

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

PROTECT



YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a *Gilson College* staff member, you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

- You **must** act, by following the 4 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).
- You **must** use the *Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template* to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

* 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

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 or volunteer to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report internally to



Child Protection Officers:

- School Principal, and/or
- Head of Campus, and/or
- Head of School who will inform
- College Council chairperson, and/or
- Director of Education, Adventist Schools Victoria.

For suspected student sexual assault, please follow the *Five Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending*.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DFFH CHILD PROTECTION

You **must** report to DFFH 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.

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 (now Orange Door) (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DFFH - Child Protection or Victoria Police.

You **must also** report internally to:



Child Protection Officers:

- School Principal; and/or
- Head of Campus; and/or
- Head of School, who will inform
- College Council chairperson, and/or
- Director of Education, Adventist Schools Victoria.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Gilson College Principal, Head of Campus or designee **must** consult with DFFH 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).

CONTACT BOTH CAMPUSES

DFFH CHILD PROTECTION AREA Mernda (M) & Taylors Hill (TH):

North & West Division 1300 664 977
After Hours weekends, public holidays 13 12 78

CHILD FIRST (Now Orange Door)
www.dffh.vic.gov.au
North & West Division

M: 1800 319 355
TH: 1300 138 180

VICTORIA POLICE 000 or M: Mernda Police Station (03) 9216 1200 TH: Caroline Springs Police Station (03) 9361 4700

ADVENTIST SCHOOLS VICTORIA (03) 9264 7730

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL VICTORIA (03) 9825 7200

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Gilson College **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 our duty of care requirements.

Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.

5 RECORDING, RETAINING SECURING

You **must** record all instances of abuse or suspected abuse, using the *Responding to Suspected Child Abuse* digital template. This is an essential part of our duty of care requirements. A copy of the template is found in SEQTA Teach: Documents.

The completed recording document will be **retained and securely stored** in the affected student's records on SEQTA.

Only the executive leadership team will have access to the child or young person's record.

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

