



Sacré Cœur

PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations Policy

Introduction

It is the policy of Sacré Cœur to live out the values that reflect its Sacred Heart tradition. These values are embodied in the Five Goals of Sacred Heart education, which are:

1. A personal and active faith in God
2. A deep respect for intellectual values
3. The building of community as a Christian value
4. A social awareness that impels to action
5. Personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom

Within these five Sacred Heart goals students, staff and parents of Sacré Cœur should foster and promote the core school values of respect, compassion, responsibility, perseverance, forgiveness and integrity. 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.

Sacré Cœur is entrusted with the holistic education of each student in partnership with her parents, guardians and/or caregivers. Sacré Cœur staff therefore have a duty of care to our students by taking reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which they can reasonably foresee would be likely to result in abuse of the student and to work for the positive wellbeing of the student.

Protection of Children and Young People

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. Sacré Cœur is entrusted with the holistic education of the child, in partnership with parents, guardians and carers, who are the primary educators of their children. Sacré Cœur staff therefore 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the ***PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations Procedure***.

1. Policy

From 2016 onwards, the Victorian Government has made changes to how schools protect children and young people from sexual abuse. These changes followed the learnings from the:

- Betrayal of trust: Inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other non-government organisations
- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

These include:

- Mandatory Child Safe Standards, for schools to manage the risk of child abuse and respond to concerns
- Mandatory education to help students understand their rights, recognise unsafe situations and seek help
- Mandatory reporting laws for all organisations with responsibility for children
- More power for the Victorian Institute of Teaching to investigate child safety concerns, share information, and take action so that only suitable people can be teachers

- Better sharing of information between schools and other organisations
- Under the [National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021 - 2031](#), protecting children is everyone's responsibility – parents/guardians/carers, communities, governments and businesses all have a role to play.

In Victoria, a joint protocol, [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#), involving the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET), the former Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) and Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) exists to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

The Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA) helps schools to implement these reforms. The following information provides clarity and context about how children are protected.

Reforms	How it applies
Child Safe Standards	Victoria's Child Safe Standards began in 2016 to protect children and young people from harm and abuse. They help schools build safe environments and put children's safety first.
The 11 Child Safe Standards	The VCEA supports schools to understand and implement the Child Safe Standards with guidance, templates, and checklists on the PROTECT website .
How the Child Safe Standards are enforced	Schools can't operate in Victoria unless they follow these standards. The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority regulates schools' compliance with the standards.
Strengthening education	Specific parts of the school curriculum help to keep children safe from abuse.
Respectful Relationships education	Schools deliver respectful relationships education to Year 10. This includes teaching students about consent in an age-appropriate way. For younger students it also includes activities about autonomy, boundaries, the difference between 'safe' and 'unsafe' secrets and getting help from trusted adults. For older students, consent education focuses on 'affirmative consent' and what to do if experiencing or witnessing coercion or gender-based violence.
Mandatory Sexuality and Consent Education	Schools must teach consent as part of the curriculum. Schools teach this in an age-appropriate way to year 12.
Reporting obligations	Under the Reportable Conduct Scheme principals must report allegations of child abuse and certain other misconduct by school staff, contractors or volunteers, to the Commission for Children and Young People within three business days. There are five types of reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme: • sexual offences, against, with or in the presence of a child • sexual misconduct, against, with or in the presence of a child • physical violence, against, with or in the presence of a child • behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child • significant neglect of a child. The scheme helps to make sure that this kind of behaviour from staff is properly investigated.

	For more information on the Reportable Conduct Scheme visit CCYP Reportable Conduct Scheme .
Mandatory reporting to child protection	Registered teachers, psychologists and counsellors must report to Child Protection if they believe that: - a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm from physical or sexual abuse and - the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type.
Failure to disclose laws	All adults in Victoria – including school staff – must follow the failure to disclose laws. This means if any school staff member has information that leads them to believe another adult has sexually abused a child under 16, they must report it to police. If they don't, they can face up to 3 years imprisonment. These laws ensure that protecting children is everyone's responsibility, even if it happens outside the school environment.
Failure to protect laws	Principals or school leadership staff who are aware that an adult associated with the school (like an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a substantial risk of sexual abuse to a student must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. People who don't follow this law can face up to five years imprisonment.

