

CHILD PROTECTION AND MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

*The Currajong School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures, and practices meet all **Child Safe Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 1359 (2022)***

RATIONALE

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. As employees of the Currajong School, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidents involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact and to report instances that we believe involve physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

PURPOSE

This policy ensures all staff and school community members understand their legal and ethical reporting obligations to protect children's safety and uphold their right to be free from abuse and neglect.

The specific procedures that are applicable are contained at Appendix 1.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers, contractors and school community members. It also applies to all staff and students engaged in any school events, activities and services.

IMPLEMENTATION

All children and young people have the right to protection in their best interests.

The Currajong School understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse which may relate to:

- Physical injury;
- Sexual abuse (including sexual exploitation);
- Family violence;
- Emotional or intellectual development;
- Physical development or health;
- Abandonment or parental incapacity; and
- Grooming.

The staff at The Currajong School are required by law to comply with various child safety reporting obligations.

At The Currajong School we also recognise the diversity of the children and young people at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering child safety.

(a) Mandatory Reporting

Principals, registered teachers and early childhood teachers, registered medical practitioners, nurses, midwives, school counsellors, out of home care workers, early childhood workers and people in religious ministry and police officers are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*.

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury and/ or sexual abuse, and
- the child's parents/carers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at The Currajong School to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection, and they must make a mandatory report even if the Principal does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the *Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module* annually. We also require all other staff to undertake this module, even where they are not mandatory reporters.

The Principal advises the School Board Chair or Deputy Chair when a mandatory report is made.

(b) Child in Need of Protection

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

The policy of The Currajong School requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to report their concerns to DFFH or Victoria Police and discuss their concerns with the School Leadership Team.

For more information about making a report to DFFH Child Protection can be found in the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide: Child Protection – Making a Report and Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse*.

At The Currajong School we also encourage all staff to make a referral to The Orange Door (previously Child FIRST) when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing.

(c) Reportable Conduct

All employees at our school must notify the Principal if they become aware of an allegation of 'reportable conduct'.

There is an allegation of reportable conduct where a person has formed a reasonable belief that there has been:

- a sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing), sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- behaviour causing significant emotional or physical harm to a child;
- significant neglect of a child; or
- misconduct involving any of the above.

The Principal has a legal obligation to inform the *Social Services Regulator (SSR)* when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

Our Principal must notify the School Board and relevant organisations of reportable conduct allegations involving current or former staff, contractors, volunteers (including parents) and School Board members.

If school staff become aware of reportable conduct by any person in the above positions, they should notify the school Principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the Principal, they should notify the School Board.

(d) Failure to Disclose Offence

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (i.e. persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child (aged under 16).

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000 or local police station) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a

'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

'Reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same circumstances as you would believe that a child is at risk of harm, for the same reasons you believed it.

For The Currajong School, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused;
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused; (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused;
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused;
- or
- signs of sexual abuse lead to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

'Reasonable excuse' is defined by law and includes:

- reasonable fear for your safety or the safety of another person, except for the person you believe committed, or was involved in the sexual offence; or
- belief on reasonable grounds that the information has already been disclosed through a mandatory report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police.

(e) Failure to Protect Offence

This reporting obligation applies to school staff who have the authority to reduce or remove the risk of child sexual abuse. This can include Principals, Assistant Principals and campus Principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes

aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (i.e. persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

(f) Grooming

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish an inappropriate relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer; or exercising inappropriate power or control over a young person.

All staff members of The Currajong School must report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect.

New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.

Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually.

All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in their absence, the person acting in the Leadership role.

The Principal will keep a record of all discussions and information about a student with whom there is a concern, and this will be confidentially recorded on Sentral.

If a belief has been formed by a staff member that sexual or physical abuse has taken place a Mandatory Report must be completed and detailed notes of the incident must be recorded in the confidential section of the student profile in the 'Wellbeing' tab of Sentral.

The staff member and/or Principal will contact the DFFH by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification on 1300 555 526 or after school hours crisis line 131278.

Members of the DFFH, or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification, will interview staff and children only in the presence of the Principal or their nominee. School visits by members of DFFH should be noted in the confidential section of the student profile in the 'Wellbeing' tab of Sentral.

All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.

All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.

While only mandated by law to report incidents of physical and sexual abuse and neglect, teachers are also encouraged to report incidents or reasonable concerns of other significant harm, emotional abuse or neglect.

