



KILBREDA COLLEGE



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Child Protection and Safety Policy



1. Values

Kilbreda College as part of Kildare Ministries is inspired by the transformative visions of the Christian story and our rich traditions. Our vision is a community where all people are valued, where all creation is recognised as sacred and where hope, justice and courage are our hallmarks.

2. Introduction

At Kilbreda College, as a Kildare Ministries school in the Brigidine Tradition there has been a long tradition of particular care for every student. We hold the integrity of each human person sacred and the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

‘The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ’s teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school’. (Congregation for Catholic education 1997, par. 9).

3. Purpose of the Policy

Kilbreda College is committed to being a Child Safe organisation and embedding a child safe culture into our practices and processes to ensure that all children that attend our school are safe at all times. Thus, the purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment and uphold Kilbreda College’s care, safety and wellbeing of all children at our school.

All children regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background have equal rights to protection from abuse. Kilbreda College is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to provide a safe environment for children with a disability.

Kilbreda College has zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children’s best interests and keeping them safe from harm. All staff employed by Kilbreda College are responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and to report information about suspected child abuse. The College regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance. This policy provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that students are kept safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our school environment, on campus, online and in other locations utilised by the school. It provides the framework for:

- The development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the College;
- The creation of a positive and robust child protection culture;
- The promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the College; and
- Complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria. This includes the specific requirements of the Victoria Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#).

4. Scope

This policy applies to all staff members, volunteers, students aged 18 years and over, Stewardship Council members, the School Parent Community, contractors and clergy.

5. Child Safe Principles

Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

The College's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

- All children deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- Our school works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.
- All children have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/guardians/caregivers.
- All adults in our school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm and abuse.
- The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of children are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people.
- Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation within the Church, governments, the police and human services agencies.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by school leadership.
- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

6. Definitions used in this policy

Child: A child is any person 17 years of age or younger. In the case of Kilbreda College, this definition is extended to include all students who are enrolled at the School, irrespective of their age.

Child abuse includes:

- a) Any act committed against a child involving:
 - A sexual offence
 - An offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)
- b) The infliction, on a child, of:
 - Physical violence
 - Serious emotional or psychological harm
- c) Serious neglect of a child. ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#))

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse. ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#))

Child neglect includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health and physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk. The failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing. ([Safe Schools Hub](#))

Child physical abuse: Generally, child physical abuse refers to the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviours include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. The fabrication or induction of an illness by a parent or carer (previously known as Munchausen syndrome by proxy) is also considered physically abusive behaviour. ([Safe Schools Hub](#))

Child protection: Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of harm. ([Safe Schools Hub](#))

Child sexual abuse: Any sexual activity between a child under the age of consent (16) and an adult or older person (i.e. a person five or more years older than the victim) is child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse can also be:

- Any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult in a position of power or authority over them (e.g. a teacher); the age of consent laws do not apply in such instances due to the strong imbalance of power that exists between young people and authority figures, as well as breaching of both personal and public trust that occurs when professional boundaries are violated.
- Any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult family member, regardless of issues of consent, equality or coercion.
- Sexual activity between peers that is non-consensual or involves the use of power or coercion.
- Non-consensual sexual activity between minors (e.g. a 14 year old and an 11 year old), or any sexual behaviour between a child and another child or adolescent who, due to their age or stage of

development, is in a position of power, trust or responsibility over the victim. Sexual activity between adolescents at a similar developmental level is not considered abuse. ([Safe Schools Hub](#))

Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or by witnessing family violence. ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#))

Grooming: When a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later date. It can include communication and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer. ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#))

Mandatory Reporting: The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. Mandated persons include teachers, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical practitioners. ([Safe Schools Hub](#))

Reasonable Belief: When staff are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief.' A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

School environment: Any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a) A campus of the school
- b) Online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- c) Other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events). ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#))

School staff: An individual working in a school environment who is:

- a) Directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- b) A volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person in an intermediary)
- c) A minister of religion. ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#))

7. Policy Commitment

All children enrolled at Kilbreda College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

Our commitment to our students

- a) We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in our school.
- b) We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- c) We commit to listening to children and young people and empowering them by taking their views seriously, and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- d) We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.

- e) We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
- f) We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.

Our commitment to parents and carers

- a) We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- b) We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child-safety practice, policies and procedures.
- c) We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.
- d) We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
- e) We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

Our commitment to our school staff (school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy)

- a) We commit to providing all Kilbreda College staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
- b) We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns.
- c) We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by Kilbreda College staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- d) We commit to providing opportunities for Kilbreda College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person.

8. Responsibilities and Organisational Arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering at Kilbreda College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#))

The school has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows:

8.1. Guide to Responsibilities of School Leadership

The principal, Kildare Ministries and school leaders at Kilbreda College recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety.

Responsibilities include:

- Creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe
- Upholding high principles and standards for all staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- Ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff
- Ensuring that school personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters

- Providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child and young people's protection and wellbeing
- Ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#).
- Ensuring the school takes specific action to protect children from abuse in line with the three new criminal offences introduced under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) and in line with the PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools.

8.2. Guide to Responsibilities of School Staff

Responsibilities of school staff (school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy) include:

- Treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- Following the legislative and internal school processes in the course of their work, if they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
- Providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- Undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people
- Assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- Following the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

8.3. Organisational Arrangements

Kilbreda College enacts this commitment to child safety through:

- Appointment of Child Safety Officers. All allegations or evidence will be directed to them as outlined in the **Kilbreda College's Responding to Allegations of Abuse Policy**. (*Appendix 1*)
- A budget allocation to enable regular training and education in order to understand the responsibilities of all staff in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people.
- Participation in the diocesan child protection professional development sessions.
- The use of school website and newsletter to remind and to keep parents and carers informed of child safety commitments, procedures and arrangements.

9. Expectations of our School Staff – Child Safety Code of Conduct

At Kilbreda College, we expect school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to proactively ensure the safety of students at all times and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any child at the school. All school staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and to comply with all requirements. Each year, staff are expected to complete the Policy Plus online modules relating to Child Safety and the Department of Education and Training's online eLearning mandatory reporting module as per their Victorian Institute for Teaching (VIT) registration requirements.

Kilbreda College has developed a **Child Safe Code of Conduct form** (*Appendix 2*), which recognises the critical role that school staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect. Our Code also protects school staff through clarification of acceptable

and unacceptable behaviour. Each year, staff must complete the Child Safety Code of Conduct and submit it to the Assistant to the Principal.

10. Student Safety and Participation

At Kilbreda College, we actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them.

We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

11. Reporting and Responding

Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Our school complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.), the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and the recommendations of the [Betrayal of Trust](#) report.

Child protection reporting obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements.

