



MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the roles and responsibilities of staff, contractors, visitors and volunteers in protecting the safety and wellbeing of students at Shelford Girls' Grammar (SGG), and to enable staff to:

- Identify indicators that a child or young person may be in need of protection;
- Describe the process to make a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection;
- Describe the process to make a report about any reasonable belief that an employee, contractor, or volunteer has engaged in reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct; and
- Comply with reporting obligations under child protection law and criminal law and fulfil their duty of care.

This policy sets out what constitutes child abuse, who is mandated to make a notification, and the process of making a report to a relevant agency including (but not limited) to ChildFIRST, Department of Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection, Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and/or Victoria Police.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all Shelford Girls' Grammar (SGG) board members, staff, contractors, volunteers, and visitors. This policy includes allegations regarding the conduct of people even if they do not have direct contact with children, and conduct that may have occurred outside of SGG related work

3.0 Policy

Individuals working with children or young people have a duty of care to support and protect them. Acting on a belief that child abuse has occurred, or is occurring, can be the first important step in stopping the abuse and protecting the child from further harm.

Where there is a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, adults in contact with or working with that child are ethically bound to act to maintain their safety and wellbeing. For some professionals, there is also a legal obligation to report the concern to the appropriate authorities.

Mandatory reporting arises from the requirements of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, and the Crimes Act 1958 and Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 for the protection of children from harm due to physical injury and sexual abuse. This policy assists SGG staff to comply with these requirements and fulfil their responsibilities regarding the welfare and protection of children at risk. This policy complements guidelines provided by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Department of Justice and Regulation, and Department of Education and Training. Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained within this policy does not

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displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

3.1 Legal Obligations

3.1.1 Mandatory Reporting and Child in Need of Protection

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) states that certain professionals must report to the Department of Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection Services, when in the course of their professional duty:

- They form the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection because the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury, and the child's parents/guardians have not protected, or are unlikely to protect the child from harm; or
- The child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse, and the child's parents/guardians have not protected, or are unlikely to protect the child from harm.

Specifically, the Victorian professionals mandated to report include legally qualified medical practitioners, registered nurses, members of the Victorian police force; teachers and Principals.

Mandatory reporters, who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, must report their concerns to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection.

If you are a mandatory reporter, failure to notify, when you have reasonable grounds, is an offence under the Mandatory Reporting amendment to the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic).

Non-mandated staff members may also make a report to DHHS Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection such as:

- The child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child;
- The child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child;
- The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child;
- The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child;
- The child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child; or
- The child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parents are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care.

Any staff member can also may make a report to DHHS Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child who is 10 years of age or over, but under 15 years of age, is in need of therapeutic treatment because he or she has exhibited sexually-abusive behaviours.

3.1.2 Significant Concerns for Wellbeing of Child

Any person may also make a report regarding concerns for the wellbeing of a child. This may include circumstances when there are:

- Significant parenting problems that may be affecting the child's development;
- Family conflict, including family breakdown;
- Families under pressure, due to a family member's physical or mental illness, substance misuse, disability or bereavement;

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- Young, isolated and/or unsupported families; or
- Families experiencing significant social or economic disadvantage that may adversely impact on a child's care or development.

In these circumstances, contact may be made with Child FIRST or DHHS Child Protection (Refer 3.5 Who to Report to), based on guidance material at:<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

3.1.3 Reporting Criminal Child Sexual Abuse - Failure to Disclose Offence

Under the Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014, any adult (aged 18 and over) who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child (aged under 16 years) is required to disclose that information to Victoria Police (unless they hold a reasonable excuse). Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.

The offence applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children. This offence is in addition to mandatory reporting obligations for specified staff under the Children and Youth Families Act 2005 (described in 3.1.1). It applies to any person in authority within a relevant organisation, not just mandatory reporters.

If any staff have a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child (aged under 16 years), they should follow the internal process outlined below in 3.8 How to Report, to ensure that accurate records are kept and key personnel are aware of the report to Victoria Police.

To read more information about the 'failure to disclose' offence, see: [Department of Justice and Regulation – Failure to disclose offence.](#)

3.1.4 Protecting Children from the Risk of Sexual Abuse - Failure to Protect Offence

Any staff member in a position of authority, who becomes aware that an adult associated with SGG (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

To read more information about the 'failure to protect offence', see: [Department of Justice and Regulations – Failure to protect offence](#)

3.1.5 Reportable Conduct Scheme

Under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, SGG is required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) of allegations that any staff member, contractor, or volunteer (including board members), has engaged in 'reportable conduct' or 'misconduct that may involve reportable conduct'.