The Victorian Department of Education previously produced [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) and [PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#) - this has now been superseded and replaced by:

- 1. Identity and respond to child abuse by an adult engaged by a catholic school, including grooming**
- 2. Identify and respond to student-to-student abuse**
- 3. Identify and respond to child abuse in the family**
- 4. Identify and respond to child abuse in the community**

All teachers, other school staff members, volunteers, contractors, other service providers and any priests associated with Catholic schools within Victoria, including Sacré Cœur, must understand and abide by the legal, moral and professional obligations to implement child protection and child safety policies, protocols and practices.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy and associated procedures is to:

- Ensure Sacré Cœur staff (which includes Sacré Cœur board directors, board committee members, school staff, volunteers, contractors, other service providers and those in religious ministry) are aware of and comply with their reporting and legal obligations, including mandatory reporting and reportable conduct obligations, to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- explain the actions required under the relevant legislation and regulatory guidance when there is a reasonable belief that a child needs protection, or a criminal offence has been committed – as set out in this Policy and associated procedures
- explain training requirements

3. Scope

Ministerial Order No. 1359: [Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and school boarding premises](#) was made under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.) and sets out the specific actions that all Victorian schools must take to meet the requirements in the Child Safe Standards for registration. This policy applies to the Sacré

Cœur board, Leadership Team, teachers, staff, other school staff members, volunteers, contractors, other service providers and those providing religious ministry at Sacré Cœur.

This Policy applies to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff member, volunteer, contractor, service provider, visitor or any other person while connected to the school environment. It is designed to enable those at Sacré Cœur to comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, including **Standard 7 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards: processes for complaints and concerns are child focused**. All procedures for reporting and responding to an incident of child abuse are designed and implemented by considering the diverse characteristics of our school community.

Actions required under the relevant legislation and regulatory guidance, when there is a reasonable belief that a child needs protection or a criminal offence has been committed, are set out in this policy. This policy also provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

This policy and accompanying procedures are designed to assist staff (which includes Directors, volunteers, contractors, other service providers and clergy) to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may need protection
- understand how a 'suspicion' or 'reasonable belief' is formed
- where possible, refer to the principles of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities as best practice in respecting and protecting the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of members of the school community
- make a report about a child or young person who may need protection
- comply with obligations under the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law
- comply with legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law

5. Principles

Sacré Cœur is entrusted with the holistic education of the child, in partnership with parents / caregivers, who are the primary educators of their children. Sacré Cœur staff therefore 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.

Sacré Cœur is committed to:

- Providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all students with zero tolerance for child abuse in all setting
- listening to and empowering children and young people
- keeping children and young people safe
- receiving and managing reports of suspected child abuse in a way that is culturally safe and sensitive to the diverse circumstances of children and students, as well as providing support to vulnerable children and students.
- reporting complaints and concerns to relevant authorities where the law requires reporting, and cooperating with law enforcement
- ensuring that recordkeeping, reporting, privacy, legislated information sharing schemes, and employment law obligations will be complied with when receiving and handling reports or concerns of suspected child abuse.

5. Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

Sacré Cœur must comply with the legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*, the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*, the *Child*

Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.), the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.) and the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic.).

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.) introduced the eleven *Victorian Child Safe Standards* which aim to create a culture where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice. The Child Safe Standards were introduced in response to recommendations made by the [Betrayal of Trust](#) report.

Child protection reporting obligations for Sacré Cœur fall under five separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements:

1. the [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 \(Vic.\)](#)
2. the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic.\)](#)
3. the [Crimes Act 1958 \(Vic.\)](#)
4. the [Family Violence Protection Act 2008 \(Vic.\)](#)
5. the [Wrongs Act 1958 \(Vic.\)](#).

