



Bacchus Marsh  
Grammar

# School POLICY

## **CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFETY**

### **Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

(source: Complispace)

Approved by the School Board: 25 February 2026

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## Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection Policy and Procedures

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## 1 Purpose

Under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYF Act) certain people **must** make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH Child Protection) when, “in the course of their professional work or carrying out duties of their office, position or employment”, they form a “belief on reasonable grounds” that a child (aged under 17 or aged 17 and the subject of a child protection order) is “in need of protection” because:

- the child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant” harm as a result of “physical injury” or “sexual abuse”; and
- the child’s “parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect” them from the harm.

These people are called Mandatory Reporters, and we call this reporting obligation “Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection”.

Failure by a Mandatory Reporter to make a Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection is an offence.

The [Reporting and Responding Obligations \(Child Safe\) Policy and Procedures](#), Complaints Management (**Child Safe**) Policy and Procedures and [Record Keeping \(Child Safe\) Policy and Procedures](#) summarise the School’s procedures for responding to child safety incidents and concerns, including Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection obligations.

This Policy and its Procedures provide additional guidance on implementing them and outline when and how Mandatory Reporters at the School must meet their reporting obligations.

## 2 Scope

2.1.1 If you are one of the following people, you are a Mandatory Reporter and this Policy and its Procedures apply to you:

- the **Principal**
- a teacher (including a casual or temporary teacher)
- a medical practitioner (such as a School nurse)
- a registered psychologist or any other person employed by the School as a counsellor
- an early childhood teacher or workers
- a “person in religious ministry” who works or volunteers at the School in your religious capacity.

2.1.2 It does not matter if you are engaged by the School in a paid or volunteer role, as long as you are working in the relevant profession.

2.1.3 If you are not sure if you are a Mandatory Reporter, ask a **Child Safe Officer**.

2.1.4 This Policy and its Procedures apply in all School environments, including physical, virtual and online environments, and on-site and off-site School grounds (e.g. camps and excursions, and interstate and overseas travel).

## 3 Policy Statement

### 3.1 Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection Obligations

3.1.1 You **must** comply with your Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection obligations. If:

- you form a “belief on reasonable grounds” that a child (aged under 17 or aged 17 and the subject of a child protection order) is “in need of protection: because:
  - they have suffered or are likely to suffer “significant” harm as a result of “physical injury” or “sexual abuse”; and
  - their “parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect” them from the harm; and
- your belief arose “in the course of your professional work or carrying out duties of your office, position or employment” at or for the School

you **must** report this to DFFH Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming your belief, regardless of any other actions that you may take.

- 3.1.2 If you sought advice from, or reported internally to, a **Child Safety Officer**, the **Principal** or another person, and they tell you not to make a Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection, you **must still** comply with your Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection obligations if – in your own mind – your concerns reach the required threshold for reporting.

### 3.2 Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection and Other Obligations

- 3.2.1 You must also:
- report the matter internally to the School, following [Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally Policy and Procedures](#)
  - document your Mandatory Report, following [Record Keeping \(Child Safe\) Policy and Procedures](#).
- 3.2.2 If you do not want to be identified in the School's records as the person who made a Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection, there are legislative protections under the CYF Act. The School will take all reasonable steps to de-identify these records if this is necessary.
- 3.2.3 Following this Policy and its Procedures does not replace other legal and policy obligations that you may have. In addition to the above, you **must also** follow all responding and reporting obligations that apply to you. Depending on the circumstances, these obligations may include:
- taking steps to protect students from future risks of abuse or other harm, where those steps are within your power or responsibilities to take (to meet your duty to protect obligations)
  - reporting to the Police
  - reporting Reportable Conduct to the Commission for Children and Young People
  - reporting teacher misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching
  - providing information to other external agencies.

