

## **CHILD SAFETY RESPONDING AND REPORTING OBLIGATIONS POLICY**

### **Including Mandatory Reporting**

#### **Help for non-English speakers**

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Keysborough Secondary College.  
Phone 03 9798 1877 – Acacia Campus or 03 9546 4144 – Banksia Campus or email at:  
keysborough.sc@education.vic.gov.au.

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures Keysborough Secondary College has in place to respond to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse and to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand and follow the various legal obligations that apply to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.

#### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school (physical and online).

#### **DEFINITIONS**

##### **Child abuse**

Child abuse includes:

- physical violence inflicted on a child
-

### Information for students

- All students should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.
- If a student does not know who to approach at Keysborough Secondary College, they should start with the Year Level Leader, an Assistant Principal, the Wellbeing Leader or Campus Nurse.
- Students can also access the 'Complaints Policy' on the College website and follow the procedures for raising an official complaint or refer to the Induction Information provided upon enrolment.

### Identifying child abuse

To ensure we can respond in the best interests of students and children when complaints or concerns relating to child abuse are raised, all staff and relevant volunteers must:

- understand how to identify signs of child abuse and behavioural indicators of perpetrators - for detailed information on identifying child abuse and behavioural indicators of perpetrators refer to [Identify child abuse](#).
- understand their various legal obligations in relation to reporting child abuse to relevant authorities - for detailed information on the various legal obligations refer to **Appendix A**
- follow the below procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse, which ensure our school acts in accordance with the Victorian Child Protection Act 1999.

The following steps will ensure our school complies with the four critical actions as well as additional actions required under the Child Safe Standards.

The Wellbeing Assistant Principal must ensure:

- all relevant information is reported to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection, Victoria Police or relevant services where required
- the incident is reported to the Department's [eduSafe Plus portal](#) or the Incident Support and Operations Centre (1800 126 126) in accordance with the severity rating outlined in the [Managing and Reporting School Incidents Policy](#)
- all [reportable conduct](#) allegations or incidents are reported by the Principal to the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (03 7022 0005) – where a reportable conduct allegation is made against the Principal, the Regional Director must be informed who will then make a report to Employee Conduct Branch

**NOTE:** In circumstances where staff members are legally required to report child abuse to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police and they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another person at the school or the designated member of school staff does not agree that a report needs to be made, the staff member who has formed the reasonable belief must still contact DFFH Child Protection and Victoria Police to make the report.

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 or seeking advice from Child FIRST or The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support) DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police.

### 3. Contacting parents or carers

The Wellbeing Assistant Principal must ensure parents and carers are notified unless advised otherwise by DFFH Child Protection or V6.2 (H)9 (r)4.6 (w)4 (i)-0.9 (o)-4.1 (n)-a e)71 Tc 0 adiem ChiT18.4 (75 Tw -14I)-0.9 (65.8 ( ay Dk2w -14I)-e)-4. nor .004 T

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. For contact details, refer to the [Four Critical Actions](#).

Members of the community do not have to inform the school if they are making a disclosure to DFFH Child Protection or the Victoria Police. However, where a community member is concerned about the safety of a child or children at



## APPENDIX A: LEGAL OBLIGATIONS RELATING TO REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

The following information outlines the various legal obligations relating to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.

It is important to note that the procedures outlined in the above policy ensure compliance with the below reporting obligations, and also include additional steps to ensure compliance with Department policy and our school's duty of care obligations.

### **Mandatory reporting to Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection**

The following individuals are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic):

- registered teachers and early childhood teachers (including principals and school staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT)
- school counsellors including staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) school health and wellbeing 1b (e)-6.2 ( w.8 (Vi1( t)-b1( t)-b1 (g),-

f

grounds that a child is in need of protection even if they are not a mandatory reporter listed above.





## APPENDIX B: MANAGING DISCLOSURES OF CHILD ABUSE

### Important information for staff

#### *When managing a disclosure relating to child abuse you 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 child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
- be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout
- highlight to the student 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 child to talk at their own pace and in their own words
- do not pressure the child 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 child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do
- use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way ("what happened next?")
- tell the child 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")
- Take prompt action in relation to following the procedures outlined below.

#### *When managing a disclosure you should AVOID:*

- displaying expressions of panic or shock
- asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the child feel uncomfortable and may cause the child 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 any promises you will keep the information the student provided confidential
-