These legislative obligations exist in addition to moral and duty of care obligations which require the school and its community members to protect any child under their care and supervision from foreseeable harm.

Sacré Cœur is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) meaning that, where legislated requirements are met, it is able to share confidential information with other ISEs to promote child wellbeing or safety under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or the Family Violence Information sharing Scheme (FVISS).

In any dealings regarding safety, the dignity, protection and wellbeing of students involved will be maintained and respected. Appropriate confidentiality is maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally. Information may be disclosed to other Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) without the knowledge or consent of any parent/guardian/carer or student, where this is required or authorised by law for the purposes of information sharing under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS).

Under the CISS, the views and wishes of the child and/or family members should be sought before sharing information where it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so.

Under the FVISS, the views of the child and non-violent family members should be sought where it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so.

All staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect children in their care from harm that is reasonably foreseeable. In relation to suspected child abuse, reasonable steps may include (but are not limited to):

- acting on concerns and suspicions of abuse as soon as practicable, including by raising concerns with members of the school leadership team
- seeking appropriate advice or consulting with other professional agencies
- reporting suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities
- arranging ongoing wellbeing support for the student and any other student connected to the concern or complaint
- sharing information with other staff who will also be responsible for providing ongoing support to the student/s

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in this policy and associated procedures does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes a child is at risk of child abuse.

The *Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic.)* creates an organisational liability for child abuse for organisations that exercise care, supervision or authority over children. Sacré Cœur has a duty to take reasonable

precautions to prevent the abuse (sexual or physical) of a child (under 18) by an individual associated with the school (e.g. employees, volunteers, board directors, contractors, ministers of religion and religious leaders) while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the school. Reasonable precautions include (but are not limited to):

- conducting employment screening and reference checking
- providing supervision and training
- encouraging children and adults to notify authorities or parents about any signs of aberrant or unusual behaviour

6. Roles, Responsibilities and Reporting

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Mandatory reporter	Completion of annual Mandatory Reporting training. Following required reporting obligations and processes.	Provision of evidence of training to the school.
Principals	Ensure that all relevant staff complete annual training in their Mandatory Reporting obligations, and that the school keeps up-to date records of this. Where a staff member is unable to perform their role in responding to and/or reporting a matter to authorities, identify an appropriate alternative person and allocate responsibility for responding to and/or reporting the matter to that person.	
All employees, including board directors, board committee members, principals, teachers, other staff members, volunteers, contractors and those involved in religious ministry	Be aware of and comply with their legal obligations to report suspected child abuse (this may include completing Mandatory Reporting training) and provide ongoing support to all students connected to the concern, complaint or allegation of child abuse. When dealing with an incident or disclosure of suspicion of child abuse, ensure that the principal and school leadership team are made aware. When a staff member who has witnessed a child abuse incident, received a disclosure or developed a suspicion of child abuse is unable to perform their role in responding to and/or reporting the matter, the staff member must inform the principal.	

7. Definitions

Types of Child Abuse and Indicators of Harm

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.)* to include:

- sexual offences
- grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*
- physical violence
- serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect

Child abuse	Child abuse includes: (a) any act committed against a Child involving: (i) a sexual offence (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
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	(b) the infliction, on a Child, of: (i) physical violence (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm (c) serious neglect of a Child.
Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)	The CISS, implemented by the Victorian Government is a scheme enabling information sharing between authorised organisations to promote a child's wellbeing or safety. All Victorian children and young people from 0 to 18 years of age are covered by the CISS.
Child safety	Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse (Ministerial Order No. 1359).
Department of Education (DE)	Victorian government department that leads the delivery of education and development services to children, young people and adults.
Sexual offences	A sexual offence occurs when a person involves a child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to the child's age and development. Sexual offences are governed by the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic.). Sexual abuse can involve a wide range of sexual activity and may include fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exploitation through pornography or prostitution.
Mandatory reporters	Mandatory reporters listed under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) include: • VIT Registered teachers (including principals and early childhood teachers) • school staff who have been granted permission to teach by VIT • registered medical practitioners, nurses and midwives • people in religious ministry • youth justice workers • out-of-home-care workers (excluding voluntary and kinship carers) school counsellors including staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional and psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) school health and wellbeing staff, primary welfare officers, student wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners, and chaplains.
Mandatory reporting	Mandatory reporting is the legal requirement under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) to protect children from harm relating to physical and sexual abuse. A child, for the purposes of the relevant parts of this Act, is any person under the age of 17 years (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools).
Policy	A high-level, principles-based directive that must be complied with across Sacré Cœur.