## 4 Procedures

### 4.1 Application to Students Aged 17 or Over

- 4.1.1 Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection only applies when the relevant child or young person is aged 16 or under or if they are aged 17 and subject to a child protection order. Therefore, if your concerns are about a student aged 17 or over, you **cannot** report this to DFFH Child Protection unless they are the subject of a child protection order.
- 4.1.2 You should instead report concerns about the abuse or other harm of a student aged 17 or over to the Police, if they are not subject to a child protection order.
- 4.1.3 However, if the student is 18 or over, you can only do this if they consent to the report or, if they do not consent, if reporting to the Police will lessen or prevent a serious or imminent threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare. For more information, refer to [Reporting to Police Policies and Procedures](#) and the **Information Sharing with Consent** and **Information Sharing Without Consent** subsections of the Information Sharing (**Child Safe**) Policy and Procedures.
- 4.1.4 Even if you cannot make a Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection about a student aged 17 or over or a report to the Police about a student aged 18 and over, you must still report internally to the **School**. For more information, refer to [Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally Policy and Procedures](#).

### 4.2 What If I Am Unsure Whether My Concerns Reach the Threshold For Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection?

- 4.2.1 If you are concerned that a student may be experiencing physical or sexual abuse, but you are unsure whether your concern rises to the level of a belief on reasonable grounds that they are in need of protection, you should immediately raise your concerns with a **Child Safety Officer**. They can assist you in clarifying your concerns and managing the next steps.
- 4.2.2 To help you decide whether you should make a Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection, you can also refer to:
- [Step-by-Step Guide to Making a Report to Child Protection or Child FIRST](#)
  - [Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)

- [Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection in Victoria – frequently asked questions.](#)

4.2.3 If a child safety incident or concern does not meet the threshold for Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection, you must still follow other relevant Policies and Procedures set out in the **Child Safe** Program.

For example, if:

- you believe on reasonable grounds that a student may be in need of protection for reasons **other** than physical or sexual abuse, and those grounds arose in the course of your professional work or carrying out duties of your office, position or employment at or for the **School**, the **Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse** says that you must still report this to DFFH Child Protection (or take other action) (for more information, refer to [Non-Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection Policy and Procedures](#))
- you believe on reasonable grounds that a student aged under 16 has been the victim of a child sexual offence, you must report this to the Police, even if no Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection is required because the student’s parents/carers have protected them, or are likely to protect them, from the harm (for more information, refer to [Reporting to Police Policies and Procedures](#))
- your concerns are about a student but they arose outside the course of your professional work or carrying out duties of your office, position or employment at or for the **School**, you must report the matter internally to the **School** and may also need to follow any other relevant Policies and Procedures (for more information, refer to [Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally Policy and Procedures](#)).

#### 4.3 Reporting by Non-Mandatory Reporters

4.3.1 If you are an employed staff member who is **not** a Mandatory Reporter but:

- you believe on reasonable grounds that a student may be in need of protection due to physical or sexual abuse (or for any other reason); and
- your belief arose in the course of your work at or for the School

the **Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse** sets out circumstances in which you must still make a Non-Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection (or take other action).

4.3.2 For more information, refer to [Non-Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection Policy and Procedures](#).

#### 4.4 How to Make a Report

##### When to Report

You must make your Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming your belief.

##### Reporting Procedures

The CYF Act says that Mandatory Reporters must report to a “protective intervenor”. Protective intervenors are the Secretary of DFFH Child Protection (or their delegate) and all Police officers.

##### Reporting to the Police

***If you are concerned that a child or young person is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, call the Police on 000.***

If you have done this, or otherwise contacted the Police following the **Responding to an Emergency** section of the **Managing Your Initial Response to a Child Safety Incident or Concerns Policies and Procedures** or [Reporting to Police Policies and Procedures](#), then you have made your Mandatory Report. You do not need to also contact DFFH Child Protection.

### Reporting to DFFH Child Protection

In all other situations, you must report to directly to DFFH Child Protection. You must do this by:

- during business hours (8:45am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday), telephoning the DFFH Child Protection intake service for the local government area where the child resides, listed in Appendix 1.
- after hours, telephoning DFFH Child Protection on 13 12 78.

Do **not** try to report via the DFFH Child Protection website or email, because the staff who monitor these are not delegates of the Secretary.