Kilbreda College's Responding to Allegations of Abuse Policy (*Appendix 1*), updated on 15 May 2019, sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child at our school is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

Our policy assists staff, volunteers and families to:

- Identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- Understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- Make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- Comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

Any school staff member who believes on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of:

- Protection from physical harm or sexual abuse – **must** report their concerns to Child Safety Officer within the College and DHHS Child Protection.
- Protection from harm that is not believed to involve physical harm or sexual abuse – are encouraged to report their concerns to Child Safety Officer within the College and DHHS Child Protection.
- Protection from the predatory conduct of grooming – **must** report their concerns to Child Protection Officers with the College and the police.
- Therapeutic treatment – are encouraged to report their concerns to Child Protection Officers within the College and DHHS Child Protection or Child First / The Orange Door.

Kilbreda College has also established internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student. At Kilbreda College, the Assistant Principal: Wellbeing and Engagement and College Counsellors serve as the Child Safety Officers and are a point of contact for those who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of child abuse. They have specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or students in relation to child safety.

Kilbreda College has formal avenues for complaints and disclosure processes, which are outlined and detailed in the following policies and procedures:

- Kilbreda College Privacy Policy
- Kilbreda College Complaints Handling Procedure
- Kilbreda College Staff and Student Professional Boundaries

12. Screening and Recruitment of School Staff

Kilbreda College will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy.

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- Confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- Obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- Verify the applicant's history of work involving children
- Obtain references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children.

Kilbreda College will monitor and assess the continuing suitability of school staff to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

13. Risk Management

At Kilbreda College, we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

We enact this commitment through:

- The establishment of a Child Safety Team.
- The development and ongoing review of the school's risk register including controls, actions and monitoring.
- Incident management.
- Risk assessments.
- Review of policies and procedures.

14. Child Safety – Education and Training for School Staff

Kilbreda College provides employees, volunteers and clergy with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters. This includes induction, ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

Staff Induction specifically includes:

- Familiarisation with this Child Safety Policy and its many implications.
- Familiarisation with and a signed commitment to the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Training about child protection reporting obligations, protocols for receiving/recording complaints.
- Training and familiarisation around the school's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety.

Staff Professional Learning provides opportunities for staff (and where appropriate, volunteers) to:

- Maintain, develop and improve skills and capabilities around child safety, including relevant legislative requirements.
- Develop understanding of the risk of harm to children; the different types of harm; and how to identify grooming and abuse.
- Understand and build confidence around their reporting obligations.
- Complete the annual online mandatory reporting module.

15. Relevant Legislation

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.)
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:

Failure to disclose offence: Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

Failure to protect offence: The offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Grooming offence: This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

16. Related Policies

16.1. Catholic Education Office Melbourne Policies

- [Policy 2.19: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#)
- [Policy 2.19a: School Guidelines – Police and DHHS Interview Protocols](#)
- [Policy 2.20: Complaints Policy](#)
- [Policy 2.26: Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools](#)
- CEM Guidelines for Behaviour Support
- [CECV Whole School Approaches to Supporting Positive Behaviour](#)

16.2. School Policies

- Child Protection – Reporting Obligations
- Staff and Student Professional Boundaries
- Cyber safety Policy
- Information and Communication Technology Policy
- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy
- Contractor Management Policy
- Visitor Management Policy

- Volunteer Management Policy
- Pastoral Wellbeing in Kildare Education Ministries School Policy
- Kildare Education Ministries Employment Policy
- Complaints Handling Procedure

17. Breach of this Policy

Where an **employee** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, Kildare College may start the process under clause 13 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013* (VCEMEA) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the **principal** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact Kildare Education Ministries.

Where any **other member of the school community** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the school is to take appropriate action, including in accordance with: *Child Safety – Reporting Obligations; Complaints Handling Procedure* and/or contact Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

18. Review of this Child Safety Policy

At Kildare College we are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices. We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

We will maintain a history of updates to the policy.

History of Updates to Policy

| Date | Comment (e.g. major review, minor review) |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July 2016 | Original policy created, approved by Leadership, communicated to all staff and published. |
| May 2019 | Major review of policy conducted by Assistant Principal: Wellbeing and Engagement and updates made |

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|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Responsibility (Monitor and implement) | Kildare College Leadership Team |
| This version: | May 2019 |
| Ratified by: | Kildare College Stewardship Council |
| Signed by: | Nicole Mangelsdorf Principal |
| Date: | 17 October 2019 |
| Last amended | 18 June 2019 |
| Next review | 2022 |



KILBREDA COLLEGE

Child Protection Reporting Obligations Policy



KILBREDA COLLEGE



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Child Protection – Reporting Obligations Policy



1. Values

Kilbreda College as part of Kildare Ministries is inspired by the transformative visions of the Christian story and our rich traditions. Our vision is a community where all people are valued, where all creation is recognised as sacred and where hope, justice and courage are our hallmarks.

2. Introduction

At Kilbreda College, as a Kildare Ministries school in the Brigidine Tradition there has been a long tradition of particular care for every student. We hold the integrity of each human person sacred and the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

‘The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ’s teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school’. (Congregation for Catholic education 1997, par. 9).

Protection for children and young people is based upon the belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God and that the inherent dignity of all should be recognised and fostered.

Catholic schools are entrusted with the holistic education of the child, in partnership with parents and carers who are the primary educators of their children. Catholic school staff therefore have a duty of care to students by taking reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which they can reasonably foresee would be likely to result in harm or injury to the student and to work for the positive wellbeing of the child.

Under the [National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020](#), protecting children is everyone’s responsibility – parents, communities, governments and business all have a role to play. In Victoria, a joint protocol, [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#), involving the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection, the Department of Education and Training (DET), the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) and licensed children’s services, exists to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. DET has also produced [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) and [Protect: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#), both of which are referred to in the joint protocol. All teachers, other staff, parish priests, canonical and religious order administrators of Catholic schools within Victoria must understand and abide by the professional, moral and legal obligations to implement child protection and child safety policies, protocols and practices.

3. Rationale

Ministerial Order No. 870: *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools* was made under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.) and sets out the specific actions that all Victorian schools, including Kilbreda College must take to meet the requirements in the Child Safe Standards for registration.

This policy is designed to enable Kilbreda College to comply with Standard 5 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards: processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse, as well as the school-specific requirements for procedures for responding to allegations of suspected abuse in Ministerial Order No. 870. All procedures for reporting and responding to an incident of child abuse are designed and implemented by taking into account the diverse characteristics of school communities.

Actions required under the relevant legislation and regulatory guidance when there is a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed are set out in this policy. It also provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

This policy assists school staff (which includes volunteers, contractors, other service providers and religious leaders including clergy) to:

- Identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- Understand how a ‘suspicion’ or ‘reasonable belief’ is formed
- Where possible, refer to the principles of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities as best practice in respecting and protecting the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of members of the school community
- Make a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- Comply with obligations under the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law
- Comply with legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all staff members, volunteers, students aged 18 years and over, Stewardship Council members, the School Parent Community, contractors and clergy.

5. Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

Kilbreda College must comply with the legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.), the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.), the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.), the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.) and the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic.).

The *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) introduced the seven Victorian Child Safe Standards, which aim to create a culture where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice. The Child Safe Standards were introduced in response to recommendations made by the [Betrayal of Trust](#) report.

Child protection reporting obligations for Kilbreda College fall under five separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements:

- The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.)
- The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.)
- The *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)
- The *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic.)
- The *Wrongs Act 1958* (Vic.)

These legislative obligations exist in addition to moral and duty of care obligations, which require school community members to protect any child under their care and supervision from foreseeable harm.

6. Definitions and Obligations

6.1 Types of Child Abuse and Indicators of Harm

Child abuse can take many forms. The perpetrator may be a parent, carer, school staff member, volunteer, another adult or even another child. The nature of child abuse is complex. The abuse may occur over time and potential risk indicators are often difficult to detect. Therefore, the legal obligations for reporting allegations of child abuse can vary depending on the circumstances of the incident.

Child abuse is defined in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) to include:

- Sexual offences
- Grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)
- Physical violence
- Serious emotional or psychological harm
- Serious neglect.

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sexual Offences | A sexual offence occurs when a person involves a child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to the child's age and development. <i>The Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic.) governs sexual offences. Sexual abuse can involve a wide range of sexual activity and may include fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exploitation through pornography or prostitution. |
| Grooming | Grooming refers to predatory conduct undertaken by an adult (18 years or over) to prepare a child for sexual activity later. It is a sexual offence under section 49M of the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic.) carrying a maximum 10 year term of imprisonment. Under section 49M, the adult's words or conduct must be intended to facilitate the child engaging or being involved in the commission of, or attempt to commit, a sexual offence by the adult or another adult. |
| Physical Violence | Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways including beating, shaking, burning or using weapons (such as belts and paddles). Physical harm may also be caused during student fights. |
| Serious emotional or psychological harm | Serious emotional or psychological abuse may occur when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats or the witnessing of family violence. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological harm could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours. |
| Serious neglect | Neglect includes a failure to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision. Significant neglect causes harm to a child that is more than trivial or temporary. Serious neglect is when the child is exposed to an extremely dangerous or life-threatening situation and there is a continued failure to provide a child with the necessities of life. |
| Family violence | Family violence is defined under the <i>Family Violence Protection Act 2008</i> (Vic.) to include behaviour that cause a child to hear, witness or be exposed to the effects of family violence such as abusive, threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour. While family violence does not form part of the official definition of 'child abuse' in the <i>child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic.), the impact of family violence on a child can be a form of child abuse, for example, where it causes serious emotional or psychological harm to a child. A child can also be a direct victim of family violence. |

Child abuse can have a significant effect on a child's physical, social, psychological or emotional health, development and wellbeing. The younger the child, the more vulnerable they are to abuse and the more serious the consequences are likely to be.

There can be physical or behavioural indicators of child abuse and neglect, or a combination of both. While the presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not necessarily prove that abuse or neglect has occurred, the repeated occurrence of either a physical or behavioural indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert school staff to the possibility of child abuse or neglect.

Child sexual abuse is more commonly perpetrated by someone who is known to and trusted by the child, and is also often someone highly trusted within their families, communities, school and/or other institutions, such as the Church.

For further definitions of all types of child abuse, a comprehensive list of the indicators of harm and advice on identifying perpetrators of child sexual abuse, refer to the protocol [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

6.2 Sources of Child Protection Reporting Obligations

6.2.1 Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)

Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting is a legal requirement under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.) to protect children from harm relating to physical injury and sexual abuse. A child, for the purpose of the relevant parts of this Act, is any person **17 years** of age or younger. The principal, teachers, medical practitioners and nurses are mandatory reporters under this Act.

If, in the course of carrying out their duties, a mandatory reporter forms a **reasonable belief** that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, and that the **child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child**, they must report that belief to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, including the information prescribed in [Protect: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#), as soon as possible after forming the belief.

A subsequent report must be made on each occasion on which the mandatory reporter becomes aware of further reasonable grounds for the belief and even if the reporter knows that another report has been made concerning the same child and suspected abuse.

The threshold for reporting child protection incidents, disclosures, concerns or suspicions has been set deliberately low by the joint protocol [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#). This protocol focuses on [Four Critical Actions](#) (refer to **Appendix 1**) that all school staff must take if they form a suspicion or reasonable belief that child abuse has occurred, or that a child is at risk of suffering abuse.

Reasonable belief

Where school staff members are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. If a staff member has witnessed potentially abusive behaviour, has a suspicion or has received a disclosure of child abuse, they must determine whether these observations or receipt of such information have caused the staff member to form a 'reasonable belief.'

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than rumour or speculation. **A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.**

A reasonable belief might be formed if:

- A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused.
- Any person tells you that they believe someone has been abused; this may include a child who is talking about themselves
- You observe physical or behavioural indicators of abuse, as described in [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- A child or young person exhibits sexually abusive or age-inappropriate behaviour(s)
- Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development cause you to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused.

While any indicators of possible child abuse or neglect are concerning, it is important to understand that the presence of a number of indicators that suggest either physical or sexual abuse of a child may be sufficient to form a reasonable belief in a mandatory reporter's mind which **must** be reported.

6.2.2 Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)

Reportable conduct

The Reportable Conduct Scheme was created under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)* and requires schools to notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) if an allegation of reportable conduct (a reportable allegation) is made against one of their employees.

Employees can include a principal, teacher, staff member, member of stewardship council, contractor, volunteer, allied health staff member or religious leader.

Reportable conduct is defined under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)* to mean a sexual offence, sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child, behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child, or significant neglect of a child.

A **reportable allegation** means any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that an employee has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, whether or not the conduct or misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person's employment.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme imposes obligations on the head of entity (governing authority). For Catholic Education Melbourne schools, the head of entity (governing authority) is required to:

- Have in place systems to prevent reportable conduct and, if reportable conduct is alleged, to ensure allegations can be brought to the attention of appropriate persons for investigation and response
- Ensure that the CCYP is notified and given updates on the organisation's response to an allegation by contact the Employee Relations unit on (03) 9267 0431 or by email on ceoir@cem.edu.au
- Report to Victoria Police as soon as they become aware that a reportable allegation may involve suspected child abuse or criminal conduct.

Reportable conduct may also include historical reportable allegations. More guidance can be found at *Reportable Conduct Scheme – Historical allegations*.