Procedure	A step-by-step or detailed instruction for the implementation of Sacré Cœur policy.
Reasonable belief	A reasonable belief or a belief on reasonable grounds is not the same as having proof but is more than rumour or speculation. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. A reasonable belief might be formed if: • a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused • any person tells you that they believe someone has been abused; this may include a child who is talking about themselves • you observe physical or behavioural indicators of abuse, as described in PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools • a child or young person exhibits sexually abusive or age-inappropriate behaviour(s) • professional observations of the child's behaviour or development cause you to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused. While any indicators of possible child abuse or neglect are concerning, it is important to understand that the presence of a number of indicators that suggest either physical or sexual abuse of a child may be sufficient to form a reasonable belief in a mandatory reporter's mind which must be reported.
Reportable allegation	A reportable allegation means any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that an employee has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, whether or not the conduct or misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person's employment.
Reportable conduct	Reportable conduct for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme is: • a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded • sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child • physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child • any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child • significant neglect of a child as defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic).
Risk	Risk is defined as the effect of uncertainty on objectives. An effect is a deviation from the expected – positive and/or negative. Risk is often expressed in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event (including changes in circumstances or knowledge) and the associated likelihood of occurrence.

Risk management	The coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation regarding risk.
School/service environment	Means any of the following physical, online or virtual places used during or outside school/service hours: • a campus of the school • online or virtual school/service environments (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services) • other locations provided by the school/service or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps, approved homestay • accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events) (Ministerial Order No. 1359).
School/service staff	Means an individual working in a school/service environment who is: • directly engaged or employed by a school/service governing authority • a contracted service provider engaged by Sacré Cœur engaged to perform child-related work • a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with Sacré Cœur (Ministerial Order No. 1359).
Student	Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends Sacré Cœur.
Sacré Cœur Board	The board of Sacré Cœur in an ex officio capacity (as the context requires).
Grooming	Grooming refers to predatory conduct undertaken by an adult (18 years or over) to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. It is a sexual offence under section 49M of the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic.) carrying a maximum 10-year term of imprisonment. Under section 49M, the adult's words or conduct must be intended to facilitate the child engaging or being involved in the commission of, or attempt to commit, a sexual offence by the adult or another adult.
Student sexual offending	Student sexual offending means sexual behaviour by a student 10 years and over which may amount to a sexual offence. A sexual offence includes rape, sexual assault, indecent acts and other unwanted sexualised touching. Under Victorian law: • children between 12 to 15 can only consent to sexual activity with another child no more than 2 years older (therefore sexual contact by a student with a child outside of this age range may be student sexual offending) • for a person to consent to sexual activity, they must have the capacity to understand the context and possible consequences of the act. Therefore sexual contact by a student involving a person with a cognitive impairment or

	affected by alcohol or other drugs may be student sexual offending.
Volunteer	A person who performs work without remuneration or reward for Sacré Cœur in the school/service environment.
Physical violence	Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways including beating, shaking, burning or using weapons (such as belts and paddles). Physical harm may also be caused during student fights.
Serious emotional or psychological harm	Serious emotional or psychological abuse may occur when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats or the witnessing of family violence. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological harm could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.
Serious neglect	Neglect includes a failure to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision. Significant neglect causes harm to a child that is more than trivial or temporary. Serious neglect is when the child is exposed to an extremely dangerous or life-threatening situation and there is a continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life.
Family violence	Family violence is defined under the <i>Family Violence Protection Act 2008</i> (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. While family violence does not form part of the official definition of 'child abuse' in the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic.), the impact of family violence on a child can be a form of child abuse, for example, where it causes serious emotional or psychological harm to a child. A child can also be a direct victim of family violence.
Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)	Implemented by the Victorian government under the Family Violence Protection Act 2008. The scheme enables the sharing of information between authorised organisations to assess and manage family violence risk and supports effective assessment and management of family violence risk.

