

Systemic Review into Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian Government Schools

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

The department proudly acknowledges Victoria's First Nations communities as the Traditional Owners of the unceded lands, waters and skies, and pays respect to all Elders past and present.

We recognise First Nations people as Victoria's first educators, artists and scientists, and we value the ongoing contribution of First Nations people and communities to Victorian life and how this enriches us all.

We also commit to work together to deliver the Victorian Government's commitment to self-determination, Truth and Treaty.

Acknowledgment of victim-survivors

The department acknowledges all victim-survivors of child sexual abuse in a Victorian government school, their family, loved ones and supporters.

We are deeply committed to continuing to acknowledge our past failings, to support healing for victim-survivors of child sexual abuse in all Victorian government schools, and to continuously learn from these failings to protect the children and young people of today and tomorrow.

A note on language

We recognise the power of words and that they can have profoundly different meanings for different people. We know language is constantly changing and there is no one set of definitions to describe people's experiences of child sexual abuse.

This report adopts language terms based on trauma-informed research. Any reference to victim-survivors is intended to include those who have experienced child sexual abuse, including those who have passed away.

Many of the experiences of child sexual abuse in the department's civil claims did not result in, or have not yet resulted in, a criminal conviction. Therefore, all relevant employees identified in civil claims are referred to as 'alleged perpetrators' in this report.

Content warning

This report contains information that may be distressing to read, particularly for those individuals who have direct or indirect experience of child sexual abuse. If you or someone you know needs support, the following services are available:

- **1800 RESPECT:** call 1800 737 732 for 24-hour sexual assault and domestic violence support
- **Sexual Assault Crisis Line Victoria:** call 1800 806 292 for 24-hour support for people who have experienced sexual assault
- **13 YARN:** call 13 92 76 for 24-hour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander crisis support who have experienced sexual assault
- **Beyond Blue:** call 1300 224 636 for 24-hour mental health support
- **Lifeline:** call 13 11 14 for 24-hour crisis support
- **Blue Knot:** call 1300 657 380 for support for adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse, as well as parents, partners, family and friends. Available 9 am to 5 pm, 7 days a week
- **Rainbow Door:** call 1800 729 367 for a specialist helpline that provides information, support and referral to LGBTIQ+ Victorians, their friends and family. Available 10 am to 5 pm, 7 days a week.
- **Survivors & Mates Support Network (SAMSN):** call 1800 472 676 for support for male survivors of child sexual abuse and their supporters.

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Statement from the Independent Monitor

The Systemic Review into Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian Government Schools ('Systemic Review') is an acknowledgement of past institutional failings by the Department of Education ('the department') and a contribution to the public record that can inform current and future child safety practices.

As found by the Board of Inquiry into Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Beaumaris Primary School and Certain Other Government Schools (Board of Inquiry), it is important to hold public institutions to account and to provide assurance to victim-survivors of abuse, their families and the broader community that the reports of child sexual abuse by a staff member in a government school from the 1950s to 1999 have been examined and recorded. The Board of Inquiry recommended that the department undertake this review.

The Systemic Review's Terms of Reference required the department to analyse civil claim files, deidentified information disclosed to the department's recently established Restorative Engagement and Support function, and deidentified data from the National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse.¹ In particular, the Systemic Review was to identify the schools and the number of victim-survivors in the civil claim records, the time periods over which abuse occurred, and circumstances of multiple perpetrators at a school or repeated offending by a perpetrator across a number of schools. The Systemic Review was required to draw observations and learnings from this material, and include case studies where appropriate, to provide greater accountability and visibility of patterns of offending and of the department's failures to prevent, detect and respond to abuse.

The responsibilities of the Independent Monitor are outlined in the Systemic Review Terms of Reference and the instrument of appointment.² In summary, the Independent Monitor's function is to provide independent quality assurance of the Systemic Review by ensuring that the review principles and methodology as set out in this report were adhered to, and that the review has been delivered in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

Having met with the department regularly (approximately fortnightly) and reviewed the work throughout its course, I am satisfied that the department has met the Terms of Reference, subject to some departures for sound reasons, and adhered to the principles and methodology of the Systemic Review.

The departures from the Terms of Reference have been given careful consideration and were agreed with me. They were made for the purpose of maintaining the privacy of the victim-survivors and reducing the risk of identification, of which there is an increased risk when reporting on smaller numbers of victim-survivors or specific information. In accordance with guidance in the ABS Data Confidentiality Guide,³ the Systemic Review adopted a threshold of 6 or more as the minimum count for releasing aggregate data about victim-survivors. It was considered that any count of 5 or less victim-survivors carries an unacceptable risk of identification, particularly when combined with other available information. The threshold of 6 or more strikes a balance by minimising the risk of unintended disclosure while still allowing meaningful insights to be drawn from the data in a secure and responsible manner.

The Table in **Appendix 1 – Acquittal of the Terms of Reference** lists each term of reference with a description of how it has been acquitted and where to find the information in this report.

¹ Department of Education (DE), *Systemic Review into Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian Government Schools* (Systemic Review Terms of Reference), n.d., cl 3(1).

² *Systemic Review Terms of Reference*, n.d., cl 5; Minister for Education (Vic), *Ministerial Order No. 1458: Appointment of an Independent Monitor for the Department of Education's Systemic Review of Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian Governments Schools*, 3 February 2025.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Data confidentiality guide*, ABS website, 8 November 2021, accessed 1 September 2025.

The staff assigned to the Systemic Review project in the department's Legal Division have demonstrated diligence and professionalism, having:

- carefully considered all source material
- established processes to ensure that information contained in the civil claim files about child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools is reliably captured, deidentified, and analysed at scale
- developed a data capture and validation system appropriate to the highly sensitive nature of the material and its volume
- carried out the review in accordance with the range of legal obligations to which the department must abide, including privacy protections and confidentiality obligations
- given close attention to the form and presentation of the report, recognising that many victim-survivors and their families may have an interest in it.

This was a solemn task. While no review can undo the harm that was caused, the establishment of a public record of what occurred is an important step towards accountability and transparency. The approach the department has taken to the Systemic Review reflects that responsibility.

I trust that the lessons drawn from this Systemic Review will inform the department's continuing efforts to strengthen child safety in schools and prevent such institutional failures from being repeated.

I commend this report to the Minister for Education.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Griffith', with a stylized, looping flourish at the end.

Julia Griffith PSM

Independent Monitor

13 March 2026

Secretary's foreword

As Secretary of the Department of Education, I am profoundly disturbed by the shocking abuse and injury inflicted on the victim-survivors of historical child sexual abuse that occurred in Victorian Government schools.

That such abuse was perpetrated by individuals employed by the department and trusted by their school communities reflects catastrophic institutional failings and an unacceptable breakdown in systems of oversight and accountability during the 1950s to 1990s – the decades examined by this review. I recognise that the failures of those in authority during this period compounded the harm caused.

The Board of Inquiry focused on Beaumaris Primary School due to the extraordinary circumstances at that school, where 4 perpetrators abused multiple students during a specific period of time.⁴ The Board of Inquiry found that, outside the department's work to respond to the Board of Inquiry, the department had never undertaken a systemic review of historical child sexual abuse in government schools to look for common themes or understand the extent of offending that occurred historically across the government school system. The Board of Inquiry offered a strong view that the department should proactively seek to understand the extent of its past failings and publish a public record of its findings.

In response, the Victorian Government committed the department to undertake a systemic review of all civil claim files relating to historical child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools, where the abuse was by a staff member and occurred prior to the year 2000 (the Systemic Review). The Government committed to an Independent Monitor overseeing the Systemic Review.

On 3 February 2025, the Minister for Education appointed Ms Julia Griffith PSM as the Independent Monitor under sections 5.2.10(1) and 5.10.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. I wish to thank Ms Griffith for her expertise and guidance to the department as we undertook this significant task.

The department has engaged openly and transparently with the Systemic Review process, and with Ms Griffith. Through this Systemic Review, the department has reflected on its past failures by reviewing a wealth of historical information held in civil claim records. This report contributes to the public record on historical child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools.

To every former student who suffered sexual abuse, I offer my deepest and most sincere apology. I recognise the lifelong impacts this trauma can have – on education, mental health, relationships, and life opportunities – sometimes manifesting in ways not expected or fully understood until many years later. I also wish to acknowledge the significant toll this abuse has taken on families, loved ones, and the broader community. The impacts on parents, partners, siblings, children and friends are profound and lasting.

I commend the victim-survivors who have brought civil claims or otherwise reported their experiences to the department or the police. Your courage and commitment have played an essential role in ensuring that this history is no longer hidden or denied. You have demonstrated extraordinary strength in speaking out and seeking justice, not only for yourselves but for others.

Children must be and feel safe in our schools. I seek to assure the Victorian community that the child safety landscape in our government schools is radically different today than at the time of the events described in the pages that follow. Over the past 10 years in particular, the Victorian Government and the department have introduced significant reforms to protect the safety and wellbeing of children in schools, including:

- implementing the Child Safe Standards as a minimum standard for school registration (with regular and rigorous reviews of government school compliance)
- mandatory reporting of suspected child sexual abuse and inappropriate staff conduct through the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- improved information sharing mechanisms and tools
- effective systems of complaints handling
- robust screening of employment candidates

⁴ *Report of the Board of Inquiry into Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Beaumaris Primary School and Certain Other Government Schools* (Board of Inquiry report), Victorian Government, 2024.

- ensuring ongoing staff supervision.

Importantly, students today are empowered through mandatory age-appropriate sexuality, respectful relationships and consent education. Through this education we equip students with skills to develop body autonomy, identify grooming behaviours and abuse, and the language to speak up and seek help. A description of contemporary policies and procedures for prevention, identification, reporting, management of and response to child sexual abuse is provided in **Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures** of this report. In addition to this suite of measures, the Executive Board of the department maintains systemic oversight of child safety in schools – as well as in the newly established Early Learning Victoria kindergartens – through a dedicated Child Safety Committee, which meets quarterly and which I personally chair.

While much has been done to protect current students, the Board of Inquiry shed light on how the department can better acknowledge and address the failures to former students and the ongoing devastating impact of child sexual abuse. As a result of the learnings and recommendations of the Board of Inquiry, the department has significantly strengthened its supports for former students who experienced sexual abuse in a Victorian government school. This includes:

- establishing a restorative engagement program which offers a safe and supportive way for victim-survivors to connect directly with a senior representative from the department to receive an acknowledgement and an apology
- a website providing information on options and supports for former students who experienced child sexual abuse⁵
- a website on how to access records⁶.

The department has also published detailed policy and guidance to support schools to respond to any matter relating to historical child sexual abuse with sensitivity, respect and accountability.⁷

Looking forward, I commit the Child Safety Committee of the Executive Board to ensuring that the observations and learnings from this review report, and the department's ongoing work with students, former students and victim-survivors of abuse in schools, are used to inform current and future child safety practices and supports.

I commend this report to the Minister for Education.



Tony Bates PSM

Secretary

Department of Education

18 March 2026

⁵ Victorian Government, [Victim-survivor support for former students](https://www.vic.gov.au/victim-survivor-support-for-former-students), vic.gov.au, 10 March 2026, accessed 10 March 2026.

⁶ Victorian Government, [Get school records](https://www.vic.gov.au/get-school-records), School records, vic.gov.au, 10 February 2026, accessed 10 February 2026.

⁷ DE, [Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian Government Schools: Policy](https://www.pal.vic.gov.au/historical-child-sexual-abuse-in-victorian-government-schools-policy), Policy and Advisory Library, PAL website, 9 December 2025, accessed 20 January 2026.