All school staff are required to notify the principal or, if the principal is involved in the allegation, the Leadership Team if they have a reportable allegation. The principal or a member of the Leadership Team (as applicable) must notify the Employee Relations unit of the allegation of reportable conduct as soon as possible.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme does not change mandatory reporting or other reporting obligations, including internal reporting and reporting criminal behaviour to Victorian Police. Reportable conduct reporting should be done in addition to these other reporting obligations.

For further support and advice regarding reporting conduct in Catholic schools under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, contact the Employee Relations unit on (03) 9267 0431 or by email on ceoir@cem.edu.au.

6.2.3 Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)

In response to the *Betrayal of Trust* report, three new criminal offences have been introduced under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.):

- **Failure to disclose offence**, which requires adults to report to Victoria Police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child.
- **Failure to protect offence**, which applies to people in positions of authority within organisations, who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and failed to reduce or remove the risk.
- **Grooming offence**, which targets communication with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.

Failure to disclose

Any school staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to Victoria Police.

Failure to disclose the information to Victoria Police is a criminal offence under section 327 of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and applies to **all adults (18 years and over)** in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children.

The obligation is to disclose that information to Victoria Police as soon as it is practicable to do so, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.

Refer to Appendix 2 for more information on when to report a concern that a child or young person has been sexually abused, or is in need of protection from sexual abuse.

For further information about the failure to disclose offence, see the Department of Justice and Community Safety's '[Failure to disclose offence](#)' webpage and [Betrayal of Trust: Factsheet](#).

Grooming

The offence of grooming prohibits predatory conduct designed to prepare or 'groom' a child for future sexual activity and is contained in section 49M(1) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.). The offence applies to communication with children **under 16 years**.

Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails. The offence can be committed by any person aged 18 years or over. It does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.

For further information about the grooming offence, see the Department of Justice and Community Safety's '[Grooming offence](#)' webpage and [Betrayal of Trust: Factsheet](#).

For more information about managing and responding to the risk of abuse, see DET's '[Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)' and '[Risk Management](#)' webpages.

6.2.4 Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.) – Child Safety Obligations

From a child safety perspective, the key functions of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.) are to:

- Require schools to notify the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) when a school has taken action against a teacher
- Ensure compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards as a requirement of registration for all Victorian schools.

A registered school must ensure that the care, safety and welfare of all students attending the school are in accordance with all applicable Victorian and Commonwealth laws, and that all staff employed at the school are advised of their obligations to child safety.

6.2.5 Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic.) And Duty of Care

Organisational duty of care

The *Wrongs Act 1958* (Vic.) creates an organisational liability for child abuse for organisations that exercise care, supervision or authority over children. This is colloquially referred to as an ‘organisational duty of care.’

Schools owe a duty to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse (sexual or physical) of a child (under 18) by an individual associated with the school while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the school.

Individuals associated with the school can include employees, volunteers, office holders, contractors, ministers or religion and religious leaders.

Reasonable precautions that a school could take are not defined in the *Wrongs Act 1958* (Vic.) but, as examples, the following measures are what courts have previously considered to be reasonable precautions in the context of organisational child abuse:

- Conducting employment screening and reference checking
- Providing supervision and training
- Implementing systems to provide early warning of possible offences
- Performing random and unannounced inspections to deter misconduct
- Encouraging children and adults to notify authorities or parents about any signs of aberrant or unusual behaviour.

School staff duty of care

School staff have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children and young people under their care and supervision from harm that is reasonably foreseeable (this duty applies to all school staff). The question of what constitutes reasonable steps will depend on the individual circumstances of each case.

A staff member may breach their duty of care towards a student if they fail to act in the way a reasonable or diligent professional would have acted in the same situation.

For more information on the scope of staff duty of care obligations and examples of reasonable steps they can take in relation to suspected child abuse, refer to the protocol [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

6.2.6 Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

While Victorian Catholic schools are not bound by the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic.), the following principle should be noted:

School staff are required to respond to suspected child abuse with proper consideration for human rights, and, when making decisions and taking actions in response to suspected child abuse, to act compatibility with human rights. This means that school staff should take into account the right to protection without discrimination, the right to protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and the right to privacy when responding to suspected child abuse.

7. Procedures – Responding to and Reporting Child Protection Concerns

Kilbreda College has a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing environments where children and young people are respected, and their voices heard, and where they are safe and feel safe.

Every person involved in Kilbreda College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they have individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people are at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

It is Catholic Education Melbourne’s policy that all schools display the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) diagram in staff rooms and other strategic areas of the school to ensure all school staff are aware of the actions to take as soon as they witness a child protection incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable suspicion or belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being, abused.

The approach to responding and reporting child protection concerns in the joint protocol incorporates the [Four Critical Actions for Schools \(Appendix 1\)](#). A school staff member must act, and follow the *Four Critical Actions*, as soon as they become aware of a child protection incident, that is when **a child is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, abuse**.

At Kilbreda College, a staff member who has concerns about a child’s safety can expect to be supported and informed in responding to their concerns for a child. This support may be to ascertain whether further steps should be taken, to guide the concerned staff member in the reporting process and to support the staff member’s wellbeing. The first step a staff member should take if they are concerned for a child’s safety is to inform one of the following:

- Assistant Principal: Wellbeing and Engagement
- College Counsellor
- Student Wellbeing Leader

Should the incident occur out of school hours and the risk to the child is imminent, the report should be made as described in Appendix 1, and the appropriate Kilbreda College staff member contacted as soon as practicable.

7.1 Becoming Aware of a Child Protection Incident

There are four main ways in which a school staff member may become aware that a child is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, abuse:

1. Witnessing an incident:

If you witness an incident where you believe a child has been subjected to, or may be at risk of, abuse, including exposure to family violence, you must first take immediate action to protect the safety of the child or children involved and then refer to [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

2. Forming a suspicion or reasonable belief:

All suspicions that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being, abused must be taken seriously, including suspicions that the abuse is taking or may take place outside school grounds or areas. If your suspicion develops into a reasonable belief, you must act and refer to [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

3. Receiving a disclosure about or from a current student:

All disclosures must be treated seriously. You should immediately refer to [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

4. Receiving a disclosure about or from a former student:

If you receive a disclosure from a former student about historical abuse, you must act. If the former student is currently of school age and attending a Victorian school, you must immediately refer to [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#). If the former student is no longer of school age or attending a Victorian school, you must still report the disclosure to [DHHS Child Protection](#).

Notes and Records

School staff members are to keep clear and comprehensive notes relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse using [Protect: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#).

Even if a school staff member decides not to make a report, they must still accurately document their notes relating to the incident, disclosure or allegation of child abuse using [Protect: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#).

Notes and records must be kept securely on school grounds and must not be destroyed as they may be needed later.

