

PROTECT



FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Student Sexual Offending

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member, you play a critical role in protecting children in your care.

- You **must** act, by following the 4 critical actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion that a student is a victim of a student sexual offending and/or a student has engaged in sexual offending.
- You **must** act even if you are unsure and have not directly observed student sexual offending (e.g. if the victim, or another person tells you about the offence).
- You **must** use the *Responding to Student Sexual Offending Template* to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

ACTION 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to ACTION 2.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid

- **calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

ACTION 2: REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report incidents, suspicions and disclosures of student sexual offending as soon as possible.

VICTORIA POLICE

All instances on **000**

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

If you believe that:

- the victim's parent/carers are unable or unwilling to protect the child
- The student who is alleged to have engaged in the student sexual offending is:
 - Aged over 10 and under 15 years and may be in need of therapeutic treatment to address these behaviours
 - May be displaying physical and behavioural indicators of being the victim of child abuse.

INTERNALLY

Also report internally to:

- **School Principal and/or leadership team** (all instances)
- **Government schools:** DET Security Services Unit
- **Catholic schools:** Diocesan education office

You must identify a contact person at the school for future liaison with Victoria Police and/or Child Protection and seek advice about contacting parents/carers (see **Action 3**)

*See the Four Critical Actions for Schools: **Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse** for further guidance in these circumstances.

ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your Principal **must** consult with **Victoria Police** or **DHHS Child Protection** to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- **not to contact** the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where contacting the parents/carers is likely to adversely affect a Victoria Police investigation or where the student is a mature minor and has requested that their parent/carer not be notified.
- **to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for students who are victim to a student sexual offence AND students who have engaged in a sexual offence. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.

This support should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals outlining support strategies.

Strategies may include the development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

AREA

North Division 1300 664 977

South Division 1300 655 795

East Division 1300 360 391

West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599

West Division (Metro) 1300 664 977

AFTER HOURS

After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78

CHILD FIRST

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA POLICE

000 or contact your local police station

DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT

(03) 9589 6266

STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT

(03) 9651 3622

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

(03) 9637 2595

DIOCESAN OFFICE

Melbourne (03) 9267 0228 Ballarat (03) 5337 7135 Sale (03) 5622 6600 Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA

(03) 9825 7200