Contents

Acknowledgement of First Peoples	2
Acknowledgment of victim-survivors	2
A note on language.....	2
Content warning.....	2
Statement from the Independent Monitor	3
Secretary's foreword.....	5
Contents	7
Executive summary	9
Observations and learnings.....	9
Conducting the Systemic Review	13
The department's current approach to protecting children and young people in government schools.....	14
Principles and methodology for conducting the Systemic Review	15
Principles	15
Methodology	17
The Systemic Review of Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian Government Schools.....	20
Introducing key concepts	20
Background to civil claims	21
Observations and learnings.....	23
Analysis of civil claims files.....	23
Analysis of redress applications	46
Analysis of other relevant disclosures	50
The Systemic Review affirms Board of Inquiry key findings.....	52
Board of Inquiry Finding 1: an absence of policies and procedures	52
Board of Inquiry Finding 2: an absence of guidance to staff	53
Board of Inquiry Finding 3: a culture that prioritised the reputation of the education system over the safety of children	54
Board of Inquiry Finding 4: a lack of staff training	55
Board of Inquiry Finding 5: poor record-keeping and information-sharing practices	56
Board of Inquiry Finding 6: no systemic reviews	57
Closing	58
Appendix 1 – Acquittal of the Terms of Reference	59
Appendix 2 – List of schools named in a settled civil claim relating to historical child sexual abuse.....	61
Appendix 3 – Perpetrator case studies.....	64
<i>Perpetrator A</i>	64
<i>Perpetrator B</i>	64
<i>Perpetrator C</i>	64
Reginald Adrian Crick.....	65
Robert Leonard Morris.....	66

Timothy Richardson 68

Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures 69

Prevention..... 69

Identification..... 74

Reporting 76

Responding..... 79

Management..... 83

Executive summary

The Systemic Review is a demonstration of the department's commitment to accountability and learning to improve systems to protect the children and young people of today and tomorrow. The Systemic Review was conducted in accordance with the Terms of Reference⁸ and the principles and methodology outlined in this report, and was overseen by the Independent Monitor.⁹

Historical child sexual abuse was defined in the Terms of Reference as 'sexual abuse of a child in a government school by a staff member employed by the department in a government school, where that abuse occurred on or prior to 31 December 1999'.¹⁰

The Systemic Review identified the following matters of historical child sexual abuse:

- **483¹¹** civil claims
- **293** applications made under the National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse
- **65** individuals that the department has assisted, directly or indirectly, following disclosures made since the restorative engagement and support function was established on 28 June 2023.

In producing the following information, the department acknowledges the past institutional failings that enabled or contributed to child sexual abuse occurring in Victorian government schools.

Observations and learnings

The Systemic Review affirmed the key findings of the Board of Inquiry.

The Board of Inquiry identified the below 6 significant and systemic failures which contributed to the inadequacy of the department's response to child sexual abuse at the relevant time:

1. An absence of policies and procedures.
2. An absence of guidance to staff.
3. A culture that prioritised the reputation of the education system over the safety of children.
4. A lack of staff training.
5. Poor record-keeping and information-sharing practices.
6. No systemic reviews.

See **The Systemic Review affirms Board of Inquiry key findings.**

The Systemic Review made the following additional observations:

⁸ DE, *Systemic Review into Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian Government Schools* (Systemic Review Terms of Reference), n.d., subcl 3(1).

⁹ Minister for Education (Vic), *Ministerial Order No. 1458: Appointment of an Independent Monitor for the Department of Education's Systemic Review of Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian Governments Schools*, 3 February 2025.

¹⁰ *Systemic Review Terms of Reference*, n.d., subcl 2(e).

¹¹ One victim-survivor brought 2 civil claims against different perpetrators, which explains why the total count of civil claims is 483 but the number of victim-survivors is 482.

1. An estimated 15% of Victorian government schools in operation between 1950 and 1999 have been named in civil claims or National Redress Scheme applications; 29% of secondary schools are named.

There were **403** Victorian government schools named in a civil claim or National Redress Scheme application relating to historical child sexual abuse. This includes:

- **249** primary schools – approximately **12%** of all primary schools in operation during 1950 to 1999.
- **143** secondary schools – approximately **29%** of all secondary schools in operation during 1950 to 1999.
- **11** special government schools – approximately **8%** of all special schools in operation during 1950 to 1999.

See **Observations and Learnings; Analysis of civil claims files; Government schools where historical child sexual abuse occurred** for analysis about the schools named in civil claims.

See **Observations and Learnings; Analysis of redress applications** for analysis about the schools named in redress applications.

A full list of the schools named in the civil claims is provided in **Appendix 2 – List of schools named in a settled civil claim relating to historical child sexual abuse**.

2. Children in ‘special schools’ were approximately 5.6 times more likely to experience child sexual abuse than children in mainstream schools.

While it is estimated that **0.9%** of students who attended a Victorian government school during 1950 to 1999 attended special schools (as they were then known), **5%** of victim-survivors who brought a civil claim were abused in special schools.

See **Observations and Learnings; Analysis of civil claims files; Government schools where historical child sexual abuse occurred**.

3. Most victim-survivors who have brought a civil claim are male, and were 12 years old or younger when the abuse commenced. On average, it has taken 42 years for victim-survivors to bring a civil claim.

There were **482** victim-survivors who had brought a civil claim relating to historical child sexual abuse.

- The majority of victim-survivors (**366** or **76%**) were male.
- The majority (**341** or **71%**) were 12 years of age or younger when the abuse commenced. The highest prevalence of abuse occurred among **9** to **13** year olds, indicating that this cohort were at particular risk. Ages ranged from **4** to **18** years.
- On average, victim-survivors were subjected to abuse over a period of approximately **2 years**.
- On average, it took **42 years** for a victim-survivor to bring a civil claim.

See **Observations and Learnings; Analysis of civil claims files; The victim-survivors**.

4. The alleged perpetrators named in the civil claims were overwhelmingly male, with their age at the time of the alleged abuse ranging from 20 to 69 years of age.

There were **195** employees named as alleged perpetrators in the civil claims.

- The majority (**174** or **89%**) were male. Male alleged perpetrators were therefore overrepresented based on the estimated proportion of male teachers in the government teaching workforce at the time.
- The median length of employment with the department was **26 years**.
- The median age of the alleged perpetrators was **35 years** of age. Ages ranged from 20 to 69 years.
- Almost half (**95** or **49%**) of alleged perpetrators had a disciplinary record on their personnel file. Of these disciplinary records, **80** related to allegations of child sexual abuse (meaning that **41%** of the alleged perpetrators had a disciplinary record relating to child sexual abuse).

See **Observations and Learnings; Analysis of civil claims files; The alleged perpetrators**.

5. Alleged perpetrators held roles at all levels, with 23% of alleged perpetrators being a principal or equivalent at the time of the abuse.

Of the **195** alleged perpetrators identified in the civil claims, **44 (23%)** were principals (including head teachers at primary schools without a principal) or vice-principals (including assistant principals) at the time of the abuse. Therefore, alleged perpetrators who were in a principal-class role were over-represented based on their estimated proportion of the government teaching workforce during the period under review.

See **Observations and Learnings; Analysis of civil claims files; The alleged perpetrators**.

6. A third of alleged perpetrators had multiple claims of abuse made against them.

Of the **195** alleged perpetrators, **64 (33%)** were named in multiple civil claims.

The Systemic Review undertook case studies of **6** perpetrators who were named in settled civil claims by 10 or more victim-survivors, and who were not subject to the Board of Inquiry. Three perpetrators are deceased, and details of their offending are in the public domain. These perpetrators are named and information about the school and the department's response to the complaints and incidents alleged in the civil claims are disclosed. These perpetrators are:

- Reginald Adrian Crick
- Robert Leonard Morris
- Timothy Richardson.

Three perpetrators are still living. They cannot be named and details about their conduct cannot be disclosed as doing so may jeopardise current or future criminal proceedings. Pseudonyms have been applied and limited information is disclosed. These perpetrators are referred to as:

- *Perpetrator A*
- *Perpetrator B*
- *Perpetrator C*.

See **Appendix 3 – Perpetrator case studies**.

7. Alleged perpetrators were rarely dismissed in response to child sexual abuse.

Of the **195** alleged perpetrators:

- **7 (3.5%)** were dismissed due to child sexual abuse allegations. Based on the low number of dismissals, it can be inferred that allegations of sexual abuse were historically not reported, believed or properly investigated, or that employees chose to resign or retire in response to allegations (and therefore left their employment before they could be dismissed)
- **69 (35%)** resigned, with just under half (**32** or **16%**) having evidence of allegations of child sexual abuse in their personnel files
- **66 (34%)** retired, with **8 (4%)** having evidence of allegations of child sexual abuse in their personnel files. If a teacher retired rather than resigned, they were eligible for employment as a replacement (emergency) teacher. Emergency teachers were engaged at short notice to fill an unforeseen staffing need as a result of illness or approved leave. As there was no central function during the period under review that had a role in the probity checking or regulation of emergency teachers, and as placements were not recorded on a staff member's Teaching Service Record or personnel file, the Systemic Review was unable to confirm how many of the alleged perpetrators who retired subsequently engaged in emergency teaching.

See **Observations and Learnings; Analysis of civil claims files; The alleged perpetrators.**

8. Teachers were transferred to other schools in response to allegations of child sexual abuse.

Based on the review of the civil claims, responding to child sexual abuse allegations was often managed at the school level. It appeared that alleged perpetrators were often transferred to another school, without apparent consideration being given to an alleged perpetrator's ongoing risk to children. Once a teacher left a school or exited the teaching service, the matter was considered resolved and, often, no further action was taken. The Systemic Review observed that, on average, alleged perpetrators were employed at **5** government schools during their career.

Historical personnel records available in the civil claims files often did not include reasons for a staff member's transfer between schools. It was therefore possible that a school which received a transferred teacher was not aware of previous allegations of child sexual abuse, if any, against that staff member.

See **The Systemic Review affirms Board of Inquiry key findings; Board of Inquiry finding 3.**

9. There was a consistent lack of evidence in the civil claims files of contemporaneous records being made about reports of child sexual abuse.

There were many cases in which victim-survivors recalled making reports of abuse to school staff, and there were no records of these complaints.

Based on the victim-survivor's allegation in a Statement of Claim, reports appeared to have been made to the school at the time of the abuse in approximately **97** civil claims (**19%** of civil claims).

The Systemic Review was able to identify evidence that a report was passed on to the department at the time of the abuse in **29** civil claims (**6%** of claims), either by the school or by the victim-survivor's family directly.

See **Observations and Learnings; Analysis of civil claims files; Reporting the abuse.**

See **The Systemic Review affirms Board of Inquiry key findings; Board of Inquiry finding 1.**

10. There was a lack of awareness amongst school communities of grooming behaviour or the risk of child sexual abuse.

Based on the allegations made in the civil claims, there were instances where there was no apparent awareness among the school community of behaviour that is now understood to be child sexual abuse (such as taking sexually explicit photographs of students), or behaviour that is a high risk for child sexual abuse (such as sleepovers at a teacher's private residence) that today would be understood to be grooming.

For example, it was observed that a substantial proportion of civil claims alleged abuse by an employee at a non-school location or activity (**39%** of civil claims), such as at private residences (**27%** of civil claims).

See **Observations and Learnings; Analysis of civil claims files; Patterns of offending.**

See **The Systemic Review affirms Board of Inquiry key findings; Board of Inquiry finding 2.**

11. There was an over-reliance on police investigating allegations of abuse.

When police investigations did not progress, or did not result in any criminal charges, schools and the department often considered that the investigation was complete and took no further administrative or disciplinary action.