#### 4.5 What to Include in the Report

4.5.1 You should provide as much of the following information as you can:

- details – the child’s name, age and address
- indicators of harm – the reason for believing that their injury or behaviour is the result of physical injury or sexual abuse and that their parent/carer has not protected them, or is unlikely to protect them, from the harm
- reason for reporting – the reason why the call is being made now
- safety assessment – assessment of immediate danger to the child or children. For example, information on the whereabouts of the alleged abuser or abusers
- description – description of the injury or behaviour observed
- child’s current whereabouts
- other services – your knowledge of other services involved with the family
- family information – any other information about the family
- cultural characteristics – any specific cultural or other details that will help to care for the child, for example, cultural origins, interpreter, or disability needs.

#### 4.6 What Happens After I Make a Report?

4.6.1 When it receives a report, DFFH Child Protection may seek further information, usually from professionals who may also be involved with the child or family, to determine whether further action is required.

4.6.2 If the matter progresses to investigation, DFFH Child Protection officers will observe and speak with the child and their parents. They may also speak with relevant professionals, information holders and other significant people in the child’s life who can inform the investigation or provide information to assist DFFH Child Protection to assess if the child is in need of protection. In circumstances involving physical and sexual abuse (and serious neglect), investigations may be conducted jointly with the Police.

4.6.3 If the matter does not progress to investigation, DFFH Child Protection may provide you with advice about support options or itself refer the family to support services in the community (such as The Orange Door), or it may decide to take no further action.

4.6.4 In most cases, DFFH Child Protection will inform you of the outcome of your report.

#### 4.7 Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection and Other Reporting Obligations

4.7.1 In addition to making a Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection, you and/or the **School** must also make all other external reports that are required by law or **School** policy.

For example:

- when it becomes aware that you have made a Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection about an overseas student, the School must notify the VRQA if the School has issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter in relation to that student (thereby assuming responsibility for approving the student’s accommodation, support and general welfare)
- if the Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection involves conduct by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor, this is Reportable Conduct and the **School** must report it to the Commission for Children and Young People, under the **Reportable Conduct Policies and Procedures**

- if the Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection involves conduct by a teacher, the **School** must also report to the VIT as set out in the **Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching Policy and Procedures**.

4.7.2 However, if your Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection was about sexual abuse and the abuse involved a sexual offence being committed against a child aged under 16, you do not need to also report this to the Police under the **Obligation to Report Sexual Offences Against Children to Police (the Failure to Disclose Offence)** section of the [Reporting to Police Policies and Procedures](#) unless you have additional information, because DFFH Child Protection notifies the Police of all reports that it receives that may involve a criminal offence.

#### 4.8 Confidentiality, Privacy and Liability Protections for Mandatory Reporters

4.8.1 For information about the legislative protections of and confidentiality obligations for Mandatory Reporters, refer to [Confidentiality and Privacy \(Child Safe\) Policy and Procedures](#).

### 5 Implementation

5.1.1 The School implements this Policy and its Procedures through:

- making them available to all Staff, via the **School's** Intranet
- including information about them in induction training and in ongoing refresher training for Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors
- making them available to parents/guardians, students and the wider School community in summary in the Child Safe Policy and Child Protection Reporting Obligations: Summary of the School's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, which are available on the School's public website as well as the School board portal, the Staff and Parent Intranet and by providing a hard copy by request.

### 6 Breach

6.1.1 If you breach this Policy and its Procedures, the School can investigate your conduct. You could face disciplinary action, such as (depending on the severity of the breach):

- attending remedial education
- attending counselling
- increased supervision
- restriction of duties
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.
- You could also face civil or criminal penalties.

### 7 Definitions

Definitions of particular terms used in this Policy and its Procedures can be found in **Child Safe Program Definitions and Definitions and Key Indicators of Abuse and Other Harm**.