8. PROTECT

The Victorian Department of Education in conjunction with Department of Families, Fairness and Housing has been working since 2024 to refresh the PROTECT guidance to support schools to identify and respond to child abuse and connect students and their families to the right support at the right time. The service system that supports children's safety has changed significantly since PROTECT was launched 10 years ago, in 2016. A key change has been the state-wide rollout of The Orange Door. In summary, the PROTECT guidance now reflects the current family and

specialist service system. School staff reporting obligations including their mandatory reporting and reportable conduct obligations have not changed.

PROTECT provides clearer advice on when to support, refer and when to report – to ensure students and their families are connected to the right support at the right time. It also helps schools to support students and their families to self-refer to The Orange Door to help them get the support they need. The refreshed PROTECT requirements makes it easier for our school staff to navigate and find information – and follow a pathway based on the source of abuse.

8.1 Key Features

An important new feature of the updated guidance is that it provides detailed guidance for schools on how to respond – based on each source of abuse:

- Adult in the school – which includes Reportable Conduct
- Student to student
- Within the family – which includes Mandatory Reporting
- Within the community

There is tailored advice for each source of abuse. The new 4 Critical Actions are **IDENTIFY, SUPPORT, REFER** and **REPORT**. The way the school will respond to child abuse will depend on the source. The order of the actions will also depend on the source of abuse (refer to appendices). There are also “At all times” actions throughout the 4 Critical Actions and the school must:

- Respond to an emergency
- Adapt to changing circumstances
- Document the actions
- Information on contacting parents or carers and information sharing is included in each action.

The refreshed PROTECT guidance supports schools to identify and respond to child abuse connect students and their families with the right support at the right time.

The refreshed PROTECT website makes it easier for school staff to navigate and find information – and follow a pathway based on the source of abuse.

PROTECT is now aligned with the family service system and the child safety policies that schools already have to follow. These include the Child Safe Standards, Reportable Conduct Scheme, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) and Information Sharing.

This includes when to:

- refer to The Orange Door (and how to support students and their families to self-refer), local sexual assault and harmful sexual behaviour services or Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations
- report to Child Protection or Victoria Police.

In summary, PROTECT provides clarity on the support available from the Orange Door on when to refer and when to report to Child Protection if abuse is in the family. Sexual Assault Services for harmful sexual behaviour between students of any age.

APPENDIX – 4 CRITICAL ACTIONS



4 CRITICAL ACTIONS

● Identify | ▲ Report | ● Support | ■ Refer

Identify and respond to child abuse by an adult engaged by a Catholic school, including grooming

Provide the right support at the right time

At all times, you must:

- **Respond to an emergency** – Call 000. Preserve evidence. Keep students safe.
- **Adapt to changing circumstances** – Be flexible. Repeat/take different actions.
- **Document your actions.**

● Identify child abuse

All staff

You can identify abuse by:

- witnessing grooming behaviours or an incident
- receiving a disclosure
- observing:
 - physical or behavioural signs
 - something concerning online or on a device.

Notify your school's nominated contact person if you become aware of any allegation, complaint, disclosure or concern that:

- an adult engaged by the school may be abusing a child, or
- a child is at risk of being abused.

▲ Report abuse to authorities

The school's nominated contact person manages reports.

If you believe a crime has been committed against a child, report to:

- Victoria Police.

Any allegations, complaints, disclosures and concerns, report to your school's relevant governing body as soon as possible.

Report any allegations, complaints, disclosures or concerns about principals to your school's relevant governing body.