An allegation of reportable conduct 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. This includes information about something that is alleged to have occurred outside the course of the person's employment or engagement with SGG. There is an allegation of 'reportable conduct' where a person has 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, or
- behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm, or
- significant neglect of a child, or

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- 'misconduct' involving any of the above.

The scope of 'reportable conduct' is wide and is not limited to criminal conduct. That means, reportable conduct includes sexual offences, grooming, 'sexting', as well as inappropriate physical contact or sexualised behaviour with a child.

Once a staff member has become aware of an allegation of reportable conduct, or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, they are required to notify the Principal as soon as possible.

SGG Staff do not need to make a report directly to CCYP. When notified of an allegation, the Principal (or her delegate) will report the allegation to CCYP (if appropriate).

3.2 Duty of Care

SGG staff have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care. If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care they should take immediate action.

In the case of a child who may be in need of protection or therapeutic treatment, or where there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, school staff can discharge this duty of care by taking action which includes the following:

- Reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency;
- Notifying the Principal or Head of Junior or Senior School or Head of ELC of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

There may be times when two or more mandated reporters have formed a belief about the same child on the same occasion. In this situation it is sufficient that only one of the mandated professionals make a report. The other is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other person.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to DHHS Child Protection.

In considering a duty of care to report concerns of child abuse and/or neglect, it is important to remember that:

- It is not necessary to prove that abuse has taken place, only to provide reasonable grounds for the belief;
- Permission from parents/guardians or caregivers is not required to make a notification, nor do they need to be informed that a notification is being or has been made;
- If a notification is made in good faith, the notifier cannot be held legally liable for any consequences, regardless of the outcome of the notification; and
- The identity of the notifier will remain confidential unless the notifier chooses to inform the child and/or family, or if the notifier consents in writing to the disclosure of their identity, or if the court decides that this information must be disclosed.

The notifier may have an ongoing role, including:

- acting as a support person in interviews with the child or young person;
- attending a case conference;
- participating in case-planning meetings;
- continuing to monitor the child's behaviour and their interactions with others;
- observing/monitoring the conditions of a protective court order that may relate to access or contact with a parent/guardian;

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- liaising with other professionals and child protection officers in relation to a child or young person's wellbeing; and
- providing written reports for case-planning meetings or court proceedings in relation to the child's wellbeing or progress.

3.3 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. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

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

Forming an objective and professional judgement can be based on:

- Warning signs (or indicators) of harm or potential harm, that have been observed or inferred;
- Knowledge of child development;
- Knowledge of cultural backgrounds;
- Knowledge of any difficulties experienced or support currently being received by a family;
- Consultation with colleagues and other professionals;
- Professional obligations and duty of care responsibilities; and
- Legal requirements, such as mandatory reporting.

3.3.1 Types of Abuse

Child abuse can have a significant effect on a child's physical or emotional health, development and wellbeing.

Types of child abuse may include:

- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- neglect;
- medical neglect;
- family violence;
- human trafficking (including forced marriage); or
- sexual exploitation (including pornography and prostitution).

3.3.2 Signs or Indicators of Harm

- Physical signs of abuse or neglect may include, but are not limited to, bruises, burns, sprains, bites, cuts, fractures, frequent hunger, malnutrition, poor hygiene and inappropriate clothing.
- Behavioural signs of abuse (physical, sexual and emotional) or neglect may include, but are not limited to, wariness or distrust of adults, fear of parents/guardians and of going home, fear when other children cry/shout, excessive friendliness to strangers, being very passive and/or compliant, having/claiming to have headaches and/or stomach pains, displaying sexual behaviour that is

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unusual for the child's age, frequent rocking, sucking and biting, having difficulty sleeping, being withdrawn, aggressive and/or demanding, being highly anxious, having delayed speech, acting like a much younger child, and often being tired and falling asleep.

- Disclosures by the child concerned, or by other parties.

3.3.3 Reportable Conduct

Specific information regarding the five types of 'reportable conduct' listed in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 is available at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/What-is-reportable-conduct.pdf>

3.4 When to Report

The following table sets out when to report a concern that a child or a young person has been abused, or is in need of protection. Note that permission is not required from parents/guardians of a child where abuse is suspected, and parents/guardians do not need to be notified that a report has been made.