Disclosures

It is the role of school staff members to reassure and support a child or young person who makes a disclosure of abuse. However, school staff members should never promise to keep any disclosures confidential as all disclosures of abuse must be reported.

The role of school staff remains the same if disclosures are made by a parent/carer or a sibling, or if disclosures involve family violence.

For strategies on how to manage a disclosure, refer to [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

7.2 The Four Critical Actions

There are *Four Critical Actions* which must be taken when responding to and reporting a child protection incident, disclosure or suspicion:

1. Responding to an Emergency
2. Reporting to Authorities
3. Contacting Parents/Carers
4. Providing Ongoing Support.

Critical Action 1: Responding to an Emergency

The first step is only applicable if a child has **just been abused** or is at risk of **immediate harm**. If this is not the case, go straight to **Critical Action 2: Reporting to Authorities**.

If the child has **just been abused or is at risk of immediate harm**, you must take reasonable steps to protect the child, including:

- Separating the alleged victim and others involved, ensuring that if the parties involved are all present at the school, they are supervised separately by a school staff member.
- Arranging and providing urgent medical assistance where necessary, including administering first aid or calling 000 for an ambulance.
- Calling 000 for urgent police assistance if the person who is alleged to have engaged in the abuse poses an immediate risk to the health and safety of any person.

If the child protection incident has occurred at the school, school staff should also ensure that reasonable steps are taken to preserve the environment, the clothing and other items and to prevent any potential witnesses (including school staff members, volunteers and contractors) from discussing the incident until Victorian Police or relevant authorities are on the premises.

Critical Action 2: Reporting to Authorities

All forms and instances of suspected or alleged child abuse must be reported to the appropriate authority.

Once immediate health and safety concerns have been addressed, the school staff member must take steps to report the incident, suspicion or disclosure of child abuse as soon as practicable. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence (refer to [Failure to disclose](#)).

There are different reporting procedures depending on:

- Whether the source of the suspected or alleged abuse comes from within the school or within the family or community of the child
- The type of abuse.

In all cases, school staff members must report internally to the Child Protection Officers.

Additionally:

- Where the source of the abuse comes from within the school, that is, the suspected or alleged abuse involves a school staff member, volunteer, allied health professional, contractor or visitor at the school, it must be reported to Victoria Police.
- Where the suspicion, belief or disclosure relates to sexual abuse or grooming. It must be reported to Victoria Police.
- Where the source of abuse comes from within the family or community and is not sexual abuse or grooming, it must be reported to DHHS Child Protection.

DHHS and DET have deliberately set a low threshold for the formation of a ‘reasonable belief.’ For more information, refer to the [Reasonable belief](#) section of this policy.

The [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) requires all school staff to report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of abuse as soon as possible to the relevant authorities.

How to make a Mandatory Report

The table below describes the information to include when making a **mandatory report** about child abuse or child protection concerns. If a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact Victoria Police immediately.

| Making a Mandatory Report | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Step | Description |
| 1. Keep Notes | <p>Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour) • The source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person) • The actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with the College Counsellor, report to DHHS Child Protection, etc.). |
| 2. Discuss Concerns | <p>Due to the complexity of child abuse incidents, disclosures and suspicions, it is recommended that concerns and observations regarding suspected physical or sexual abuse of a child are discussed with the Principal or a Child Protection Officer and/or Catholic Education Melbourne’s Student Wellbeing Information Lion.</p> <p>This is not a legal requirement; however, it will help to ensure support is provided to all involved in matters of this nature. The confidentiality of these discussions must be maintained.</p> <p>You should then make your own assessment about whether you are required to make a report about the child or young person and to whom the report should be made.</p> <p>It is important to remember that the duty to report abuse or suspicions of abuse exists even if the Principal, Child Protection Officers or a representative of Catholic Education Melbourne advises you not to proceed with reporting suspected abuse.</p> |
| 3. Gather & Document Information | <p>Gather the relevant information necessary to make the report. This should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full name, date of birth and residential address of the child or young person • Details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns • Your involvement with the child or young person • Details of any other agencies, which may be involved with the child or young person. <p>This information should be collected and documented using Protect: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools. The template is to be used to record as much information as possible to provide when you make your report to either Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection.</p> <p>It is critical that completing the template does not impact on reporting times – if a child is in immediate danger, school staff need to report the matter to Victoria Police immediately.</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>4. Make the Report</p> | <p>To report concerns, which are life-threatening, phone 000 or the local police station.</p> <p>Where the source of the abuse comes from within the school, that is, the suspected or alleged abuse involves a school staff member, volunteer, allied health practitioner, contractor or visitor at the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Victoria Police, who will contact DHHS Child Protection when appropriate • Report internally to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Principal or a Child Protection Officer if the principal is involved in the allegation ○ Catholic Education Melbourne’s Student Wellbeing Information Line (9267 0228). <p>Where the source of the suspected or alleged abuse comes from within the child’s family or community, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report sexual abuse and grooming to Victoria Police • Report the matter to <u>DHHS Child Protection</u> if you consider the child to be in need of protection due to child abuse, or that they have been, are being or are at risk of being harmed due to any form of abuse, including family violence. If after hours, call the Child Protection Emergency Service on 13 12 78 • Report internally to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Principal or a Child Protection Officer ○ Catholic Education Melbourne’s Student Wellbeing Information Line (9267 0228). |
| <p>5. Document Written Records of Report</p> | <p>Make a written record of the report, including the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported • The name and position of the person who made the report and the person who received the report. <p>The information initially recorded in <i>Protect: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools</i> and any additional information provided to either Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection are to be stored securely and maintained indefinitely by the school to ensure that records are accessible upon request by external authorities investigating the matter.</p> |
| <p>6. Additional steps for overseas students</p> | <p>Where a child protection incident, disclosure or suspicion involves an international student at the school and Kilbreda College has issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter for that student (thereby assuming responsibility for the child’s accommodation, support and general welfare), the school will also need to contact the VRQA.</p> |

How to Report Allegations of Reportable Conduct

The table below describes the information to include when making **an allegation of reportable conduct** about an employee (persons engaged by the entity such as volunteers, contractors, office holders, stewardship council members and officers of a religious body) at the school. The Reportable Conduct Scheme is in addition to a school staff member's mandatory reporting or criminal reporting obligations.

Any allegations of criminal conduct, including physical violence, significant emotional or psychological abuse, sexual offences and significant neglect must be reported to Victoria Police as the priority. However, school staff members may find they also need to make an allegation of reportable conduct for the same incident.