See **The Systemic Review affirms Board of Inquiry key findings; Board of Inquiry finding 2.**

Conducting the Systemic Review

The Systemic Review considered material received by the department prior to 30 June 2025.

The department has endeavoured to provide an accurate interpretation of the information it holds from the above records. The department acknowledges that the information contained in this report does not provide an exhaustive account of historical child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools. This is because:

- the data outlined in this report captures information collected and analysed at a point in time (that is, information received by the department prior to 30 June 2025)
- poor historical record keeping practices have meant that some records are incomplete, unclear, unable to be located or do not exist. This issue was also encountered by the Board of Inquiry.¹² For this reason, the department has focussed on the only centrally searchable record collection available, being the civil claims files
- research from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) indicates that on average victim-survivors take 23.9 years to disclose the abuse, with men taking longer to disclose than women.¹³ Some victim-survivors will never disclose the abuse.

Therefore, the department accepts that the following information is non-exhaustive, and that the full extent of historical child sexual abuse in the Victorian government school system may never be known.

¹² *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, pp 239–240, 373.

¹³ The average for women was 20.6 years and for males was 25.6 years: *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (Institutional Abuse Royal Commission report) (Final Report, 2017), vol 4, p 9.

The department's current approach to protecting children and young people in government schools

The child safety framework in Victorian government schools has evolved significantly since the period under review, and the department acknowledges that the work of child safety is ongoing.

A summary of the current approach to child safety is in **Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures**.

Principles and methodology for conducting the Systemic Review

The Terms of Reference provide that the Systemic Review be conducted in accordance with the principles and methodology as determined by the department. These principles and methodology were agreed with the Independent Monitor and are outlined below.

Principles

1. The department acknowledges:
 - a. that child sexual abuse is abhorrent and can have lifelong effects for victim-survivors
 - b. the courage required of any victim-survivor to come forward
 - c. the substantial work undertaken by the Board of Inquiry into Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Beaumaris Primary School and Certain Other Government Schools ('Board of Inquiry'), which:
 - i. established an official public record of victim-survivors' experiences of child sexual abuse by staff members employed by the department at Beaumaris Primary School and certain other government schools between 1960 and 1999
 - ii. reported on how the education system operated and was structured between 1960 and 1999, and the broader cultural context of the time
 - iii. found that the department's response to child sexual abuse in its schools at the time was wholly inadequate and characterised by a series of repeated, systemic and self-reinforcing failures. Specifically, the Board of Inquiry made 6 findings as to the specific failures that existed at the time, which were systemic in nature
 - iv. made 9 recommendations to support victim-survivors of historical child sexual abuse, which included a recommendation on a statewide truth-telling and accountability process ('Recommendation 3').
 - d. that while the Beaumaris Primary School cluster of child sexual abuse was particularly insidious, it was not isolated
 - e. there have been no systemic reviews led by the department to understand the scope and scale of historical child sexual abuse in government schools.
2. The department will undertake a review of civil claim files¹⁴ relating to historical child sexual abuse by a staff member employed by the department, in accordance with the Terms of Reference set by the Victorian Cabinet, referred to as the Systemic Review into Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian Government Schools ('Systemic Review').¹⁵
3. The objectives of the Systemic Review are to:
 - a. identify and acknowledge the department's historical failings

¹⁴ Civil claims files mean records held by the department's Legal Division for claims for compensation brought against the department by former Victorian government school students alleging sexual abuse by departmental employees where the abuse allegedly occurred before 31 December 1999.

¹⁵ [*Systemic Review Terms of Reference*](#), n.d.

- b. contribute information to the public record regarding historical child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools.
4. The department will undertake the Systemic Review in accordance with the following principles:
- a. The department is committed to safeguarding victim-survivors' privacy and psychological safety. In line with this commitment, the department will:
 - i. conduct the Systemic Review in a trauma-informed way that recognises victim-survivors' right to privacy and the sensitivity of the material being reviewed.
 - ii. maintain confidentiality and prevent unlawful disclosure of information about victim-survivors by ensuring victim-survivors are not identifiable in the Systemic Review report.
 - b. The Systemic Review, established by the department as an area of the department's Legal Division to conduct the review, will openly engage with the Independent Monitor, who will be granted access on a confidential basis to the information collected by the Systemic Review in order to provide independent review, monitoring and assessment of the department's performance of the Systemic Review.
 - c. The Systemic Review will be undertaken within the resources and time determined by Cabinet, and in accordance with the Terms of Reference. Within these constraints it is noted that:
 - i. the department is committed to providing an accurate picture of the information held in the department's civil claims files relating to historical child sexual abuse in government schools. This acknowledges that historical records obtained by the department to respond to civil claims, including those sourced from schools, are often incomplete, unclear or non-existent (which the department learnt through the Board of Inquiry process), and searching beyond the information held in the civil claim files within the Systemic Review's reporting deadline is unfeasible due to their volume
 - ii. in reviewing the department's civil claims files relating to historical child sexual abuse, the Systemic Review will comply with the department's legal obligations under section 27 of the *Civil Procedure Act 2010* (Vic) and the common law *Harman* implied undertaking,¹⁶ which prevent information and documents obtained through compulsive court processes from being used for any other purpose
 - iii. redress applications that the department has received about historical child sexual abuse under the National Redress Scheme can provide a valuable contribution to the statewide picture. Part 4.3 of the *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018* (Cth) (National Redress Scheme Act) limits how redress scheme information may be obtained, recorded, disclosed or used. Therefore, the Systemic Review will consider redress scheme information insofar as permitted under the National Redress Scheme Act
 - iv. the department acknowledges that disclosures of historical child sexual abuse can provide valuable insights despite not being subjected to a formal investigative or legal process. Due to historical record-keeping practices (which were often incomplete, unclear or non-existent), it may be the case that allegations of child sexual abuse were raised at the school level, but no action was taken by the school or department at the time (noting allegations may be up to 75 years old). Allegations

¹⁶ *Harman v Secretary of State for Home Department* [1983] 1 AC 280, affirmed in *Hearne v Street* (2008) 235 CLR 125.

may also have been made directly to the department in the past, records of which, if they exist, may not have been captured in such a way that enables them to be readily identified within the time and resources of the review. The Restorative Engagement and Support team in the Operational Policy School Engagement and Compliance (OPSEC) Division provides a central function for receiving and responding to disclosures or reports of historical child sexual abuse in government schools. Therefore, in addition to information held on civil claims files, the Systemic Review will consider any relevant disclosures held by this team since this function was established on 28 June 2023 (up until 30 June 2025)

5. The Forum for Truth and Recognition has also been established in response to Recommendation 3 of the Board of Inquiry and is running concurrently with the Systemic Review. The Forum for Truth and Recognition is available to hear directly from victim-survivors who wish to share their experience and contribute to the public record. Therefore, and as it was not required by the Terms of Reference, the Systemic Review will not approach victim-survivors directly.

Methodology

The following methodology was adopted to perform the Systemic Review.

1. The Systemic Review requested information from the following areas of the department:
 - a. The Negligence, Litigation and Redress area in Legal Division, about:
 - i. civil claims files relating to historical child sexual abuse in a Victorian government school
 - ii. redress applications under the National Redress Scheme Act for historical child sexual abuse in a Victorian government school.
 - b. The Knowledge, Privacy and Records area, for archived civil claims files that were not available on Legal Division's electronic document management system. Reasonable endeavours were made to locate these files by searching centrally held archived records.
 - c. The Restorative Engagement and Support function, about the total number of individuals the department has assisted, directly or indirectly, in relation to historical child sexual abuse since 28 June 2023, when the function was established.
 - d. The following divisions about the department's current policies and procedures for prevention, detection and response to child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools:
 - i. OPSEC Division
 - ii. Conduct and Integrity Division
 - iii. Assurance, Knowledge and Executive Services Division
 - iv. Employee Safety, Wellbeing and Inclusion Division
 - v. People and Workplace Relations (Schools) Division
 - vi. Wellbeing, Health and Engagement Division
 - vii. Security and Emergency Management Division.
2. The Systemic Review consulted with the Commonwealth Operator of the National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse, about the use of redress scheme data for the purpose of the Systemic Review, including seeking confirmation that the proposed use complies with Part 4.3 of the of the National Redress Scheme Act.
3. The Systemic Review focused its resources on reviewing the civil claims which indicated a heightened level of historical child sexual abuse activity and were not the subject of the Board of Inquiry, including:

- a. if a certain perpetrator was identified in multiple settled civil claims, the civil claims relating to that perpetrator. If a perpetrator was named by 10 or more victim-survivors in a settled civil claim, a case study was prepared to provide details of the school and department's response to the complaints and incidents alleged in the civil claim. In these case studies, the Systemic Review:
 - i. has not made any findings about the allegations in the civil claims
 - ii. has not included any information that might lead to the identification of a victim-survivor
 - iii. has provided limited information on the nature of the offending to minimise retraumatising victim-survivors
 - iv. engaged with Victoria Police about identifying the alleged perpetrators by name, to ensure that any police investigations or criminal proceedings were not prejudiced. Pseudonyms have been applied where necessary.
 - b. if a certain school was identified in multiple civil claims (about multiple perpetrators), the civil claims relating to that school.
4. The review of civil claims complied with the department's legal obligations in respect of use of documents and information discovered in civil proceedings.¹⁷ Accordingly, the Systemic Review limited its review of civil claims files to the following documents and information, which were not obtained through compulsive court processes, being:
 - a. originating processes (writs and Statements of Claim)
 - b. departmental records gathered for the purpose of responding to the claim, such as teacher's statements of service and the personnel file (including any disciplinary records on the personnel file). In limited cases when a personnel or disciplinary file of an employee was not readily identifiable in a civil claim file, the Systemic Review requested these records from the relevant human resource functions in the department
 - c. any information relating to criminal records in the department's civil claim file (for instance, reasons for sentence or indictments), except where subject to confidentiality restrictions
 - d. any other documents and records in the civil claim file that is not subject to an undertaking as to their use and disclosure (for example, publicly available information such as media records).
5. The department adopted a trauma-informed approach to minimise the risk of retraumatising victim-survivors. To this end, the department:
 - a. presented all observations and analysis in a de-identified manner that is thematic in nature
 - b. followed best-practice trauma-informed language guides.
6. The Systemic Review has upheld the privacy of all persons in accordance with relevant legislation, such as the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and the *Judicial Proceedings Reports Act 1958* (Vic),¹⁸ along with any applicable civil procedure rules and confidentiality orders. In practice:
 - a. no names or personal information of victim-survivors has been published

¹⁷ *Harman v Secretary of State for Home Department* [1983] 1 AC 280, affirmed in *Hearne v Street* (2008) 235 CLR 125; *Civil Procedure Act 2010* (Vic), s 27.

¹⁸ For example, it is an offence to publish any information that could likely lead to the identification of a victim of an alleged sexual offence: *Judicial Proceedings Reports Act 1958* (Vic), subs 4(1A).

