

### Identifying & Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools

Principals have primary responsibility for managing their school's response to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.

As outlined in the *Minimum Standards for a Child Safe Environment, Ministerial Order No. 870- Child Safe Standards- Managing the risk of child abuse in schools*, it is a requirement that the school leadership team support and empower staff to make a report by having clear policies and procedures about:

- who a staff member can seek advice from regarding if and who to report to
- what arrangements are in place to relieve staff while they are making or deciding to make a report as soon as practicable
- what strategies are in place to support staff through the process of making a report
- maintaining written records.

See [www.education.vic.gov.au/protect](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/protect) for further information.

### PRINCIPALS CHECKLIST

#### Fulfilling your role when an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse comes to your attention

If there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse concerning a student or staff member at your school, as a Principal, you are responsible for:

#### REPORTING AND RECORDING

- Ensuring that the **Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse** have been followed
- Ensuring that your staff complete the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template for all Victorian Schools**
- Undertaking the review process included within the template between 4-6 weeks after a report is made.

#### ON-GOING COMMUNICATION

Ongoing liaison/communication with:

- DHHS Child Protection and Victoria Police
- Regional Office and SIRU if engaged (Government schools)
- Diocese education office (Catholic schools)
- School Board (Independent schools)
- Parents/carers of all impacted students (where appropriate, following advice from authorities)

If an international student is impacted:

- Liaison with International Education Division (Government schools)
- Liaison with VRQA (Catholic and Independent schools in some instances)

If an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Student is impacted:

- Liaison with Koorie Education Officer (Government schools)
- Liaison with Diocese education office (Catholic schools)

If a staff member is implicated:

- Liaison with Victoria Police

- Ongoing communication and action as set out by the Employee Conduct Branch (Government schools)
- Ongoing communication and action as set out by Diocesan education office (Catholic schools)
- Ongoing communication with the School Board (Independent schools).

#### **PROVIDING ON-GOING SUPPORT**

**Overseeing the development of a short-term action plan for all children impacted by suspected abuse in consultation with:**

- The Region and the Student Incident and Recovery Unit (government schools)
- Diocese education office (Catholic schools)

**Ensuring ongoing education and support services are provided for all children involved via:**

- Formation of a Student Support Group
- Developing, implementing and reviewing a *Student Support Plan* in partnership with children and their parents/carers, allied health workers and external support agencies where appropriate (this plan should list appropriate school-level and non-school based supports and should assist students in returning to school)
- Addressing concerns as they arise

**Provision of school based wellbeing services**

- Continued monitoring of the situation and the health and wellbeing of impacted children and staff members
- Ensuring the provision of ongoing support for the children, families and staff members involved.