For further support and advice regarding reporting conduct in Catholic schools under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, contact the Employee Relations unit on (03) 9267 0431 or by email on ceoir@cem.edu.au.

| Making an Allegation of Reportable Conduct | |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Step | Description |
| 1. Keep Notes | <p>Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour) • The source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person) • Any actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with the principal, report to DHHS Child Protection, etc.). |
| 2. Make the Report | <p>As soon as you form a reasonable belief that an employee (persons engaged by the entity such as volunteers, contractors, office holders, stewardship council members and officers of a religious body) at the school has engaged in reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct you must report this allegation to the College Principal or, if the Principal is involved in the allegation, the Leadership Team who will notify the Employee Relations unit at Catholic Education Melbourne on (03) 9267 0431 or by email on ceoir@cem.edu.au</p> |

What should a Principal do about a reportable allegation?

Below are the steps that a principal should take if there is a potential reportable allegation. These steps are in *general* order of priority, but the guidance may change depending on the circumstances.

| What if a student or another child informs you of a reportable allegation? | What if a staff member of another adult informs you of a reportable allegation? |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. The first step should always be to ensure the student/child is safe. If you believe a child faces immediate danger or risk of harm, contact Victoria Police on 000. | |
| 2. When speaking with a child or young person, it is important to remember that if they have decided to speak to you, then there is a good chance that they trust you. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the child or young person your full attention. | 2. Thank the individual for bringing the allegation to your attention. Offer them support and assistance as necessary. If they are a staff member, refer them to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), where available. |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen calmly and empathically. • Reassure the child or young person that it is right to tell. • Accept the child or young person will disclose only what they are comfortable disclosing and recognise the bravery/strength of the child for talking about something that is difficult. • Let the child or young person take their time. • Let the child or young person use their own words. • Do not make promises you cannot keep. | |
| <p>3. Tell the child or young person what you plan to do next.</p> | <p>3. Explain to the person making the report that the school will manage the concern confidentially and, to protect all parties, they should not discuss the matter.</p> |
| <p>4. Take a moment to make a record of the allegations. If appropriate, use Protect: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools. You may also make a note in your diary. If a staff member, parent or other adult was present, ask them to make a record as well.</p> | |
| <p>5. Consider whether you need to refer the matter to Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection. If necessary, report the matter in accordance with the actions documented in <i>Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools</i> and <i>Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse</i>, using <i>Protect: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools</i>.</p> | |
| <p>6. If relevant, notify the child's parents following advice in <i>Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools</i> and <i>Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse</i>.</p> | |
| <p>7. As soon as practicable, contact the Employee Relations unit for advice (including guidance as to whether the alleged conduct is reportable), support and assistance to discuss the circumstances, and notify the head of entity.</p> | |
| <p>8. If the matter does involve a reportable allegation, the Employee Relations unit will notify the CCYP with authorisation from the school's head of entity.</p> | |
| <p>9. Conduct a risk assessment (with the assistance of Employee Relations unit resources) to determine any measures that should be put in place to manage the person against whom allegations have been made, and to protect the student(s)/child(ren) against whom reportable conduct may have occurred.</p> | |

If you think, you have a reportable allegation, it is important that you:

- Do not say or do anything to suggest to the student that you doubt them or make them feel ashamed to have revealed the allegation.
- Do not start investigating the allegation, including unnecessarily questioning the student or speaking with the person who is the subject of the allegation, without conducting a risk assessment; otherwise, you may be putting the student, the staff member, the school or the investigation at risk.

Child FIRST/ The Orange Door

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, including family violence, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing (e.g. risk-taking behaviour, parenting difficulties, isolation from family or lack of support), **you must still act**. This may include making a referral to or seeking advice from Child FIRST/The Orange Door.

Child FIRST/The Orange Door is a family information, referral and support team run by a registered community service in a local area that can receive confidential referrals about a child of concern. It does not have any statutory powers to protect a child but can refer matters to relevant services.

You should make a report to Child FIRST/The Orange Door if:

- You have a significant concern for a child's wellbeing
- Your concerns are about circumstances that have a low-to-moderate impact on the child
- The child's immediate safety is not compromised
- You and the school have discussed the referral to Child FIRST/The Orange Door with the child's parents/carers, and all parties are supportive of this decision.

Where you believe that the child's parents/carers will not be supportive of the referral, or the child is partaking in any risk-taking activity that is illegal and extreme in nature or poses a high risk to the child or others, you may refer the matter to DHHS Child Protection.

If you are unsure of what action to take in response to your concerns about a child, speak to the principal or a member of the school's Leadership Team, or contact DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST/The Orange Door for further advice.

For more information, refer to [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

Making Additional Reports

After you have made a report, you may continue to suspect that a child is at risk and in need of protection. Any further observations should continue to be recorded and a report made on each separate occasion where a belief has been formed – on reasonable grounds – that a child is likely to be at risk and in need of protection. Additional reports should use the same format outlined above in this policy at Critical Action 2: Reporting to Authorities.

If there is any suspicion that this relates to a sexual offence involving a person over 18 and a child under 16, then it must be reported to Victoria Police. For more information, refer to the [Failure to disclose](#) section of this policy.

Where a school staff member is aware that another school staff member has formed a reasonable belief about the same child on the same occasion, or based on the same indicators of abuse, and has made a report to the appropriate authority, the first school staff member need not make a further report.

However, if the first school staff member has formed a reasonable belief of abuse or significant risk of abuse to the child based on different observations, further indicators or additional information, a further report must be made to the appropriate authority detailing this additional information.

Critical Action 2: Reporting to Authorities

Critical Action 3: Contacting Parents/Carers

Where it is suspected that a child at Kilbreda College has been or is at risk of being abused, it is critical that parents/carers of the child are notified as soon as practicable after a report is made to the authorities.

The school must always seek advice from Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection to ensure that it is appropriate to contact the parents/carers.

In circumstances of family violence, schools should:

- Take care not to inadvertently alert the alleged perpetrator by notifying parents/carers as it could increase risk of harm to the child, other family members or school staff
- Seek advice from DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST/The Orange Door before alerting parents/carers about safe strategies for communicating with a parent/carer who is experiencing family violence and on recommending family violence support services.

Advice from **Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection** will depend on a number of factors, including whether:

- The parents/carers of the child are alleged to have engaged in the abuse (including in circumstances of suspected family violence)
- A disclosure to the parents/carers may result in further abuse to the child
- The child is a mature minor (at least 17 years of age and assessed to be sufficiently mature and intelligent to make decisions for themselves) and has requested that their parents/carers not be notified – the school should insist that another responsible adult is notified in lieu of the parents/carers
- The notification of parents/carers would adversely affect an investigation of the matter by external authorities.

Where the suspicion of abuse or risk of abuse has not yet warranted a reasonable belief, parents/carers should also be notified promptly after the school has carefully considered the factors listed above.

In some circumstances, a child may have returned to the care of their parent/carer before advice has been received from Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection. In these circumstances, a school should not share any information with the parent/carer which may place the child or any other person at risk, or where the child is a mature minor.