- b. pseudonyms have been applied to all living alleged perpetrators who are the subject of a case study, and no personal information of any living alleged perpetrator has been published
 - c. the drafts of the Systemic Review and any documents and records relied upon are subject to restricted access
 - d. all observations and analyses have been presented in a de-identified and thematic manner.
- 7. The civil claims files were reviewed to identify trends, patterns of offending and failures to prevent, detect or respond to abuse. Key data points were extracted and used to produce the figures in this report. Data compilation and cleaning was undertaken by the Systemic Review project team, with validation against source information occurring by peer review. Best efforts were made to interpret the information in the historical records, which at times was difficult to decipher (for example, due to deterioration of documents, or difficulties in interpreting handwriting and the use of shorthand). Data analysis of the matters listed in clause 4 of the Terms of Reference is intended to contribute to a statewide picture of historical child sexual abuse in government schools.
- 8. The Systemic Review did not:
 - a. undertake investigations or make findings about individual cases of historical child sexual abuse
 - b. reconsider any matters considered by the Board of Inquiry.
- 9. Material received by the department (being a civil claim, redress application or disclosure) after 30 June 2025 was not included in the review.
- 10. The Systemic Review provided regular updates, on a fortnightly basis, to the Independent Monitor as to the review's progress and to obtain feedback.
- 11. The Independent Monitor provided assurance to the Minister for Education through quarterly governance meetings with the Deputy Secretary, People and Executive Services Group.

The Systemic Review of Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian Government Schools

The Systemic Review considered **483 civil claims** and **293 redress applications** relating to historical child sexual abuse by a staff member in Victorian government schools.

Introducing key concepts

Civil claims

Civil claim files mean records held by the department's Legal Division of claims for compensation brought against the department by former Victorian government school students alleging sexual abuse by a staff member employed by the department, where the abuse occurred before 31 December 1999.

The Terms of Reference required the Systemic Review to consider all settled civil claims relating to historical child sexual abuse and those civil claims that were in progress where the department had accepted that the abuse occurred.¹⁹ It was necessary to limit the review to those civil claims that were substantially progressed or finalised as the Systemic Review was not investigating allegations in the claims.

The review of civil claims complied with the department's legal obligations in respect of the use of documents and information discovered in civil proceedings. In its review of the civil claim files, the Systemic Review considered the following documents and information which were not obtained through compulsive court processes:

- originating processes (writs and Statements of Claim)
- departmental records gathered for the purpose of responding to the claim, such as teacher's statements of service and the personnel file (including disciplinary records). In limited cases when a personnel or disciplinary file was not readily identifiable in a civil claim file, the Systemic Review requested these records from the relevant human resource functions in the department
- any information relating to criminal records in the department's civil claim file (for example, reasons for sentence or indictments), except where subject to other confidentiality restrictions
- any other documents and records in the civil claim file not subject to an undertaking as to their use and disclosure (for example, publicly available information such as media records).

Historical child sexual abuse

The Terms of Reference define 'historical child sexual abuse' as 'sexual abuse of a child in a government school by a staff member employed by the department in a government school, where that abuse occurred on or prior to 31 December 1999'.²⁰ This definition has been interpreted to exclude contractors and volunteers (who were usually locally engaged by schools rather than the department), as well as visitors. The definition also excludes peer-to-peer harmful sexual behaviours.

The earliest year of abuse identified in the civil claims was 1951. Therefore, the period under review is 1950 to 1999.

Out of scope civil claims

The Systemic Review was provided with **660** civil claims that may have fallen within the scope of a settled, or close to settled, civil claim about 'historical child sexual abuse' as defined in the Terms of Reference.

¹⁹ *Systemic Review Terms of Reference*, n.d., cl 3(1)(a)–(b).

²⁰ *Systemic Review Terms of Reference*, n.d., cl 2(e).

The Systemic Review's first task was to identify those claims that were out of the scope of the Terms of Reference.

The Systemic Review found that **177** civil claims were out of scope. The reasons for a civil claim being out of scope included that:

- the claim, or the facts of the claim, were not settled as at 30 June 2025. This included discontinued claims
- the alleged abuse did not meet the definition of 'historical child sexual abuse' as set by the Terms of Reference. For example:
 - the alleged perpetrator was not a staff member employed by the department
 - the abuse occurred in or after the year 2000
 - the abuse was not sexual.

The Systemic Review found that **483** civil claims were in scope.

Episodes of abuse

To understand the scope and scale of abuse described in the civil claims, the Systemic Review has also counted the number of 'episodes' of abuse, in which an 'episode' refers to the combination of:

- a victim-survivor
- an alleged perpetrator
- a school.

This terminology is only for reporting purposes and is not connected to the number of instances or type of abuse – the department acknowledges the profound impact on children of all types of abuse.

For example:

- a victim-survivor may have been abused by 2 perpetrators and named both perpetrators in the one civil claim. This means there are 2 episodes of abuse in that civil claim (episode one being the victim-survivor, Alleged Perpetrator A, and the school; episode 2 being the victim-survivor, Alleged Perpetrator B, and the school)
- 2 victim-survivors may have brought a civil claim together. This occurred when siblings brought a joint claim together as they were abused by the same perpetrator. This means that there are 2 episodes of abuse in that civil claim (episode one being Victim-Survivor A, the alleged perpetrator, and the school; episode 2 being Victim-Survivor B, the alleged perpetrator, and the school).

As noted above, the Systemic Review found that **483** civil claims were in scope. These civil claims represent **505** episodes of abuse.

The Systemic Review sometimes reports on the number of episodes instead of the number of civil claims as this provides a more accurate picture. The report will clarify whether episodes or civil claims are being counted.

Within each episode there were often multiple instances of abuse. However, due to various factors (including memory fallibility and legal restrictions on the Systemic Review's ability to review all evidence in a civil claim file), it was not possible for the Systemic Review to count individual instances of abuse.

Background to civil claims

Civil claims against the department for historical child sexual abuse have more than tripled over the past 5 years. There are a range of reasons for the increase, with one being the significant civil and criminal law reforms in Victoria over the past 10 years.

In earlier years, limitation periods meant that many victim-survivors were time-barred from making a claim against the department for compensation for their abuse. The law did not recognise that many victim-survivors do not disclose child sexual abuse until years after the abuse occurred, often when they are well

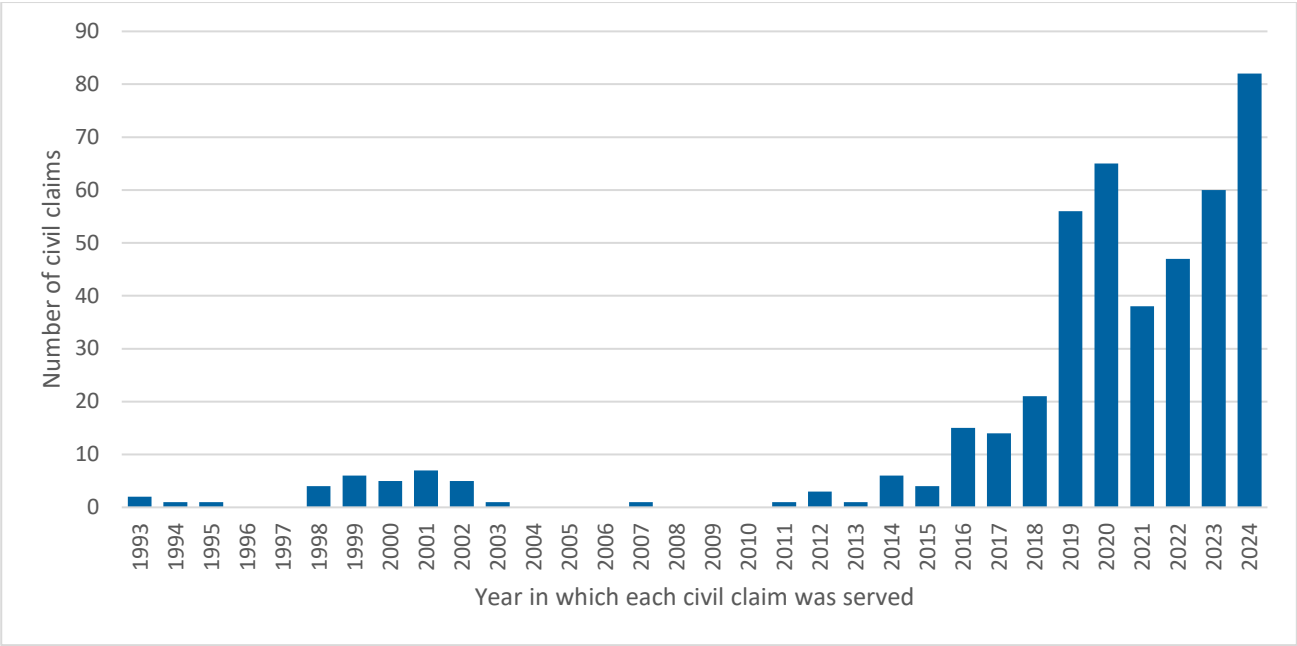
into adulthood. For instance, data from the Royal Commission indicated that the average time between abuse and a victim-survivor first disclosing the abuse was 23.9 years.²¹

In 2015, the *Limitation of Actions Amendment (Child Abuse) Act 2015* (Vic) was enacted. This change removed any limitation period in Victoria for claims relating to injuries arising from sexual, physical or psychological abuse of a minor.²² This meant that victim-survivors who had previously been ‘out of time’ to claim were now able to seek compensation for injuries related to historical child sexual abuse. This reform has had a significant impact, as the Systemic Review found that the average length of time to bring a civil claim was **42 years** after the abuse occurred.

In 2019, the *Limitation of Actions Act 1958* (Vic) was further amended to allow victim-survivors of child abuse, who had previously settled a claim and signed a deed of release, to relitigate claims if the court is satisfied that it is just and reasonable to do so.²³

Both changes were intended to improve access to compensation for injury. As a result, the department has seen a marked increase in the number of civil claims in recent years, with **80%** of all civil claims relating to historical child sexual abuse being made since 2019. This trend is shown in the graph below.²⁴

Figure 1: Civil claims relating to historical child sexual abuse brought against the department over time



The department is bound by Victoria’s Model Litigant Guidelines and committed to the Common Guiding Principles in responding to civil claims involving allegations of child sexual abuse.²⁵ The latter requires the department to respond to matters involving child sexual abuse in a manner that minimises potential future trauma to victim-survivors. Other commitments include handling claims fairly and consistently, reducing

²¹ *Institutional Abuse Royal Commission report*, 2017, vol 4, p 9.

²² *Limitation of Actions Act 1958* (Vic), pt 2A, as inserted by *Limitation of Actions Amendment (Child Abuse) Act 2015* (Vic), ss 3–4.

²³ *Limitation of Actions Act 1958* (Vic), ss 27QA–QF, as inserted by *Children Legislation Amendment Act 2019* (Vic), s 32.

²⁴ As the Systemic Review did not consider material received after 30 June 2025, the number of civil claims for 2025 is not included in the graph to prevent any distortion caused by including a count for half a year.

²⁵ Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS), *Victorian Model Litigant Guidelines*, 8 July 2022, accessed 28 July 2025; DJCS, *Common Guiding Principles for responding to civil claims involving allegations of child sexual abuse*, 13 February 2024, accessed 28 July 2025.

unnecessary delay, facilitating early settlement, attempting to resolve matters promptly and by agreement, and offering a written apology, where appropriate.

Observations and learnings

The department acknowledges that each number in this section of the report represents a person who experienced a profound trauma in their childhood. For many, this has left an indelible mark on their lives.

Analysis of civil claims files

The Terms of Reference required the Systemic Review to consider:

- all settled civil claims relating to historical child sexual abuse²⁶
- civil claims relating to historical child sexual abuse that are in progress where the department accepts that the abuse occurred.²⁷

Both of these categories are referred to as 'settled' civil claims for the purpose of this report.

As at 30 June 2025, there were **483** civil claims brought against the department relating to historical child sexual abuse by a staff member that met the inclusion criteria set by the Terms of Reference.

