

Safeguarding Response Guide

If a Student Discloses Harm, Abuse or a Safety Concern

The Child Protection Foundation is a grassroots charity, founded in 2007 and endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient. We believe every child has the right to feel safe. Our directors and staff are volunteers; we are independent and non-partisan, and while we welcome support from across the community, no sponsor or political party controls our work.

Listen. Reassure. Record. Report. Teachers are not expected to investigate, verify or assess allegations of abuse or harm.

1. Listen — stay calm and give your attention

- Listen carefully and allow the student to speak in their own words.
- Acknowledge what they are telling you; remain supportive and non-judgmental.

You might say:

- ✓ “Thank you for telling me.”
- ✓ “You have done the right thing.”
- ✓ “I am glad you spoke to me.”

2. Reassure — help the student feel supported

- Let the student know they are not in trouble, and that help is available.
- Be honest about what happens next.

You might say:

- ✓ “My job is to help keep children safe.”
- ✓ “I may need to share this with people who can help.”

Do not:

- ✗ Promise secrecy.
- ✗ Promise specific outcomes.

3. Do not investigate — your role is not to determine what happened

Teachers are not expected to investigate allegations or gather evidence.

Do:

- ✓ Listen, and clarify immediate safety concerns only.

Do not:

- ✗ Conduct interviews or ask leading questions.
- ✗ Seek evidence or attempt to verify the information.
- ✗ Contact alleged offenders.

4. Record — document what was said

As soon as practical:

- ✓ Record factual information, using the student's own words where possible.
- ✓ Record observations objectively.

- ✓ Follow school documentation procedures.

5. Report — follow school safeguarding procedures

Immediately notify your Principal, Child Protection Officer, Wellbeing Coordinator, or Designated Safeguarding Lead, and follow:

- ✓ School policy and departmental requirements.
- ✓ Mandatory reporting obligations and State/Territory legislation.

6. Support — continue providing appropriate support

- Maintain normal, respectful interactions and refer wellbeing concerns appropriately.
- Respect confidentiality; share information only on a need-to-know basis.

Emergency situation?

Is the student at immediate risk of harm? If **yes**, follow school emergency procedures immediately and contact Emergency Services (000) if required. If **no**, continue through the school's normal safeguarding and reporting processes.

The Initiative supports existing school safeguarding frameworks and does not replace school child-protection policies or mandatory reporting obligations. A reporting duty can arise from a concern formed in any setting, not only a formal disclosure. Backstop support: Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 (for students); if a child is in immediate danger, call 000. For current reporting contacts by jurisdiction, see the AIFS resource sheet and the state-by-state overview in the Teacher Pack.

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