Engage parents/carers

- Obtain clearance from Victoria Police (if involved) or your school's relevant governing body before contacting parents/carers on what can be shared.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible (same day preferred).

Sexual offences

- Your school's relevant governing body will work with the school and health and wellbeing staff to lead ● **Support** and ■ **Refer**.

Other matters

- Your school's nominated contact person or wellbeing team may lead ● **Support** and ■ **Refer**.

● Support students through your school

- Support impacted student/s.
- Arrange support for impacted students and staff through regional/centralised services.
- Engage students and parents/carers to find the best support.
- Tailor to diverse needs.
- Use information sharing.
- Continue as long as necessary.

■ Refer to community services

- Engage student/s and parents/carers to find and connect with suitable services.
- Use information sharing.

Key contacts

Victoria Police

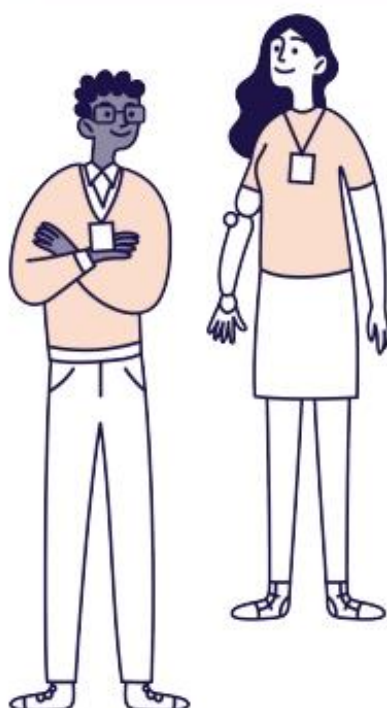
- 000 (emergencies)
- 131 444 or local police station (non-emergencies)

Local sexual assault service

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School governing body

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vic.gov.au/identify-abuse-adult-catholic-school



Identify and respond to student-to-student abuse

Provide the right support at the right time

At all times, you must:

- **Respond to an emergency** – Call 000. Preserve evidence. Keep students safe.
- **Adapt to changing circumstances** – Be flexible. Repeat/take different actions.
- **Document your actions.**

Identify child abuse

All staff

You can identify abuse by:

- witnessing an incident
- receiving a disclosure
- observing:
 - physical or behavioural signs
 - something concerning online or on a device.

If you form a reasonable belief that a student has been, or is at risk of being abused (including harmful sexual behaviour), inform school leadership.

Information Sharing staff/Child Link users

- Request information from Information Sharing Entities or check Child Link.

School leadership/nominated staff

-  **Report**
-  **Support** and  **Refer**

You may need to take actions in support and refer at the same time.

Harmful sexual behaviour

Contact local sexual assault services for support and advice.

Report abuse to authorities

If you believe a crime against a child has been committed, report to:

- Victoria Police
- your school's relevant governing body.

If the student is under the age of criminal responsibility/not a Victoria Police matter, report to:

- your school's relevant governing body.

For harmful online content, report to:

- esafety.gov.au/report

Engage parents/carers

- If Victoria Police are involved, seek their clearance on what can be shared before you contact parents/carers.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible (same day preferred).

Harmful sexual behaviour

- If Victoria Police are not involved, you can contact your local sexual assault service for advice to engage parents/carers.

Support students through your school

- Support impacted student/s.
- Engage students and parents/carers to find the best support.
- Tailor to diverse needs.
- Use information sharing.
- Continue as long as necessary.

Refer to community services

- Engage student/s and parents/carers to find and connect with suitable services.
- Use information sharing.