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p>Mandatory Reporting - DHHS Child Protection Mandatory reporters must make a report as soon as practicable if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.</p>	<p>Mandatory reporters Registered Teachers Principal</p>	DHHS Child Protection.
<p>Child in Need of Protection Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child. • The child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child. • The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. • The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. • The child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. • The child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parents are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care. 	Any person	DHHS Child Protection. Victoria Police
<p>Child displaying sexually abusive behaviours and in need of therapeutic treatment Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child who is 10 years of age or over, but under 15 years of age, is in need of therapeutic treatment because he or she has exhibited sexually-abusive behaviours.</p>	Any person	DHHS Child Protection.
<p>Significant concerns about wellbeing of a child Any person may make a report if they have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child.</p>	Any person	DHHS Child Protection. ChildFIRST
<p>Reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16. 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</p>	Any person aged 18 years or over.	Victoria Police

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<p>information to police. It is a criminal offence not to make a report, except in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The victim is 16 years of age or older and does not have an intellectual disability that limits his/her capacity to make an informed decision; and he/she does not want the information reported to the police. • The victim has disclosed the information in confidence in the course of a therapeutic relationship with you as a registered medical practitioner or counsellor. • The victim turned 16 years of age before 27 October 2014. <p>Reasonable excuses for failing to comply with the requirement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a reasonable belief that the information has already been reported to police or DHHS Child Protection disclosing all of the information. • a reasonable fear that the disclosure will place someone (other than the alleged perpetrator) at risk of harm. 		
<p>Reportable Conduct Scheme - 'reasonable belief that an employee, contractor or volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct.'</p> <p>Any staff member that forms a reasonable belief that an employee, contractor or volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct must report this to the Principal. The Reportable Conduct Scheme applies to the conduct of the following people if they are over 18 years of age, regardless of whether the conduct or misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person's employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGG staff • Contractors (including external allied health staff) • Volunteers 	<p>Any persons aged 18 years or over</p>	<p>Principal Principal (or her delegate then reports to CCYP)</p>

3.5 Who to Report To

To report concerns that are life threatening ring Victoria Police on 000.

There are two types of notifications to be made in relation to significant concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child: a report to DHHS Child Protection or a referral to Child FIRST. The following guidance material can be displayed within SGG staff rooms and used by staff in determining who to report to.

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/582591/flowchart-mandatory-reporting-27-5-10.pdf.

3.5.1 Making a Report to DHHS Child Protection

To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit, call the nearest DHHS office during business hours or Child Protection Services – ph: 1300 655 795 (business hours). To report concerns after hours or on weekends, call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78 (24 hours, 7 days a week and toll free within Victoria). Note: this is an emergency service for weekends and after hours only, and cases reported to the Child Protection Crisis Line will be referred to the relevant DHHS office on the following working day.

A notification should still be made, even if the notifier does not have all the necessary information.

A report to Child Protection should be considered if, after taking into account all of the available information, the staff member forms a view that the child is in need of protection because:

- The harm or risk of harm has a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability and/or development;
- The harm or risk of harm is persistent and entrenched, and is likely to have a serious impact on the child's safety, stability and/or development; and

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- The child's parents/guardians are unwilling or unable to protect the child or young person from harm.

A report should be made to DHHS Child Protection in circumstances where, for example:

- the child is engaging in risk-taking behaviour;
- female genital mutilation has occurred, or there is a risk of it occurring;
- there is a risk to an unborn child;
- a child or young person is exhibiting sexually-abusive behaviours; or
- there are indications that a child is being groomed. For information see: [Department of Justice and Regulation – Grooming offence](#)

3.5.2 Making a Report to Child FIRST

A report to Child FIRST should be considered if, after taking into account the available information, the staff member forms a view that raising their concerns will have a low-to-moderate impact on the child, and that the immediate safety of the child will not be compromised.

Child FIRST provides a consolidated intake service to Family Services within sub-regional catchments. Child FIRST ensures that vulnerable children, young people and their families are linked effectively into relevant services, and this may be the best way to connect children, young people and their families with the services they need.

3.5.3 Making a Report to Victoria Police

Instances of physical and sexual abuse of children are crimes and must be reported to the Victoria police. A report must be made to Victoria Police where there is a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16.