Of particular relevance to this Policy and its Procedures are the following additional key definitions:

Term	Definition
Belief on reasonable grounds	<p>The concept of a "belief on reasonable grounds" (a reasonable belief) requires you to consider whether another person, when faced with similar information, would also draw the same conclusion. It is a low threshold.</p> <p>A reasonable belief does not require proof but does require more than a mere rumour or suspicion. You should ensure that your concerns are well founded and based on information from a reliable source.</p> <p>You may have a belief on reasonable grounds if:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you witness the physical or sexual abuse of a child</li> <li>• a child tells you that they have been physically or sexually abused</li> <li>• a child tells you that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused</li> <li>• someone who knows the child tells you that the child has been physically or sexually abused</li> <li>• a child shows physical or behavioural signs of being physically or sexually abused.</li> </ul>
<p>In the course of your professional work or when carrying out the duties of your office, position or employment</p>	<p>The CYF Act does say what this phrase means. It likely means that, for your Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection obligation to apply, your belief that the child is in need of protection due to physical injury or sexual abuse must arise as a result of your duties at or for the School. This includes duties that occur at School events that take place outside School grounds, such as sporting competitions, excursions and camps.</p> <p>Incidents or concerns that arise outside of these duties do not fall into Mandatory Reporting requirements. For example, if a teacher, while doing personal shopping outside school hours, witnesses a child being physically injured by their parent, the teacher would not commit an offence if they fail to report this to DFFH Child Protection. However, they can still make a Non-Mandatory Report to DFFH Child Protection.</p>
<p>In need of protection</p>	<p>When a child is “in need of protection” it means that the state should intervene in the life of the child and/or their family in order to protect the child from harm, regardless of whether or not the child or their family consent.</p> <p>The CYF Act sets out a number of grounds on which a child is considered to be in need of protection. However, your Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection obligation only applies if the child is in need of protection because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they have suffered, or are likely to suffer, “significant harm” as a result of physical injury and their “parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect,” them from harm of that type (for more information, refer to Physical Abuse and Physical Violence)</li> <li>• they have suffered, or are likely to suffer, “significant harm” as a result of sexual abuse and their “parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect,” them from harm of that type (for more information, refer to Sexual Abuse and Sexual Offences).</li> </ul> <p>The harm may be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or accumulate through a series of acts, omissions or circumstances.</p>
<p>Parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm</p>	<p>The CYF Act does not say what this phrase means, but some examples given by DFFH Child Protection may assist.</p> <p>A parent who has not protected or is unlikely to protect their child from harm includes a parent who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wants to protect their child from harm but lacks the means to</li> <li>• has the means to protect their child from harm but does not want to.</li> </ul> <p>A parent may be rendered unlikely to protect that child for many reasons. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the parent does not, or refuses to recognise that harm is occurring</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the parent or child may be subject to domestic violence</li> <li>the parent's partner may be abusive or harmful to the child.</li> </ul> <p>"Parent" includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the child's father</li> <li>the child's mother</li> <li>the spouse of the mother or father of the child</li> <li>the domestic partner of the father or mother of the child</li> <li>a person who has custody of the child</li> <li>a person who is named as the father on the child's birth certificate</li> <li>a person who acknowledges that he is the father of the child by an instrument under the Status of Children Act 1974 (Vic)</li> <li>a person in respect of whom a court has made a declaration or a finding or order that the person is the father of the child.</li> </ul>
Person in religious ministry	The CYF Act says that a "person in religious ministry" is "a person appointed, ordained or otherwise recognised as a religious or spiritual leader in a religious institution". This definition includes a chaplain, priest, pastor, minister, brother and nun.
Significant harm	<p>The CYF Act does not say what this phrase means. However, it has been defined in case law, and is defined in the <a href="#">Child Protection Manual</a>, as harm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is more than trivial or insignificant, but need not be as high as serious</li> <li>is important or of consequence to the child's development</li> <li>need not have a lasting or permanent effect, nor necessarily be treatable.</li> </ul> <p>Significant harm may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child's safety, welfare or wellbeing.</p> <p>In general, it would mean harm that is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by DFFH Child Protection irrespective of a family's consent.</p> <p>Significant harm can result from a single act or omission or an accumulation of these.</p>

## 8 Source of Obligation

This Policy and its Procedures help the School and its Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to meet obligations in:

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), section 184
- Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse, 2018
- Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standard 7
- Ministerial Order 1359, Clause 11

## 9 Related Policies

The following policies are available in Complispace which is accessible via the School Intranet, and by providing a hard copy by request.

