion, or based on the same indicators of abuse, and has made a report to the appropriate authority, the first staff member need not make a further report.

However, if the first staff member has formed a reasonable belief of abuse or a significant risk of abuse to the child based on different observations, further indicators or additional information, a further report must be made to the appropriate authority detailing this additional information.

Appendix 3 – Potential Consequences of Making a Report

This table describes the potential consequences of making a report.

Potential consequence	Description
Confidentiality	<p>The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or parent of the report • the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed • a court or tribunal decides that it necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child • a court or tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to provide evidence.
Professional Protection	<p>If a report is made in good faith:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter • the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.
Interviews	<p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police may conduct interviews of children and young people at the school without their parent’s knowledge or consent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing children and young people at school should only occur in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the best interests of the child to proceed in this manner • DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police will notify the principal or a member of the leadership team of their intention to interview the child or young person on the school premises • When DHHS Child Protection practitioners/Victoria Police officers come to the school premises, the principal or a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to the child or young person • When a child or young person is being interviewed by DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, school staff must arrange to have a supportive adult present with the child or young person. <p>For more information on these requests and school responsibilities: see Catholic Education Melbourne's School Guidelines 2.19a: Police and DHHS Interview Protocols.</p>

<p>Support for the child or young person</p>	<p>The roles and responsibilities of staff members in supporting children who are involved with DHHS Child Protection may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acting as a support person for the child or young person • attending DHHS Child Protection case-planning meetings • observing and monitoring the child’s behaviour • liaising with professionals.
<p>Requests for Information</p>	<p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Child FIRST and/or Victoria Police may request information about the child or family for the purpose of investigating a report and assessing the risk to the child or young person.</p> <p>In certain circumstances, DHHS Child Protection can also direct school staff and Department staff to provide information or documents about the protection or development of the child. Such directions should be in writing and only be made by authorised persons within DHHS Child Protection. Refer to Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools.</p>
<p>Witness Summons</p>	<p>If DHHS Child Protection makes a Protection Application in the Children’s Court of Victoria, any party to the application may issue a Witness Summons to produce documents and/or to give evidence in the proceedings. See Catholic Education Melbourne’s School Guidelines 2.19a: Police and DHHS Interview Protocols.</p>