3.5.4 Making a Report to the CCYP

Once a person has become aware of an allegation of reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, they are required to notify the Principal as soon as possible.

SGG Staff do not need to make a report directly to CCYP. When notified of an allegation, the Principal (or her delegate) will report the allegation to CCYP (if appropriate).

Under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, the Principal (or her delegate) is responsible for reporting any allegation of reportable conduct to the CCYP within three business days of becoming aware of the allegation.

Within 30 days of becoming aware of the reportable allegation, the Principal (or her delegate) must provide a further report to CCYP.

As soon as practicable after an investigation has concluded, the CCYP must be advised of the outcome of the investigation.

3.6 How to Report

If any staff have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person, or the conduct of a staff member, contractor or volunteer, they should follow the internal process outlined below, to ensure that accurate records are kept and key personnel are aware of any need to report to DHHS Child Protection, Child FIRST, Victoria Police, CCYP, or any other external authority.

3.6.1 Gathering Information

SGG staff should make comprehensive notes to record their observations and reasons for their belief.

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3.6.2 Reporting Procedure

This table describes how to make a mandatory report, to report child abuse or child protection concerns.

Step	Description
1	<p>In case of emergency or if a child is in immediate danger contact Triple Zero (000) or the local police station.</p> <p>Alternatively, to report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHHS Child Protection, call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78 (24 hours 7 days, toll free). Ensure as far as practicable, that the child(ren) are safe if an allegation of child abuse is made.</p> <p>Notify the Principal of any incidents of reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, concerning staff members, contractors or volunteers.</p>
2	<p>Keep comprehensive notes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • date of observations or notes • information that has led to concerns about the child's safety (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour) • the source of this information (e.g. observation of behaviour, report from child or another person) • the actions taken or that need to be taken as a result of the concerns
3	<p>Consult with the Head of Junior School, Senior School, Head of ELC or Principal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and give notes to relevant Head of Junior or Senior School, Head of ELC or Principal. • Relevant Head notifies Principal without delay. • Determine if an external report needs to be made and to which authority. • The Staff member should also make their own assessment about whether they should make a report about the child and to whom the report should be made. • If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to DHHS Child Protection. • If there is uncertainty about the need for a mandatory report to DHHS Child Protection, the Head of Junior School or Senior School, Head of ELC, Principal or the notifier should ring the Department of Human Services for advice/secondary consultation.
4	<p>Make a report to the relevant agency.</p> <p>To report concerns that are life threatening phone 000 or the local police station. The Principal, (or her delegate), will report matters under the Reportable Conduct Scheme to the CCYP. If a staff member believes a report to DHHS Child Protection is required the notifying staff member, Head of School, Principal or the School Counsellor will proceed with a report to Child Protection Services – ph: 1300 655 795 (business hours) or ph: 13 12 78 (after hours). The following information will be required when making a report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child's name, age and address • The name, age and address of any known siblings • Your reason for believing that the injury or behavior is the result of abuse or neglect • Your assessment of the immediate danger to the child • Current whereabouts of the child or young person • Your description of the injury or behavior observed • Any other information you have about the family <p>Your identity as a notifier will remain confidential unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You choose to inform the child and/or family of the notification yourself • You consent to your identity as the notifier being disclosed
5	<p>Make a written record of the report using SGG Mandatory Reporting Record SGG-FOR-12-1 or similar which includes 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. • All written records and notes should be placed in the student file.