These civil claims represent:

- **505** episodes of abuse. Of the **483** civil claims, **17** had two or more episodes of abuse
- **482**²⁸ victim-survivors
- **195** alleged perpetrators. Of these, **64** alleged perpetrators abused multiple victim-survivors
- **201** Victorian government schools, representing approximately **7%** of government schools in operation during the period under review (1950 to 1999).

Year of abuse

The Terms of Reference required the Systemic Review to consider historical child sexual abuse that occurred prior to the year 2000.

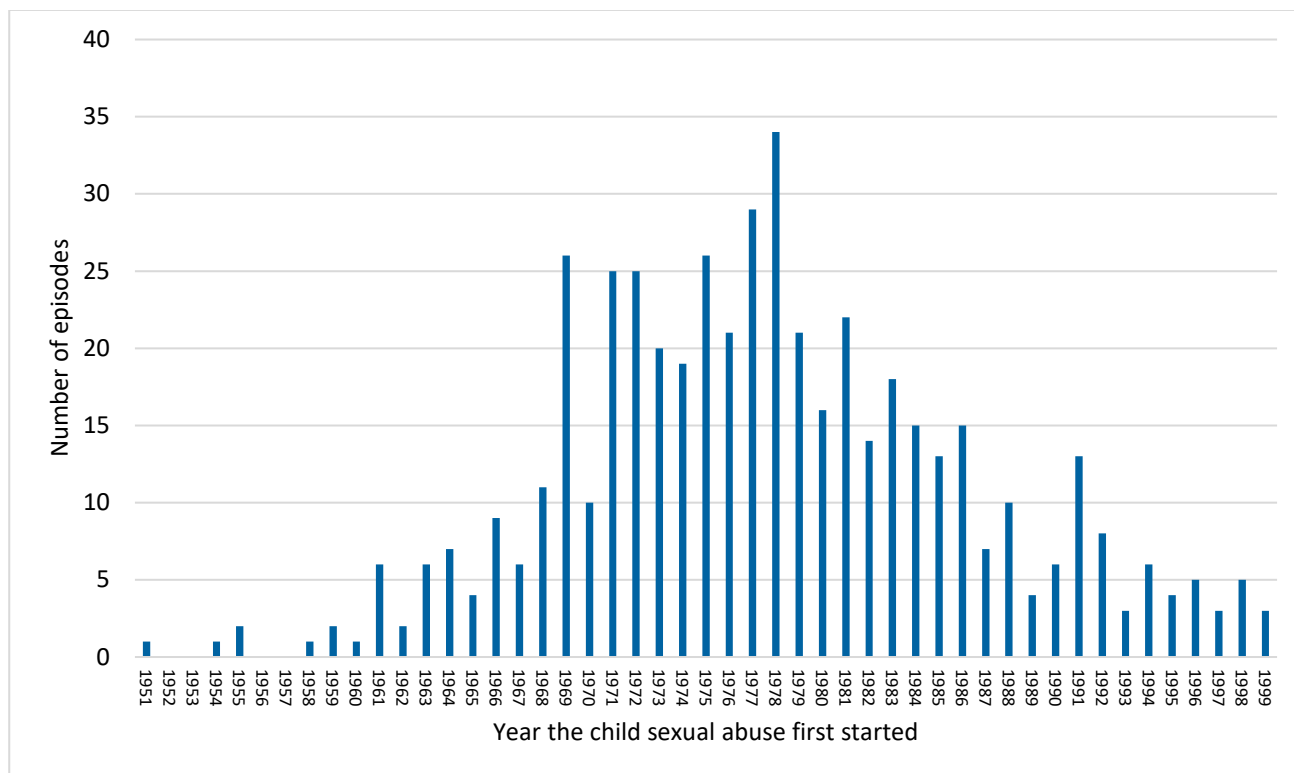
The graph below shows the year that the abuse alleged in a civil claim first started. It demonstrates that the earliest year of abuse identified in the civil claims occurred in 1951. Most of the historical child sexual abuse alleged in the civil claims occurred in the 1970s.

²⁶ *Systemic Review Terms of Reference*, n.d., cl 3(1)(a).

²⁷ *Systemic Review Terms of Reference*, n.d., cl 3(1)(b).

²⁸ One victim-survivor brought 2 civil claims against different perpetrators, which explains why the total count of civil claims is 483 but the number of victim-survivors is 482.

Figure 2: Year that the abuse alleged in an episode started



Government schools where historical child sexual abuse occurred

201 government schools were named in a settled civil claim as a school where historical child sexual abuse occurred. Of these:

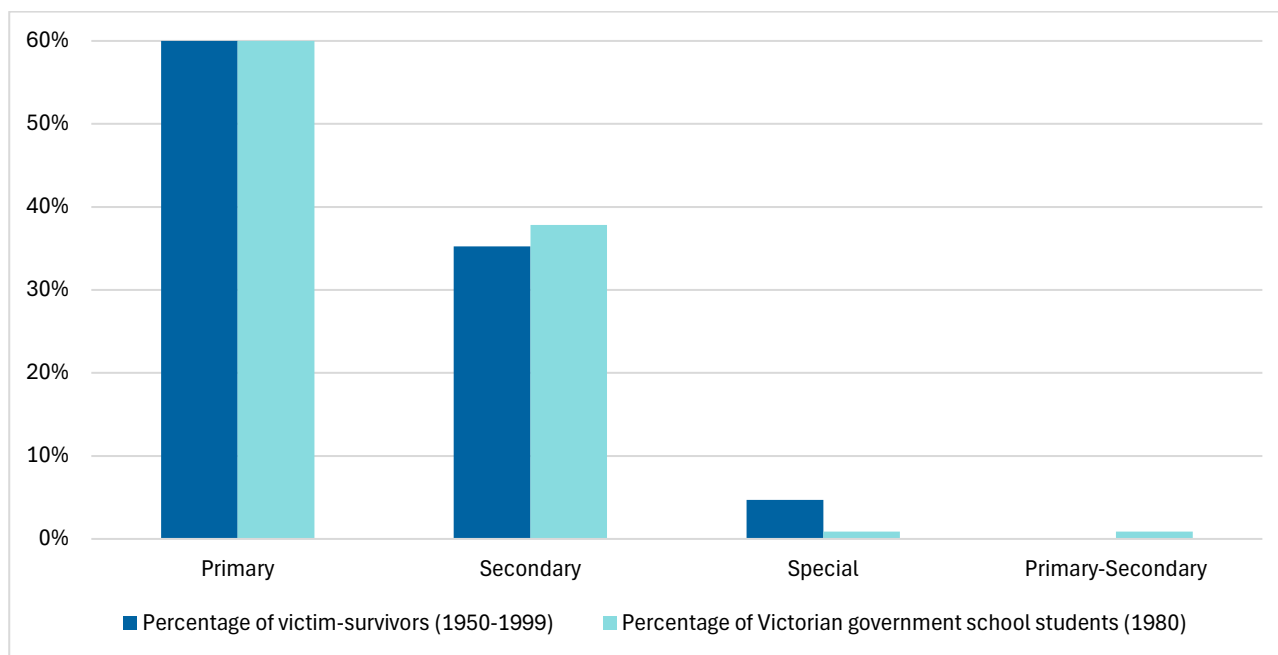
- **111** were primary schools. This represents approximately **5%** of all primary schools in operation during 1950 to 1999
- **81** were secondary schools (including secondary technical schools). This represents approximately **16%** of all secondary schools in operation during 1950 to 1999
- **9** were special schools. This represents approximately **7%** of all special schools in operation during 1950 to 1999.²⁹

The Systemic Review undertook analysis to determine the prevalence of abuse across school types. The Systemic Review compared the proportion of episodes that occurred in each school type against the proportion of students in each school type in 1980.³⁰ This analysis is shown in the figure below.

²⁹ To provide an indication of the number of schools named in a civil claim as a proportion of the schools in operation during the period under review, the Systemic Review relied upon the department's internal Entity Register of schools. The Entity Register includes the schools that were in operation from the 1990s. It does not include any schools that may have closed prior to the 1990s. The Entity Register is the most accurate register available that contains school open and close dates. The Systemic Review filtered out any schools that opened after 31 December 1999 from the analysis. Accordingly, the Systemic Review was not able to determine the exact number of schools in operation during the relevant period due to the limitations of the Entity Register.

³⁰ 1980 was chosen as a benchmark year as it is in the middle of the period under review. Student population data was extracted from ABS (1981) *Victorian Year Book 1981*, number 95, catalogue number 1301.2, p 591, accessed 4 February 2026.

Figure 3: Percentage of victim-survivors by school type; percentage of students attending a Victorian government school by school type in 1980



The graph shows that:

- **60%** of victim-survivors were abused in primary schools
- **35%** of victim-survivors were abused in secondary schools
- **5%** of victim-survivors were abused in special schools.

For primary and secondary schools (mainstream schools), the proportion of victim-survivors reflects the estimated proportion of the student population at those school types.

This is not the case for special schools. While **5%** of victim-survivors were abused in special schools, less than 1% (estimated at 0.9%) of children in Victorian government schools attended a special school.

This means that, based on the victim-survivors who brought a civil claim and the student population in Victorian government schools in 1980, a child attending a special school was **5.6 times more likely** to experience child sexual abuse than a child in a mainstream school.

Historically, 'special schools' were for students with disabilities and for children who were in detention facilities, children's homes and orphanages, and hospitals.³¹ The disproportionately high rates of abuse in special schools suggests that students in special schools were at an increased risk of abuse.

This aligns with the findings of both the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The former found that people with disability experienced violence at higher rates than people without a disability, including being more than twice as likely to experience physical or sexual abuse before the age of 15.³² The latter found that the extent of child sexual abuse in historical residential institutions, including orphanages,

³¹ Victorian Government, '[The history of school types](#)', *School records*, vic.gov.au, 23 December 2025, accessed 2 February 2026. Today, 'specialist schools' are those that specialise in certain subjects or in teaching students with disability: Victorian Government, '[Types of schools](#)', *Education – Information for parents*, vic.gov.au, 6 December 2023, accessed 2 February 2026.

³² *Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability* (Final Report, 2023), vol 3, pp 10–11.

children's homes, and youth detention facilities, was significant, echoing previous inquiries and reports into the vulnerability of children in these institutions.³³

The number and names of the government schools

The Terms of Reference required the Systemic Review to report on the number and names of government schools referred to in a relevant civil claim.³⁴

In most Statements of Claim, the name of the relevant school was easily identified and validated against the department's internal Entity Register of schools. However, in some circumstances it was difficult to identify the correct school as, due to the passage of time, the school had closed, its name was changed, or it merged with another school. Best efforts were made to identify the appropriate school, based on the school number, from the Entity Register.

In cases where a school merged but the school number remained the same, the school name as it was at the time of the abuse (as opposed to the current name) is used. In these circumstances, the Systemic Review referred to the online Victorian Government Schools Directory.³⁵ The directory contains details of over 6,000 Victorian government schools that existed since 1850 and has been published as part of the department's implementation of recommendations from the Board of Inquiry. The school number can be used to search the Victorian Government Schools Directory to identify all names of a school.

The full list of schools named in the civil claims is provided in **Appendix 2 – List of schools named in a settled civil claim relating to historical child sexual abuse**.

The table below shows the schools named in 6 or more civil claims.

Table 1: Schools named by 6 or more victim-survivors

School name	Number of victim-survivors
Beaumaris Primary School	28
Bandiana Primary School	24
Rosebud High School	15
Cranbourne North Primary School	12
Dandenong High School	12
Eastwood Primary School	10
Horsham Technical School	10
Beechworth Primary School	9
Box Hill Primary School	8

³³ *Institutional Abuse Royal Commission report*, 2017, vol 11.