Harmful sexual behaviour

- Contact your local sexual assault service for support for students and parents/carers.
- If a student is using harmful sexual behaviour and their parents/carers are not willing or able to help the student connect to a service, call Child Protection.



vic.gov.au/identify-student-to-student-abuse-schools

Key contacts

Child Protection

8:45am to 5pm, Mon-Fri

North	1300 598 521
South	1300 555 526
East	1300 360 452
West	1300 360 462
After hours	13 12 78

Victoria Police

- 000 (emergencies)
- 131 444 or local police station (non-emergencies)

eSafetyCommissioner

- esafety.gov.au/report

Local sexual assault service



School governing body



Victoria
Catholic
Education
Authority



Victoria
Department
of Education

Identify and respond to child abuse in the family

Provide the right support at the right time

Identify child abuse

All staff

You can identify abuse by:

- witnessing an incident
- receiving a disclosure
- observing:
 - physical or behavioural signs
 - signs of family violence trauma in students
 - family violence risk factors
 - narratives and behaviours that may indicate an adult is using family violence
 - something concerning online or on a device.

You only need to collect enough information to form a reasonable belief or inform your next steps. If you form a reasonable belief:

- go to **Determine your pathway**
- inform school leadership.

If you have a concern that a student is experiencing, or at risk of, child abuse in the family, and need more information:

- complete Family Violence Identification Tool
- provide to MARAM-nominated staff.

MARAM nominated staff

- complete Family Violence Screening Tool

If you form a reasonable belief that there is current family violence:

- inform school leadership
- go to **Determine your pathway**
- complete Basic Safety Plan.

Information Sharing staff/Child Link users

- Request information from Information Sharing Entities or check Child Link.

At all times, you must:

- **Respond to an emergency** – Call 000. Preserve evidence. Keep students safe.
- **Adapt to changing circumstances** – Be flexible. Repeat/take different actions.
- **Document your actions.**

Determine your pathway

Report to Child Protection (including mandatory report)

- **Report**
- **Support** and **Refer**

Crime

- **Report**
- **Support** and **Refer**

Family violence

(not a mandatory report or crime)

- **Refer** then **Support**

Family struggling with the care, wellbeing or development of a child

- **Support** and **Refer**

You may need to take actions in support and refer at the same time.

If you are unsure which pathway to take, contact The Orange Door for advice.

Support students through your school

- Engage students and parents/carers to find the best support.
- Tailor to diverse needs.
- Use information sharing.
- Continue for as long as necessary.

Refer to community services

- Engage the student and parents/carers, and connect them to services:
 - the Orange Door for family violence or families struggling with care, wellbeing to development of a child. First Nations people can be supported by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.
 - local sexual assault services for sexual offences or harmful sexual behaviour.
- Use information sharing.

Key contacts

Child Protection

8:45am to 5pm, Mon-Fri

North	1300 598 521
South	1300 555 526
East	1300 360 452
West	1300 360 462
After hours	13 12 78

Victoria Police

- 000 (emergencies)
- 131 444 or local police station (non-emergencies)

The Orange Door

Local sexual assault service

School governing body

Report abuse to authorities

Report to Child Protection (including mandatory report)

If you form a reasonable belief that the parents/carers have not, or are unlikely to, protect the student from significant harm. You must report physical and sexual abuse. Report to:

- Child Protection
- your school's relevant governing body.

Crime

If you believe a crime has been committed against a child, report to:

- Victoria Police
- your school's relevant governing body.

Engage parents/carers

- If Child Protection/Victoria Police are involved, seek their clearance on what can be shared before you contact parents/carers.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible (same day preferred).

vic.gov.au/identify-child-abuse-family



Identify and respond to child abuse in the community

Provide the right support at the right time

At all times, you must:

- **Respond to an emergency** – Call 000. Preserve evidence. Keep students safe.
- **Adapt to changing circumstances** – Be flexible. Repeat/take different actions.
- **Document your actions.**

● Identify child abuse

All staff

You can identify abuse by:

- witnessing an incident
- receiving a disclosure
- observing:
 - physical or behavioural signs
 - something concerning online or on a device.

If you form a reasonable belief that a child has been abused, or is at risk of abuse, inform school leadership.

Information Sharing staff/Child Link users

- Request information from Information Sharing Entities or check Child Link.

School leadership/nominated staff

- ▲ **Report**
- ● **Support** and ■ **Refer**

You may need to take actions in support and refer at the same time.