RELATED POLICIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Child Safe Code of Conduct; Child Safe Response and Support for Children Who Disclose; Commitment to Child Safety Policy; Child Safe Informing the Community Policy; Child Safe Staff Selection Policy; Child Safe Child Friendly Information on the Right to Be safe Policy; Child Safe Leadership and Governance in a Child Safe Environment.

EVALUATION AND VERSION HISTORY

This policy will be reviewed every two years or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Version	Approval date:	Approved by:	Next review:	Modifications	Owner/Implementor
2	December 2023	School Board	December 2025	Reviewed	Principal
3	December 2025	School Board	December 2027	Minor procedural updates	Principal
4	June 2026	School Board	June 2028	Updated Social Services Regulator	Principal



The Currajong School acknowledges the traditional owners of this country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to the Elders past, present and emerging.

APPENDIX 1

The Currajong School Child Safety Reporting Process

The Principal, and Leadership team are responsible for ensuring that the School's child safety requirements are met. The Assistant Principal is The Currajong School's Child Safety officer. The Principal and the wellbeing leader or person acting in that position will:

- Ensure that all school staff have access to, and understand school child safety policies
- Ensure that child safety policies and procedures are followed and implemented
- Implement and monitor child safety policies, positive behaviour support framework, and procedures in school
- Will follow child safety reporting obligations and procedures policy and four critical actions if an allegation is made
- Review and update relevant policies in consultation with staff and School Board
- Provide relevant training in relation to child safety

Identify and respond to child abuse by an adult engaged by a school, including grooming

Provide the right support at the right time

At all times, you must:

- **Respond to an emergency** – Call 000. Preserve evidence. Keep students safe.
- **Adapt to changing circumstances** – Be flexible. Repeat/take different actions.
- **Document your actions.**

Identify child abuse

All staff

You can identify abuse by:

- witnessing grooming behaviours or an incident
- receiving a disclosure
- observing:
 - physical or behavioural signs
 - something concerning online or on a device.

Notify your school's nominated contact person if you become aware of any allegation, complaint, disclosure or concern that:

- an adult engaged by the school may be abusing a child, or
- a child is at risk of being abused.

Report abuse to authorities

The school's nominated contact person manages reports.

If you believe a crime has been committed against a child, report to:

- Victoria Police.

All allegations, complaints, disclosures and concerns, report to:

- Social Service Regulator

You can contact Independent Schools Victoria for support and advice on child safety related matters, including if you are unsure and need advice on reporting.

Engage parents/carers

- Obtain clearance from Victoria Police (if involved) before contacting parents/carers on what can be shared.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible (same day preferred).

Support students through your school

- Support impacted student/s.
- Arrange support for impacted students and staff through regional/centralised services.
- Engage students and parents/carers to find the best support.
- Tailor to diverse needs.
- Use information sharing.
- Continue as long as necessary.

Refer to community services

- Engage student/s and parents/carers to find and connect with suitable services.
- Use information sharing.

Key contacts

Independent schools Victoria

- 03 9825 7200
- enquiries@is.vic.edu.au

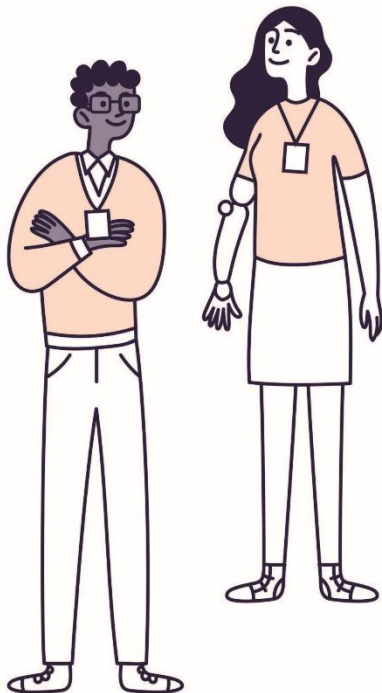
Social Service Regulator

- 1300 310 778
- Reportable.Conduct@ssr.vic.gov.au
- rcs.ssr.vic.gov.au

Victoria Police

- 000 (emergencies)
- 131 444 or local police station (non-emergencies)

Local sexual assault service



vic.gov.au/identify-abuse-adult-independent-school

Identify and respond to child abuse in the community

Provide the right support at the right time

At all times, you must:

- **Respond to an emergency** – Call 000. Preserve evidence. Keep students safe.
- **Adapt to changing circumstances** – Be flexible. Repeat/take different actions.
- **Document your actions.**

Identify child abuse

All staff
 You can identify abuse by:

- witnessing an incident
- receiving a disclosure
- observing:
 - physical or behavioural signs
 - something concerning online or on a device.