³⁴ *Systemic Review Terms of Reference*, n.d., cl 4(a)(i).

³⁵ Victorian Government, *Victorian Government Schools Directory*, vic.gov.au, 3 March 2026.

Braybrook Primary School	8
Derinya Primary School	8
Moorabbin Primary School	8
Bendigo Primary School	7
Templestowe High School	7
Cranbourne High School	6
Fawkner Technical School	6
Glendonald School For Deaf Children	6
Westall Primary School	6

The table below shows the schools where 2 or more alleged perpetrators were employed, and indicates, as required by the Terms of Reference, whether those perpetrators worked within a 5-year period of each other.³⁶ To prevent identification of victim-survivors, the number of civil claims at a school is only shown if there were 6 or more.

Table 2: Schools named with 2 or more alleged perpetrators (AP)

School name	AP	Claims	Two or more APs within 5 years
Dandenong Technical School	6	-	Yes
Baltara Special School / Baltara School / Royal Park Special School	4	-	Yes
Beaumaris Primary School	4	28	Yes
Pleasant Creek Special School	4	-	Yes
Rushworth High School	3	-	Yes
Ardeer High School	2	-	Yes
Bendigo Primary School	2	7	Yes
Box Hill Salvation Army Boys' Home School	2	-	Yes

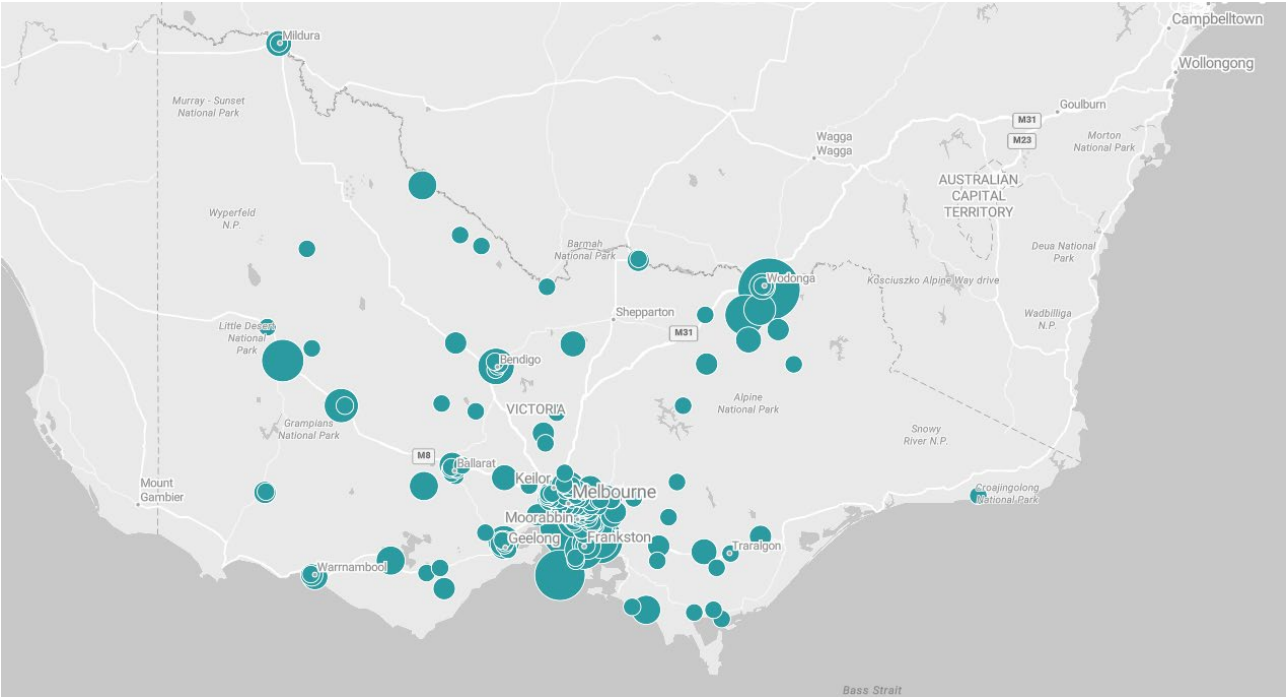
³⁶ *Systemic Review Terms of Reference*, n.d., cl 4(a)(v).

Cobram Consolidated School	2	-	Yes
Coburg High School	2	-	Yes
Dandenong High School	2	12	No
Eastwood Primary School	2	10	No
Hallam Primary School	2	-	Yes
Heatherhill High School	2	-	Yes
Monbulk High School	2	-	No
North Geelong High School	2	-	Yes
Oakleigh High School	2	-	Yes
Ormond East Primary School	2	-	Yes
Tally Ho Special School	2	-	Yes
Templestowe High School	2	7	Yes
Turana Youth Training Education Centre / Royal Park Special School	2	-	Yes
Verdale Primary School	2	-	Yes
Werribee Secondary College	2	-	Yes
Total	57	109³⁷	20

The Systemic Review plotted each episode of abuse on a map of Victoria to demonstrate historical child sexual abuse 'hot spots' across the state, based on the episodes of abuse in civil claims (see below). This map demonstrates the statewide nature of child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools, with hot spots around major regional centres and Melbourne because of higher populations.

³⁷ This is the total number of claims that name a school with 2 or more alleged perpetrators.

Figure 4: Heat map of episodes of historical child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools across the state



The zoomed-in image below is of the greater Melbourne area. This map demonstrates the relative size of the Beaumaris Primary School cluster.

Figure 5: Heat map of episodes of historical child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools in the greater Melbourne area



The Systemic Review examined schools by Local Government Areas (LGAs) to compare the number of claims across LGAs. Those LGAs with 10 or more civil claims are listed in the table below.

Table 3: Number of civil claims (10 or more) by LGA

LGA	Claims
Bayside	38
Wodonga	29
Greater Dandenong	23
Casey	22
Glen Eira	19
Monash	17
Whitehorse	17
Frankston	16
Mornington Peninsula	16
Greater Geelong	14
Indigo	14
Maroondah	14
Merri-bek	12
Banyule	11
Greater Bendigo	11
Manningham	11
Horsham	10
Kingston	10
Yarra Ranges	10

The Systemic Review compared the rates of claims in metropolitan LGAs with non-metropolitan (regional and rural) LGAs (see below). This analysis shows that there is a higher proportion of metropolitan schools named in civil claims (**10%** of metropolitan schools that were in operation between 1950 to 1999 are named in a civil claim) compared with non-metropolitan schools (**5%** of non-metropolitan schools that were in operation between 1950 to 1999 are named in a civil claim).

Table 4: Metropolitan vs non-metropolitan distribution of schools named in civil claims

LGA	Schools named in civil claims	Percentage of schools in operation between 1950 and 1999 named in civil claims
Metropolitan	122	10%
Non-metropolitan	79	5%

When counting episodes of abuse in each LGA, it was clear that most abuse (approximately **64%**) occurred in metropolitan LGAs (see below).

Table 5: Metropolitan vs non-metropolitan distribution of episodes of child sexual abuse

LGA	Episodes	Percentage of episodes
Metropolitan	325	64%
Non-metropolitan	180	36%

The victim-survivors

There are **482** victim-survivors who have brought a civil claim against the department within the scope of the Systemic Review. The Systemic Review acknowledges that this figure does not reflect the true number of victim-survivors of historical child sexual abuse that occurred in the government school system. This may never be known. This is further detailed below in **Observations and learning; Analysis of civil claims files; Reporting the abuse**.

Sex of victim-survivors

Of the **482** victim-survivors identified:

- **366** are male (**76%**)
- **116** are female (**24%**).

This aligns with the Royal Commission's observations and existing research which suggests that, historically, most victim-survivors of child sexual abuse within institutions are male. This is contrasted with other settings, such as within the family or in the broader community, where females are more likely than males to be abused.³⁸

Age of victim-survivors when the abuse commenced

The Systemic Review observed that:

- the majority (**341** or **71%**) were 12 years of age or younger when the abuse commenced
- the age when the abuse commenced ranged from 4 to 18 years of age

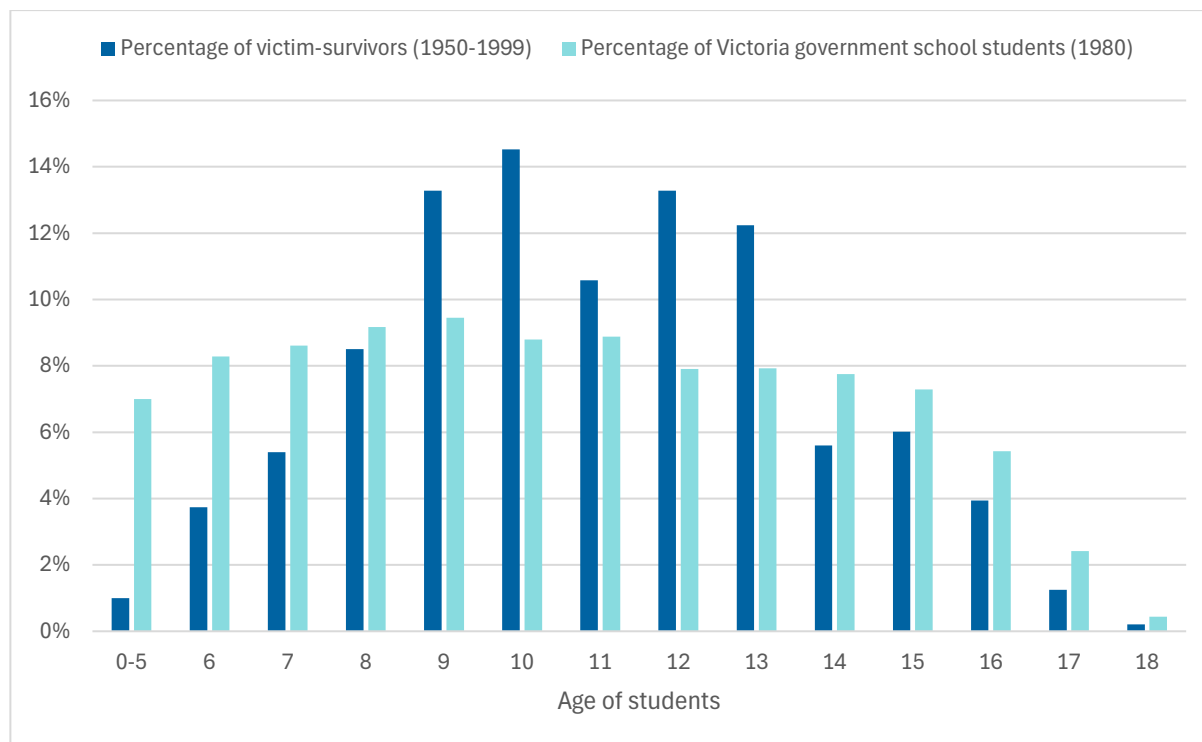
³⁸ *Institutional Abuse Royal Commission report*, 2017, vol 2, p 85.

- on average, a victim-survivor was subjected to abuse over a period of approximately **2 years**.³⁹

These averages were broadly consistent across males and females.

The graph below shows the percentage of the ages of all **482** victim-survivors at the time the abuse commenced, compared with the percentage of the ages of all students who attended a Victorian government school in 1980.⁴⁰ It shows an increased prevalence of abuse occurring between the ages of 9 to 13 years, indicating that this cohort was particularly vulnerable to abuse in school settings during the period under review.