For detailed guidance on how to have this conversation with a parent or carer, refer to [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

Critical Action 4: Providing Ongoing Support

School staff members who witness a child protection incident, receive a disclosure or develop a suspicion of child abuse (including exposure to family violence) have a critical role to play in supporting students impacted by the child protection matter to ensure that they feel supported and safe at the school. Schools also play a critical role in building students' resilience and protective factors, which can reduce the long-term impacts of child abuse by providing them with the opportunity to be supported and heard by a school staff member they trust.

Support provided to students at the school includes:

- Regularly communicating with the student and their parents/carers where appropriate

- Convening a Student Support Group of school wellbeing staff and teachers to plan, support and monitor affected students
- Developing Student Support Plans for students impacted by the incident to ensure appropriate levels of care and support are provided depending on their involvement.

You should contact Catholic Education Melbourne’s Student Wellbeing Information Line (9267 0228) for a description of the range of school-based support services that may be available, including SAFEMinds and referrals to family violence services, Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA) or headspace.

Where external authorities are investigating a report of abuse or risk of abuse, it is the role of the Principal to ensure that students are supported throughout interviews at the school. For more information on this topic, refer to [School Guidelines 2.19a: Police and DHHS Interview Protocols](#).

The school has a duty to provide support to school staff members who have witnessed an incident or disclosure, or who have made a report to external authorities about a reasonable belief of child abuse. It is important that schools remember that school staff members may have also experienced child abuse (including family violence) or be experiencing family violence and abuse in their own lives. School staff members requiring wellbeing support can contact the school’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider.

Information to support Victorian Catholic schools in understanding their obligation to employees and to provide suggestions of how to assist employees experiencing family and domestic violence may be found in Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd.’s (CECV) [Family and Domestic Violence: A guide to supporting staff](#).

The school should conduct a review of the reporting process four–six weeks after a report has been made to identify if any follow-up support actions are needed. Refer to [Protect: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#) for more information.

7.3 Potential Consequences of Making a Report

This table describes the potential consequences of making a report.

| Potential Consequence | Description |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Confidentiality | The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or parent of the report • The reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed • A court or tribunal decides that it necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child • A court or tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to provide evidence. |
| Professional Protection | If a report is made in good faith: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter • The reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report. |
| Interviews | DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police may conduct interviews of children and young people at the school without their parent’s knowledge or consent. |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing children and young people at school should only occur in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the best interests of the child to proceed in this manner. • DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police will notify the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team of their intention to interview the child or young person on the school premises. • When DHHS Child Protection workers/police officers come to the school premises, the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to the child or young person. • When a child or young person is being interviewed by DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, school staff must arrange to have a supportive adult present with the child or young person. <p>For more information on these requests and school responsibilities, see Catholic Education Melbourne’s School Guidelines 2.19a: Police and DHHS Interview Protocols.</p> |
| Support for the child or young person | <p>The roles and responsibilities of the Principal or other school staff in supporting children who are involved with DHHS Child Protection may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting as a support person for the child or young person • Attending DHHS Child Protection case-planning meetings • Observing and monitoring the child’s behaviour • Liaising with professionals. |
| Requests for information | <p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Child FIRST/The Orange Door and/or Victoria Police may request information about the child or family for the purpose of investigating a report and assessing the risk to the child or young person.</p> <p>In certain circumstances, DHHS Child Protection can also direct school staff to provide information or documents about the protection or development of the child. Such directions should be in writing and only be made by authorised person within DHHS Child Protection. Refer to Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools.</p> |
| Witness summons | <p>If DHHS Child Protection makes a protection application in the Children’s Court of Victoria, any party to the application may issue a witness summons to produce documents and/or to give evidence in the proceedings. See Catholic Education Melbourne’s School Guidelines 2.19a: Police and DHHS Interview Protocols.</p> |

7.4 Responding to complaints or concerns

The school may receive complaints or concerns about school staff management of a child protection incident. These complaints or concerns may be voiced by parents/carers or others within the school community.

The school should follow its internal complaints-handling process to ensure that all complaints, concerns or feedback on school policies or processes are effectively captured and appropriately managed.

It is important that, as a first step, the school ensures that the complaint does not raise concerns that child abuse or a risk of child abuse has gone unreported.

If this is the case, the school should follow [*Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse*](#) to ensure that any new information received through a complaint or concerns from a members of the school community is reported to authorities where required.



Appendix 1: Four Critical Actions for Schools

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

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 Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief* that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
- You **must** act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- It is strongly recommended that you use the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template** to keep clear and comprehensive notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

* A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

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.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report internally to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Employee Conduct Branch
 - DET Security Services Unit.
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or school chairperson
- Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

All allegations of reportable conduct **must** be reported as soon as possible to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - Employee Conduct Branch
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must also** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report internally to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - DET Security Services Unit.
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or chairperson.

OTHER CONCERNS

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/The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support)
- DHHS Child Protection
- Victoria Police.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

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

- not to contact** the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- 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)
- how to communicate** with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a **Student Support Plan** in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You **must** follow the **Four Critical Actions** every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA
North Division **1300 664 9777**
South Division **1300 655 795**
East Division **1300 360 381**
West Division (Rural) **1800 075 599**
West Division (Metro) **1300 664 9777**

AFTER HOURS
After hours, weekends, public holidays **13 12 78**.

CHILD FIRST
<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams>

ORANGE DOOR
<https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html>

VICTORIA POLICE
000 or 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

THE LOOKOUT
The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: <http://www.lookout.org.au>.

Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to **1800 Respect** for counselling, information and a referral service: **1800 737 732**.





KILBREDA COLLEGE



Appendix 2: Reporting Criteria – Failure to Disclose

In accordance with the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.), this table sets out when to report a concern that a child or young person has been sexually abused or is in need of protection from sexual abuse.

| Type of Reporting | By Whom | To Whom |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| <p><i>Reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16.</i></p> <p>Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to Victoria Police.</p> <p>You will not be guilty of an offence if you do not report in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The victim is 16 years of age or older and does not want the information reported to Victoria Police. However, this exception does not apply where the victim is aged under 16 years, or is aged over 16 years and has an intellectual disability and does not have the capacity to make an informed decision about whether or not to report. • The victim has disclosed the information in confidence in the course of a therapeutic relationship with you as a registered medical practitioner, counsellor or in a religious confession to a member of the clergy. A ‘counsellor’ is a person who is treating a person for an emotional or psychological condition. <p>Please note that mandatory reporting obligations under the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i> (Vic.) may override the exceptions to making a disclosure under the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic.).</p> <p>The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) <i>Privacy Compliance Manual</i> (updated by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) in April 2018) also provides details relating to the role of school counsellors and their obligations to students, the schools at which the students are enrolled and the parents of those students (refer to Section 25).</p> <p>Where it is necessary for school counsellors to directly pass on information which relates to the wellbeing of a student at a school, this information must be conveyed to a person (i.e. school Principal) who has a legal obligation to receive it without betraying a confidence (Section 25.3). A mandatory report may then need to be made by the person who receives the information (e.g. the school Principal).</p> <p>Reasonable excuses for failing to report to Victoria Police any reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reasonable belief that the information has already been reported to Victoria Police or disclosed to DHHS Child Protection • The victim turned 16 years of age before 27 October 2014 • A reasonable fear that the disclosure will place someone (other than the alleged perpetrator) at risk of harm. | <p>Any person aged 18 or over</p> | <p>Victoria Police</p> |