If you form a reasonable belief that a child has been abused, or is at risk of abuse, inform school leadership.

Information Sharing staff/Child Link users

- Request information from Information Sharing Entities or check Child Link.

School leadership/nominated staff

- **Report**
- **Support** and **Refer**

You may need to take actions in support and refer at the same time.

Report abuse to authorities

If you believe a crime has been committed against a child, report to:

- Victoria Police.

If you form a reasonable belief that the parents/carers have not, or are unlikely to, protect the student from significant harm. You must report physical and sexual abuse. Report to:

- Child Protection

You can contact Independent Schools Victoria for support and advice on child safety related matters, including if you are unsure and need advice on reporting.

Engage parents/carers

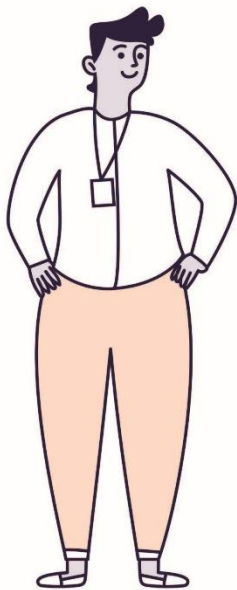
- If Victoria Police/Child Protection are involved, seek their clearance on what can be shared before you contact parents/carers.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible (same day preferred).

Support students through your school

- Support impacted student/s.
- Engage students and parents/carers to find the best support.
- Tailor to diverse needs.
- Use information sharing.
- Continue for as long as necessary.

Refer to community services

- Engage students and parent/carers to find and connect with suitable services.
- Use information sharing.



Key contacts

<p>Child Protection 8:45am to 5pm, Mon-Fri</p> <p>North 1300 598 521 South 1300 555 526 East 1300 360 452 West 1300 360 462 After hours 13 12 78</p> <p>Independent schools Victoria → 03 9825 7200 → enquiries@is.vic.edu.au</p>	<p>Victoria Police → 000 (emergencies) → 131 444 or local police station (non-emergencies)</p> <p>The Orange Door </p> <p>Local sexual assault service </p>
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vic.gov.au/identify-child-abuse-community



Identify and respond to child abuse in the family

Provide the right support at the right time

Identify child abuse

All staff

You can identify abuse by:

- witnessing an incident
- receiving a disclosure
- observing:
 - physical or behavioural signs
 - signs of family violence trauma in students
 - family violence risk factors
 - narratives and behaviours that may indicate an adult is using family violence
 - something concerning online or on a device.

You only need to collect enough information to form a reasonable belief or inform your next steps. If you form a reasonable belief:

- go to **Determine your pathway**
- inform school leadership.

If you have a concern that a student is experiencing, or at risk of, child abuse in the family, and need more information:

- complete Family Violence Identification Tool
- provide to MARAM-nominated staff.

MARAM nominated staff

- complete Family Violence Screening Tool

If you form a reasonable belief that there is current family violence:

- inform school leadership
- go to **Determine your pathway**
- complete Basic Safety Plan.

Information Sharing staff/Child Link users

- Request information from Information Sharing Entities or check Child Link.

At all times, you must:

- **Respond to an emergency** – Call 000. Preserve evidence. Keep students safe.
- **Adapt to changing circumstances** – Be flexible. Repeat/take different actions.
- **Document your actions.**

Determine your pathway

Report to Child Protection (including mandatory report)

- **Report**
- **Support** and **Refer**

Crime

- **Report**
- **Support** and **Refer**

Family violence

(not a mandatory report or crime)

- **Refer** then **Support**

Family struggling with the care, wellbeing or development of a child

- **Support** and **Refer**

You may need to take actions in support and refer at the same time.

If you are unsure which pathway to take, contact The Orange Door for advice.

Support students through your school

- Engage students and parents/carers to find the best support.
- Tailor to diverse needs.
- Use information sharing.
- Continue for as long as necessary.