Figure 6: Ages of victim-survivors (%); ages of students in Victorian government schools in 1980 (%)



The Systemic Review was unable to determine the reason behind the dip observed at 11 years of age. This could be the result of the transition from primary to secondary school or memory fallibility as to the exact age when the abuse commenced.

Other demographic information about victim-survivors

The Systemic Review attempted to capture other demographic information about victim-survivors for reporting purposes, such as First Peoples identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. However, information available on the civil claims records was not sufficiently detailed for the Systemic Review to accurately report on this information.

³⁹ When calculating the duration of the abuse, if the abuse started and ended in the same calendar year it was counted as one. If the abuse started in one calendar year and ended in the following calendar year, it was counted as 2. This method was used because the Systemic Review was unable to reliably capture data about the month in which abuse started and ended.

⁴⁰ 1980 was chosen as a benchmark year as it is in the middle of the period under review. Student population data was extracted from ABS (1981) *Victorian Year Book 1981*, number 95, catalogue number 1301.2, p 591, accessed 4 February 2026.

The alleged perpetrators

Many of the experiences of child sexual abuse in the department's civil claims did not, or have not yet, resulted in a criminal conviction. Accordingly, all relevant staff members are referred to as 'alleged perpetrators' in this report.

The Systemic Review identified **36** episodes (in **31** civil claims) that were out of scope of the Terms of Reference as the alleged perpetrator of the child sexual abuse was not a staff member employed by the department. The majority of these claims were single incidents where the alleged perpetrator was a contractor or their role could not be identified with a degree of certainty, but where the department nevertheless accepted that a breach of a duty of care had occurred. These claims are not included in the analysis below. However, they highlight that most historical child sexual abuse that occurred in the Victorian government school system was committed by an employee who was known to the victim-survivor. This aligns with research that shows that perpetrators of child sexual abuse are usually known to victim-survivors.⁴¹

Sex of alleged perpetrators

Of the alleged perpetrators identified in the civil claims that met the inclusion criteria set by the Terms of Reference (**n = 195**):

- **174** were male (**89%**)
- **21** were female (**11%**).

The first year that the Australian Bureau of Statistics counted teaching staff in government schools by sex was in 1964. At this time, male teachers made up 51% of the Victorian government school teaching workforce.⁴² This proportion steadily declined over the years:

- In 1975, males represented 44% of Victorian government school teaching staff⁴³
- In 1990, males represented 36% of Victorian government school staff (including teaching staff and other school staff such as maintenance and administration staff)⁴⁴
- By 1999, males represented 29% of Victorian government school staff (including teaching staff and other school staff such as maintenance and administration staff).⁴⁵

Based on the above, the Systemic Review observed that male alleged perpetrators were over-represented based on the proportion of males in the teaching workforce during the period under review. Conversely, female alleged perpetrators were under-represented based on the proportion of females in the teaching workforce during the period.

This aligns with research that shows that men are more likely than women to commit sexual abuse in different environments (such as institutional environments, online or in the family home).⁴⁶

The Systemic Review observed that:

- both male and female alleged perpetrators identified through the civil claims were more likely to target male students

⁴¹ See, e.g., National Office for Child Safety, [Who perpetrates child sexual abuse?](#), n.d., accessed 18 July 2025.

⁴² There were 10,409 male teachers and 10,185 female teachers: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 'Schools, 1964', *Social Statistics: Australia, No. 29*, catalogue number 4221.0, 1965, p 7, accessed 2 February 2026.

⁴³ There were 16,621 male staff and 21,107 female staff: ABS, [Schools, 1975](#), reference number 13.5, 1976, p 8, accessed 2 February 2026.

⁴⁴ There were 17,037 male staff and 29,197 female staff: ABS, [Schools, Australia 1990](#), catalogue number 4221.0, 1991, p 61, accessed 2 February 2026.

⁴⁵ There were 12,668 male staff and 30,493 female staff: ABS, [Schools, Australia 1999](#), catalogue number 4221.0, 2000, p 73, accessed 2 February 2026.

⁴⁶ See, e.g., National Office for Child Safety, [Who perpetrates child sexual abuse?](#), n.d., accessed 18 July 2025.

- only **13** male alleged perpetrators (**7%** of alleged perpetrators) targeted both male and female victim-survivors
- all of the female alleged perpetrators targeted a single sex (either males or females).

These trends are demonstrated in the table below.

Table 6: Sex of alleged perpetrators (AP) and victim-survivors

Sex of AP	No. of APs	Female victim-survivors	Male victim-survivors
Male	174	112	344
Female	21	5	22
Total	195	117 ⁴⁷	366

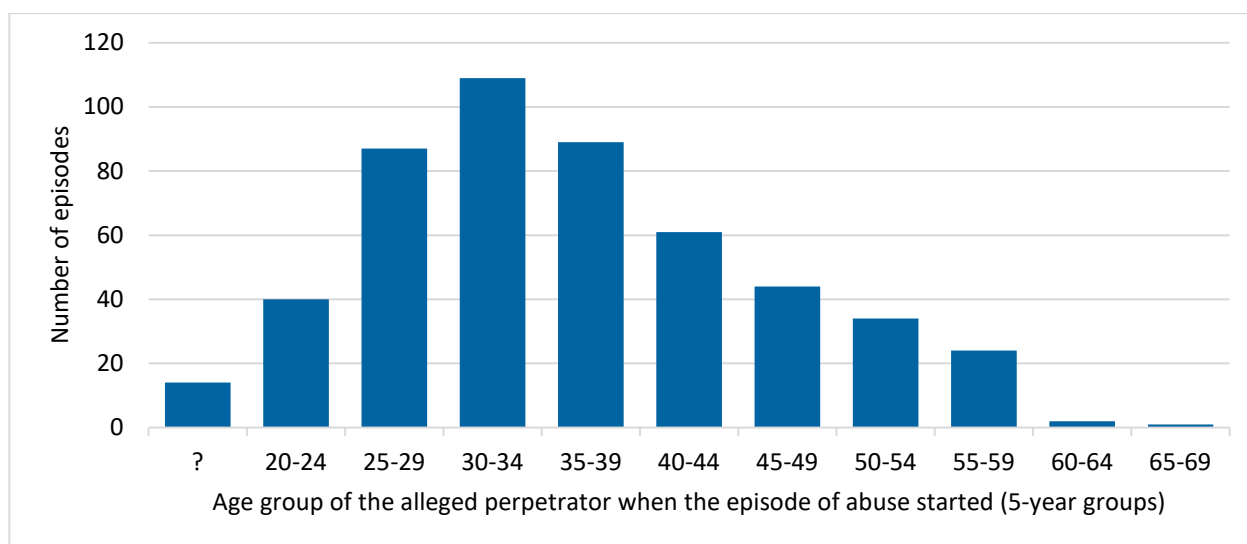
Age of alleged perpetrators

The median age of alleged perpetrators at the time they committed the abuse was **35 years of age**, with age ranging from **20 to 69 years**.⁴⁸

The median age of female alleged perpetrators was **31 years of age**, and the median age of male alleged perpetrators was **35 years of age**, indicating that female perpetrators were marginally younger than male perpetrators.

The ages of each alleged perpetrator are displayed in the graph below, in groupings of 5 years (for example 30–34 years old; 35–39 years old; and so on). The ‘?’ represents those alleged perpetrators whose age was unable to be determined based on available records.

Figure 7: Age of alleged perpetrators at the time of each episode of abuse



⁴⁷ One female victim-survivor alleged abuse by both a male and a female alleged perpetrator. This victim-survivor is counted twice. This explains why the total count in this column is 117 for the purpose of this analysis, when there were 116 female victim-survivors.

⁴⁸ Because some alleged perpetrators are named in more than one episode, their estimated age for each episode is counted for this analysis.

Roles held at school

Alleged perpetrators held a range of roles at schools, including principals, classroom teachers, extra-curricular teachers (defined to include sport coaches, music teachers and librarians), caretaking staff such as cleaners and groundkeepers, and 'other' staff such as integration aides, audio-visual officers or staff whose role was unable to be accurately identified based on the records in the civil claim file.

The table below presents an overview of occupations. Sometimes, an alleged perpetrator who abused multiple victim-survivors held different roles through the course of their employment (for example, they were promoted from classroom teacher to school principal). The table below counts the role held by the alleged perpetrator in each episode of abuse.

Table 7: Role of the alleged perpetrator (AP) in each episode of abuse

Role	AP role at time of abuse	Episodes
Principal/vice-principal	44	101
Classroom teacher	102	274
Extracurricular teacher	47	115
School counsellor	2	3
Cleaner/groundskeeper/caretaker	6	7
Other	5	5
Total	206⁴⁹	505

Overwhelmingly, the abuse was committed by a classroom teacher (**54%** of episodes). Note that this does not necessarily mean the abuse occurred in the classroom – see **Table 12: Mentions of a location of abuse in a civil claim, based on activity (school vs non-school based)** below for analysis on locations of abuse.

Of note, the table above indicates that in **101** episodes of abuse (**20%**), the alleged perpetrator was a principal (which was defined to include head teachers at primary schools which did not have a principal) or vice-principal (which was defined to include assistant principals). This means that **44** alleged perpetrators (**23%**) were a school principal/head teacher or vice-principal/assistant principal at the time of the abuse. The Systemic Review made 2 observations based on the high number of alleged perpetrators who were in the principal class:

1. Principal-class alleged perpetrators were over-represented based on the estimated proportion of principal-class employees in the government teaching workforce at the time. This is based on estimations using the Australian Bureau of Statistics data as follows:
 - in 1975, there were 37,728 government teaching staff working in 2,161 schools.⁵⁰ If it is assumed that each school had a principal or head teacher, and that each secondary school

⁴⁹ This total is higher than the total number of alleged perpetrators. When perpetrators held different roles for different episodes of abuse, each role is counted for the purpose of this role analysis. For example, if an alleged perpetrator committed abuse in Episode A as a classroom teacher, then was promoted to principal and committed abuse in Episode B, they would be counted in both categories (classroom teacher and principal).

⁵⁰ ABS, *Schools, 1975*, reference number 13.5, 1976, pp 6, 8, accessed 2 February 2026.

- (of which there was 367)⁵¹ was large enough to also have a vice or assistant principal, the principal class made up **7%** of the government teaching workforce
- in 1999, there were 43,160 government school staff (including teaching staff and other school staff such as maintenance and administration staff) working in 1,631 government schools.⁵² If it is assumed that each school had a principal or head teacher, and that each secondary school (of which there was 389) was large enough to also have a vice or assistant principal, the principal class made up **5%** of the government school workforce.
2. A principal-class alleged perpetrator would have been a significant barrier to reporting abuse at the time, as the most accessible authority to whom a report could be made was the perpetrator. Research commissioned by the Royal Commission found that ‘the more status and power the perpetrators and their allies possess in an organisation, the more difficult it will be for victims and third-party observers to have their disclosures heard and believed’.⁵³

Number of schools worked at and duration of career

Historical teacher record cards were, at times, difficult to decipher due to inconsistent approaches used to record the schools where a staff member worked. Sometimes a school name, or an abbreviation of a school name, was recorded. In other cases, only a school number was recorded. Best efforts were made to accurately interpret the records to identify the schools where each alleged perpetrator was employed.

On average, alleged perpetrators worked at **5** Victorian government schools over the course of their employment with the department. This number does not include casual relief placements (historically referred to as emergency teaching). As emergency teacher placements were not recorded on a staff member’s Teaching Service Record or personnel file, the Systemic Review was unable to confirm how many of the alleged perpetrators also engaged in emergency teaching based on the information in civil claims records.