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6	<p>Communicate with other parties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alleged Perpetrators: There should be no detailed communication with alleged perpetrators or any other students involved until after approval from Victoria Police. Police and Child Protection Services are to be the investigating body at all times. • Media: The Principal or their delegate is the only authorized representative of SGG able to make media comment. • Parents/Guardians of the Alleged Victim: Are to be contacted by the Principal unless circumstances indicate this should not occur. Where meetings are conducted with parents or others in regard to a report, it is recommended that an interview be conducted with a minimum of two designated school staff members present. The focus of such a meeting should be on the welfare of the child, not on justifying the actions or perceptions of the staff involved. • Other Parties: The need for confidentiality should be remembered at all times in the interest of the child and family. Other parties should be directed to speak with the Principal. Individual teachers should not engage in discussion with parents or others. Only where the welfare of the child will be affected should the matter be discussed with anyone else. • International Students: School procedures are to be followed with the inclusion of the Principal informing the Immigration Department (DIAC). Refer to http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/National_Code_2007_pdf_1.pdf • Indigenous Students: Child Protection must consult with an Aboriginal organisation such as the Victorian Child Care Agency (VACCA) when a report regarding an Aboriginal child is received.
7	<p>Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is essential that reports are managed in a caring, supportive and confidential manner. • Where relevant, support for a responding staff member and the student who is the cause for concern as well as anyone else affected should be arranged. • Students should be referred to the School Counsellor or an external psychologist for ongoing support. • If an allegation of child abuse is made against a staff member, child(ren) connected to the alleged abuse will be protected, as far as practicable, until the allegation is resolved. • Access to the School's Employee Assistance Program should be promoted to affected SGG staff and managers should monitor the wellbeing of the responding staff member and any other effected individual (including the alleged perpetrator if an employee of SGG). • Staff will also be provided with regular awareness on mandatory reporting and protection of children education.
8	<p>Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After notification to DHHS Child Protection Services or Victoria Police is made, a Child Protection Worker or Police Officer will decide whether or not further investigation is required. The notifying staff member will usually be advised of this decision. • If the notifying staff member is not advised, the Head of Junior School, Senior School, Head of ELC or the Principal may contact Child Protection Services and request information about what action is proposed. • Any information provided at any stage of the process shall also be shared with the Principal in a timely manner. • The reporting staff member should also continue to make additional notes or observations as required and continue to consult with and provide these notes to the Head of Junior School, Senior School, Head of ELC or the Principal. • Under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, within 30 days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation, the Principal (or her delegate) must conduct an investigation as per the Child Safety and Protection Policy, Complaints and Grievances Policy, and provide a further report to CCYP. • As soon as practicable after an investigation has concluded, the CCYP must be advised of the outcome of the investigation, by the Principal (or her delegate).

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3.7 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 of Children and Young People	DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police may conduct interviews of children and young people at the school without the parent's knowledge or consent. 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 officers from DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police 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. For more information on these requests and school responsibilities, see: Police and DHHS Interviews
Internal Investigations conducted under the Reportable Conduct Scheme	Internal investigations conducted by SGG under the Reportable Conduct Scheme will be managed as per the Child Safety and Protection Policy and Complaints and Grievances Policy.
Support for the child or young person	The roles and responsibilities of staff members in supporting children who are involved with DHHS Child Protection may include the following: <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	DHHS Child Protection and/or Child FIRST 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. In certain circumstances, DHHS Child Protection can also direct school staff and Department 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 persons within DHHS Child Protection. for more information see: Requests for Information About Students
Witness Summons	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: Subpoenas and Witness Summonses

3.8 Staff Training in Mandatory Reporting Requirements

Staff are to be briefed upon induction and at least every 2 years regarding mandatory reporting requirements either through staff briefings or completion of online training through DET or similar. (Refer SGG Induction and Professional Development Policy).

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4.0 Definitions

Child: For the purpose of the relevant parts of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.), a child is any person 17 years of age or younger.

Child FIRST: The Family Information Referral 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 family services.

Child Protection: The Victorian Government agency, provided by DHHS, that protects children at risk of significant harm. Child Protection has statutory powers and can use these to protect children.

Mandatory Report: A report made to Child Protection, by a person mandated under the Act, that is based on a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from physical injury that results from abuse or neglect or harm caused as a result of sexual abuse.

Mandatory Reporter: Person(s) required under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) to make a report to the Child Protection if they believe a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. Mandatory reporters include registered school teachers or Principals and registered nurses.

Reasonable Belief: A reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection is more likely formed in circumstances where:

- a child states that they have been physically injured or sexually abused (self-disclosure);
- a child states that they know someone who has been physically injured or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about him or herself);
- a relative, friend, acquaintance or sibling of the child states that the child has been physically injured or sexually abused;
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development lead the mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been physically injured or sexually abused;
- signs of physical injury or sexual abuse lead to a belief that the child has been abused.

Perpetrator: A person who mistreats and/or harms a child or young person.

5.0 References

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958
- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Vic)
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
- National Quality Framework Resource Kit

6.0 Related Documentation

- Mandatory Reporting Record
- Induction and Professional Development Policy
- Child Safety and Protection Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Contractors and External Providers Policy
- Volunteers Policy

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- Records Management Policy
- Privacy Policy
- FAQs: Reportable Conduct Scheme

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