Refer to community services

- Engage the student and parents/carers, and connect them to services:
 - the Orange Door for family violence or families struggling with care, wellbeing or development of a child. First Nations people can be supported by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.
 - local sexual assault services for sexual offences or harmful sexual behaviour.
- Use information sharing.

Report abuse to authorities

Report to Child Protection (including mandatory report)

If you form a reasonable belief that the parents/carers have not, or are unlikely to, protect the student from significant harm. You must report physical and sexual abuse. Report to:

- Child Protection.

You can contact Independent Schools Victoria for support and advice on child safety related matters, including if you are unsure and need advice on reporting.

Crime

If you believe a crime has been committed against a child, report to:

- Victoria Police
- your school's relevant governing body.

Engage parents/carers

- If Child Protection/Victoria Police are involved, seek their clearance on what can be shared before you contact parents/carers.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible (same day preferred).

Key contacts

Child Protection

8:45am to 5pm, Mon-Fri

North	1300 598 521
South	1300 555 526
East	1300 360 452
West	1300 360 462
After hours	13 12 78

Independent schools Victoria

- 03 9825 7200
- enquiries@i.s.vic.edu.au

Victoria Police

- 000 (emergencies)
- 131 444 or local police station (non-emergencies)

The Orange Door



Local sexual assault service



vic.gov.au/identify-child-abuse-family



Identify and respond to student-to-student abuse

Provide the right support at the right time

At all times, you must:

- **Respond to an emergency** – Call 000. Preserve evidence. Keep students safe.
- **Adapt to changing circumstances** – Be flexible. Repeat/take different actions.
- **Document your actions.**

Identify child abuse

All staff
You can identify abuse by:

- witnessing an incident
- receiving a disclosure
- observing:
 - physical or behavioural signs
 - something concerning online or on a device.

If you form a reasonable belief that a student has been, or is at risk of being abused (including harmful sexual behaviour), inform school leadership.

Information Sharing staff/Child Link users

- Request information from Information Sharing Entities or check Child Link.

School leadership/nominated staff

- **Report**
- **Support** and **Refer**

You may need to take actions in support and refer at the same time.

Harmful sexual behaviour
Contact local sexual assault services for support and advice.

Report abuse to authorities

If you believe a crime against a child has been committed, report to:

- Victoria Police.

For harmful online content, report to:

- **esafety.gov.au/report**

You can contact Independent Schools Victoria for support and advice on child safety related matters, including in you are unsure and need advice on reporting.

Engage parents/carers

- If Victoria Police are involved, seek their clearance on what can be shared before you contact parents/carers.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible (same day preferred).

Harmful sexual behaviour

- If Victoria Police are not involved, you can contact your local sexual assault service for advice to engage parents/carers.

Support students through your school

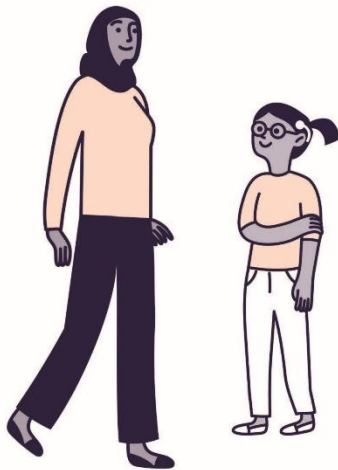
- Support impacted student/s.
- Engage students and parents/carers to find the best support.
- Tailor to diverse needs.
- Use information sharing.
- Continue as long as necessary.

Refer to community services

- Engage student/s and parents/carers to find and connect with suitable services.
- Use information sharing.

Harmful sexual behaviour

- Contact your local sexual assault service for support for students and parents/carers.
- If a student is using harmful sexual behaviour and their parents/carers are not willing or able to help the student connect to a service, call Child Protection.



Key contacts

Child Protection		Victoria Police	
8:45am to 5pm, Mon-Fri		→ 000 (emergencies)	
North	1300 598 521	→ 131 444 or local police station (non-emergencies)	
South	1300 555 526	eSafetyCommissioner	
East	1300 360 452	→ esafety.gov.au/report	
West	1300 360 462	Local sexual assault service	
After hours	13 12 78	☎	
Independent Schools Victoria		📍	
→ 03 9825 7200		
→ enquiries@is.vic.edu.au		



vic.gov.au/identify-student-to-student-abuse-schools