- Complaints Management (Child Safe) Policy and Procedures
- Duty to Protect-Failure to Protect Policy and Procedures

- Managing Your Initial Response to a Child Safety Incident or Concern Policies and Procedures
- Non-Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Recognising and Responding to Sexual Behaviour in Children and Young People and Student Sexual Offending Policies and Procedures
- Record Keeping (Child Safe) Policy and Procedures
- Reportable Conduct Policies and Procedures
- Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally Policy and Procedures
- Reporting and Responding Obligations (Child Safe) Policy and Procedures
- Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching Policy and Procedures
- Reporting to Police Policies and Procedures

## 10 Related Documents

- Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, PROTECT Recording your actions: [Responding to suspected child abuse - A Template for Victorian Schools](#)
- Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, [PROTECT Responding to Suspected Student Sexual Offending: Template for all Victorian Schools](#)

## 11 References

- DFFH Child Protection, [Child Protection Manual](#)
- Department of Education, [Step-by-Step Guide to Making a Report to Child Protection or Child FIRST](#)
- DFFH Child Protection, Department of Education, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools [Protecting the Safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)
- DFFH Child Protection, Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection in Victoria – frequently asked questions
- Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, [PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse, 2018](#)
- Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, [PROTECT Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools, 2018](#)
- Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, [PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending, 2018](#)
- Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, , 2018

## 12 Authorisation

<b>School Document Name</b>	<b>Mandatory Reporting to DFFS Child Protection Policy and Procedures</b>	
<b>Required Approval Authority</b>	<b>Chair of the School Board</b>	
<b>Approval Signature</b>	Diana Taylor <b>Chair of the School Board Bacchus Marsh Grammar</b>	
<b>Administrator</b>	<b>Company Secretary</b>	Kerryn Browne
<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>25 February 2026</b>	
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	<b>25 February 2027</b>	To be reviewed annually

## 13 History

<b>Date</b>	<b>Amendment</b>
<b>25 February 2026</b>	1. New policy to replace the former Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection Policy

## 14 Appendix 1: DFFH Child Protection Contacts

You should contact child protection in the area in which the child lives if you have concerns that a child is at risk of significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

### Child Protection business hours: 8.45am - 5.00pm (Monday - Friday)

During business hours, ring the number covering the local government area (LGA) where the child lives. These numbers are effective from 13 November 2023).

Division	Contact Number	Areas and LGA's
North	1300 598 521	Banyule, Buloke, Darebin, Campaspe, Central Goldfield, Gannawarra, Greater Bendigo, Hume, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mildura, Moreland, Mount Alexander, Nillumbik, Swan Hill, Whittlesea, Yarra.
South	1300 555 526	Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Bayside, Cardinia, Casey, East Gippsland, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Latrobe, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip, South Gippsland, Stonnington, Wellington.
East	1300 360 452	Alpine, Benalla, Boroondara, Greater Shepparton, Indigo, Knox, Manningham, Mansfield, Maroondah, Mitchell, Moira, Monash, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, Whitehorse, Wodonga, Yarra Ranges.
West	1300 360 462	Ararat, Ballarat, Brimbank, Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Hepburn, Hobsons Bay, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Maribyrnong, Moorabool, Moyne, Melbourne, Melton, Moonee Valley, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Queenscliffe, Southern Grampians, Wyndham, Surf Coast, Warrnambool, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack.

### After hours Child Protection Emergency Service - 13 12 78

#### (5.00pm to 9.00am Monday - Friday, 24 hours on weekends and public holidays)

A state-wide after-hours emergency service that receives new reports, as well as concerns for existing child protection clients who are considered to be at immediate risk and require urgent after-hours service.

#### Interstate websites and contact numbers

Australian Capital Territory (ACT) - 1300 556 729

New South Wales (NSW) - 13 21 11

Northern Territory (NT) - 1800 700 250

Queensland (QLD) - 1800 811 810

South Australia (SA) - 13 14 78

Tasmania (TAS) - 1800 000 123

Western Australia (WA) - 1800 273 889