Appendix 3: Kilbreda College’s Internal Process and Related Documents

Internal Reporting Processes:

Key College personnel can be contacted for support and advice regarding the reporting of child safety matters. For further information please contact:

- Assistant Principal: Wellbeing and Engagement – Ms Stephanie Smyth Stephanie.smyth@kilbreda.vic.edu.au
- College Counsellor – Ms Sue Brick sue.brick@kilbreda.vic.edu.au
- College Counsellor – Mrs Toni Gunn toni.gunn@kilbreda.vic.edu.au
- Student Wellbeing Leader 7 – 9 – Ms Suzanne Grima Suzanne.grima@kilbreda.vic.edu.au
- Student Wellbeing Leader 10 – 12 – Ms Amanda Flynn Amanda.flynn@kilbreda.vic.edu.au

Related Documents and Policies:

- CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety
- Kilbreda College Child Protection and Safety Policy
- Kilbreda College Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Kilbreda College Pastoral Care Policy
- Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy

Related Resources

Catholic Education Melbourne

- [Protect: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#)
- [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#)
- [Catholic Education Melbourne’s School Guidelines 2.19a: Police and DHHS Interview Protocols](#)
- Catholic Schools Operational Guide (CEVN website)
- Privacy Compliance Manual (CEVN website):
 - Updated by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) December 2015
 - This manual may be used by schools and systems, which are represented by the CECV.

Counselling and support resources

- [Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum](#)
- [Respectful Relationships](#)
- [The Lookout](#)
- [Safe steps](#)
- [1800RESPECT](#)
- [Centres against Sexual Assault](#)
- [Gatehouse Centre, Royal Children’s Hospital](#)
- [Kids First](#)
- [Australian Childhood Foundation](#)

- [Djirra](#)
- [Child Wise](#)
- [headspace](#)

Department of Education and Training (DET)

- [School Policy and Advisory Guide](#) (SPAG)
- [Protecting Children and eLearning module](#)

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

- [Child Protection](#)
- [Child FIRST/The Orange Door](#)

Department of Justice and Community Safety

- [Failure to disclose offence](#)
- [Failure to protect offence](#)
- [Grooming offence](#)
- [Reportable conduct](#)

Related Legislation

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic.)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.)
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic.)

Victorian Government

- [Ministerial Order 870: Child Safe Standards](#)

Further Information

Catholic Education Melbourne's **Student Wellbeing Information Line** can be contacted between **9 am and 5 pm weekdays** on **9267 0228**.

The Student Wellbeing Information Line seeks to:

- Address matters that impact the wellbeing and educational outcomes of young people arising in Catholic school communities across the Archdiocese of Melbourne using a solution-focused framework
- Act as a conduit between the school and family to promote effective communication and resolution of enquiries
- Empower and enhance the capacity, competence and confidence of stakeholders to address matters related to the wellbeing of young people.

| | |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date: | |
| Authorship: | Stephanie Smyth Assistant Principal: Wellbeing and Engagement |
| Ratified: | |
| Date to be reviewed: | |
| Responsibility for implementation of review: | |



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CODE OF CONDUCT

Central to the mission of Kilbreda College is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults toward students, and serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur and promotes child safety in the School environment. Where a staff member breaches the Code of Conduct, Kilbreda College may take disciplinary action, including in the cases of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

PURPOSE

The Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at Kilbreda College against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, school policies/procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as they apply to staff and personnel.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and Stewardship Council members at Kilbreda College are expected to actively contribute to a school culture that respects the dignity of its members as modelled by the words, example and person of Jesus and affirms the Gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice. They are required to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and young people, as noted below.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

All staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, clergy and Stewardship Council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children and young people by:

- Adhering to the school's Child Safety Policy and Child Protection – Reporting Obligations Policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse
- Treating everyone in the school community with respect, modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment
- Addressing conflict and discipline matters through restorative practices
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of young people, particularly if they are telling you that they or another young person has been abused or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another young person
- Promoting student agency and voice
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations) young people
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of young people with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of young people of diverse gender or sexuality
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of young people with a disability
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a young person
- Reporting concerns about child safety to the School's Child Safety Officer or a member of the Leadership Team and ensuring that legal obligations to report allegations externally are met
- Reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher that they become aware of
- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)
- Acting as quickly as possible, in the instance of an allegation of child abuse being made, that the student/s involved is/are safe. Calling the Police if immediate concerns are held for a student's safety
- Respecting the privacy of students and their families and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

All staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, clergy and Stewardship Council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children and young people, and must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- Develop any 'special' relationship with children and young people that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- Exhibit behaviours with children and young people which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- Put children and young people at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children and young people or do things of a personal nature that a child /young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes

- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children and young people (for example, personal social activities)
- Use inappropriate language (e.g. sexually explicit, derogatory, socially offensive) in the presence of children and young people
- Express discriminatory personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children and young people
- Discriminate against any child or young person, in particular because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- Have contact with a child or young person or their family outside of school without the Principal's and/or Principal's delegate's knowledge, (for example, unauthorised after-hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching). This does not include accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street
- Have any online contact with a young person (including by social media, email, instant messaging, etc), unless that contact is to provide information about the school or connected directly to the school work of the enrolled student. Exceptions to this would exist when an association with a student outside of the College (e.g. sporting club) has been made known to the Principal and the contact relates directly to the declared association.
- Use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account to make contact with a student
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or personal email addresses with a student
- Photograph or video a young person except in the case of activities connected with learning and teaching and/or College events and only for the purpose of use by the College
- Work with a young person while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Consume alcohol or drugs in the presence of young people at school or at school events. Exceptions may be granted by the Principal or Principal's delegate subject to a thorough risk assessment for events held on premises that request the serving of alcohol
- Engage in any form of physical violence toward a student including inappropriately rough physical play
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm

CHILD SAFE REVIEW PROGRAM

Kilbreda College is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safe Program, which is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child safe related laws, regulations and standards. Any changes made to the Child Safe Program are reviewed and endorsed by the Stewardship Council.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received and read the Kilbreda College Child Safe Code of Conduct. I understand my obligations and responsibilities under the Code of Conduct. By signing below, I agree to comply with the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Name

Signature

Date