▲ Report abuse to authorities

If you believe a crime has been committed against a child, report to:

- Victoria Police
- your school's relevant governing body.

If you form a reasonable belief that the parents/carers have not, or are unlikely to, protect the student from significant harm. You must report physical and sexual abuse. Report to:

- Child Protection
- your school's relevant governing body.

Engage parents/carers

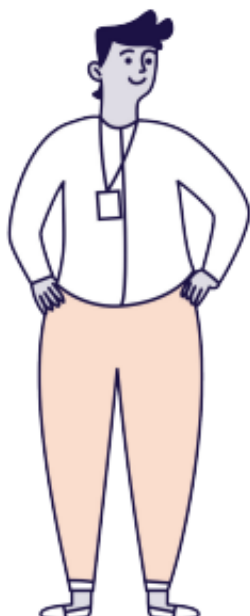
- If Victoria Police/Child Protection are involved, seek their clearance on what can be shared before you contact parents/carers.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible (same day preferred).

● Support students through your school

- Support impacted student/s.
- Engage students and parents/carers to find the best support.
- Tailor to diverse needs.
- Use information sharing.
- Continue for as long as necessary.

■ Refer to community services

- Engage students and parent/carers to find and connect with suitable services.
- Use information sharing.



Key contacts

Child Protection

8.45am to 5pm, Mon-Fri
 North 1300 598 521
 South 1300 555 526
 East 1300 360 452
 West 1300 360 462
 After hours 13 12 78

Victoria Police

- 000 (emergencies)
- 131 444 or local police station (non-emergencies)

The Orange Door



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Local sexual assault service



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School governing body

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vic.gov.au/identify-child-abuse-community





Sacré Cœur

PROTECT Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations Policy

Document Control

Document Details

Document Name	PROTECT Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations Policy
Document created by	Director of Risk and Compliance / Child Safety Officer
Document Approval	School Board, School Principal, School Leadership and the Child Safeguarding Committee

Document Management

Relevant to:	All Teaching Staff, General Staff, School Board members, Volunteers, Visitors, Clergy, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers
Related documents include, but not limited to:	• Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (2025) • Reportable Conduct Policy (2025) • Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy (2025) • Child Safety Code of Conduct (2025) • Diversity Policy (2022) • Complaints Policy (2023) • Grievance Policy (2019) • Whistleblower Policy (2019) • Staff Code of Conduct (2021) • Parent Code of Conduct (2023) • Student Code of Conduct (2023) • Psychologist Policy (2023) • Against Bullying Policy (2020)
Related Legislation, but not limited to:	• Ministerial Order 1359 (2022) • The Child and Young Persons Act (2005) • Privacy Act Cth (1988) / Australian Privacy Principles (2014) • Crimes Act 1958 • Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) • Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) • Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) • Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.) • Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005)
Review:	The Policy shall be reviewed on an annual basis by the School Board, School Principal, School Leadership and the School's Child Safeguarding Committee. The next review of this Policy is due November 2026.

Change History

Author	Date	Change Description	Version
N Visic	April/May 2021	New policy created and endorsed by Leadership and School Board and communicated to all staff, updated to ELMO Learning and published on website.	V1
N Visic	July 2022	Policy updated (in line with MO1359), document reviewed and endorsed by the School Board, School Principal, Leadership Team and Child Safeguarding Committee. Updated document communicated to school community, updated to ELMO Learning and published on website.	V2
N Visic	November 2024	Policy reviewed and updated in line with the MACS PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations Policy. Policy reviewed and endorsed by the School Board, School Principal, Leadership Team and Child Safeguarding Committee. Updated document published on website.	V3
N Visic	November 2025	Document review conducted with some material changes linked to MACS and CECV, Document reviewed and endorsed by the School Board, Leadership and Child Safeguarding Committee and updated versions updated on School Website.	V4
N Visic	May 2026	Document reviewed and updated in line with the Refreshed PROTECT Guidance issued by the Department of Education and VCEA. Document reviewed by the Leadership Team and Child Safeguarding Committee and updated version published on School Website.	V5