Table 8: Snapshot of measures – the number of schools where an alleged perpetrator was employed over their career

Measure	Schools
Minimum number of schools	1
Median number of schools	4
Average number of schools	5
Maximum number of schools	26

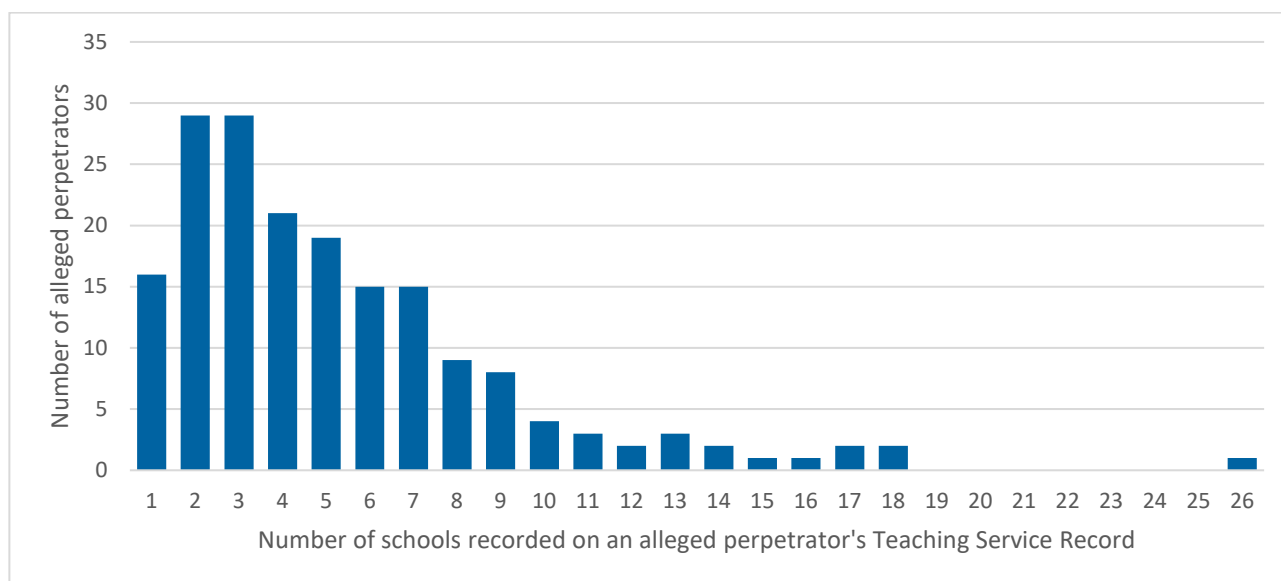
The graph below shows the number of schools where each alleged perpetrator was employed over their career.

⁵¹ ABS (1976) *Victorian Year Book 1976*, number 90, catalogue number 1301.2, p 645, accessed 4 February 2026.

⁵² *Schools, Australia 1999*, catalogue number 4221.0, 2000, pp 10, 73, accessed 2 February 2026.

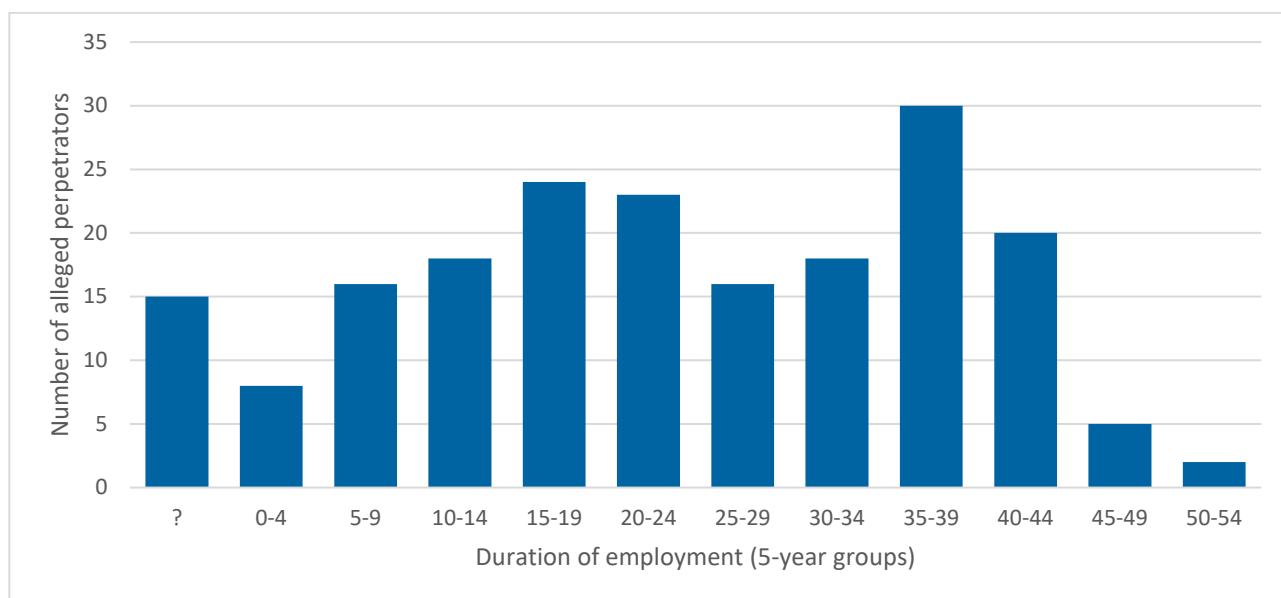
⁵³ *Institutional Abuse Royal Commission report*, 2017, vol 4, p 123, quoting D Palmer, *The role of organisational culture in child sexual abuse in institutional contexts*, 1 December 2016, p 29.

Figure 8: Number of schools where an alleged perpetrator was employed over their career



The median length of employment of an alleged perpetrator with the department was **26 years**, with the maximum length of service being **51 years**. The graph below shows the length of service of alleged perpetrators, in groupings of 5 years (for example, 0–4 years; 5–9 years; 10–14 years; and so on). The ‘?’ represents those alleged perpetrators whose length of service was unable to be determined based on the records in the civil claim files.

Figure 9: Length of an alleged perpetrator’s employment (years)



Reasons for exiting the department’s employment

The Systemic Review analysed the alleged perpetrators’ personnel records available in the civil claim files to determine the circumstances in which each alleged perpetrator left their employment with the department, and classified the reasons as shown in the table below.

The Systemic Review found that **9** alleged perpetrators were dismissed, with **7** having evidence of recent allegations of child sexual abuse in their personnel file at the end of service. It can be inferred from the low number of dismissals that allegations of sexual abuse were historically not reported, believed or properly investigated, or that employees chose to resign or retire in response to allegations and left their employment before any dismissal could occur.

Based on the personnel file information in the civil claim files, the table below indicates that **32** alleged perpetrators who resigned, **8** who retired and **6** who accepted redundancy packages were the subject of allegations of child sexual abuse at the end of their service.

Table 9: Reasons alleged perpetrators (AP) left the department's employment

Reason	AP	Evidence of recent allegations in APs' personnel file at the end of service
Resignation	69	32
Retirement due to age (includes early retirement)	47	3
Retirement due to ill health	19	5
Redundancy	19	6
Dismissal	9	7
End of fixed-term employment	7	2
Died during service	2	0
Unclear ⁵⁴	22	1
Other	1 ⁵⁵	1
Total	195	57

The Systemic Review also identified that **19** alleged perpetrators moved from teaching roles to non-teaching roles⁵⁶ prior to ending their employment with the department. It was clear from the personnel records available in the civil claim files that **16** of these alleged perpetrators moved to non-teaching roles due to allegations of child sexual abuse, for example while the allegations were being investigated or criminal charges were pending. When police investigations did not progress, or did not result in any criminal charges, the Systemic Review often observed an acceptance that the investigation had concluded, with no further administrative or disciplinary action taken.

In many cases, the Systemic Review observed that once a teacher accused of child sexual abuse resigned, retired, or otherwise left the government teaching service, the matter was considered closed. No further steps were taken to investigate allegations, identify additional victim-survivors, or prevent the individual from seeking employment elsewhere.

⁵⁴ 'Unclear' captures those alleged perpetrators who were unable to be identified, or whose reason for departure was unable to be identified based on the records available in the civil claim file.

⁵⁵ While the civil claim relating to this alleged perpetrator has settled (bringing it within the scope of the Systemic Review), the alleged perpetrator remains employed but suspended from duty while investigations are finalised.

⁵⁶ 'Non-teaching roles' include both corporate roles and school-based non-teaching roles.

Importantly, if a teacher retired (rather than resigned), they were eligible for employment as an emergency teacher.⁵⁷ Emergency teachers were employed at short notice to fill an unforeseen staffing need because of illness or approved leave. As there was no central function during the relevant period that had a role in the probity checking or regulation of emergency teachers, and placements were not recorded on a staff member's Teaching Service Record or personnel file, the Systemic Review was unable to determine how many of the **66** alleged perpetrators who retired subsequently engaged in emergency teaching based on the information in the civil claims records.

Alleged perpetrators named by multiple victim-survivors

The Systemic Review identified **64** alleged perpetrators who have been named by more than one victim-survivor. These **64** alleged perpetrators abused **373** victim-survivors.

The table below shows the number of alleged perpetrators who are alleged to have abused more than one victim-survivor.

Table 10: Count of alleged perpetrators (AP) named by multiple victim-survivors

Number of victim-survivors	Count of APs
2-5	44
6-10	13
11-15	3
16-20	1
20+	3
Total	64

Female perpetrators were also less likely than male perpetrators to target multiple victims. For example:

- of the **21** female alleged perpetrators, **4 (19%)** had multiple victim-survivors
- of the **174** male alleged perpetrators, **60 (34%)** had multiple victim-survivors.

Case studies of 6 perpetrators who have been named in a settled civil claim by 10 or more victim-survivors, and who were not subject to the Board of Inquiry, has been undertaken. The case studies provide factual summaries of the school and departmental response to the complaints and incidents disclosed.

Three perpetrators are deceased and details of their offending are in the public domain. These are:

- Reginald Adrian Crick
- Robert Leonard Morris
- Timothy Richardson.

Three perpetrators are still living. Their names and details about their conduct cannot be disclosed as doing so may jeopardise current or future criminal proceedings. Limited information has been disclosed and the following pseudonyms applied:

⁵⁷ Ministry of Education and Training (Office of Schools Administration) Victoria, *School Information Manual: Personnel (Teaching Service)* [internal school policy and procedure manual], 2nd edn, Ministry of Education and Training, 1991, para 1.3.3.

- *Perpetrator A*
- *Perpetrator B*
- *Perpetrator C.*

The case studies do not make any findings about the allegations contained in the civil claim files, as this was not the role of the Systemic Review. They have been included as a means of examining the systemic failures that enabled perpetrators to abuse children over a protracted period.

The case studies can be found in **Appendix 3 – Perpetrator case studies**.

Patterns of offending

There was sufficient information in the civil claims to enable the Systemic Review to make observations about patterns of offending.

Types of abuse

As the Board of Inquiry noted, there is no one set of definitions to describe people’s experiences of child sexual abuse. Each victim-survivor may use different words to describe what happened to them, and how it has affected and continues to affect their life.⁵⁸

The Systemic Review identified a spectrum of child sexual abuse, encompassing both non-contact⁵⁹ and contact abuse⁶⁰. Of the **505** episodes in the civil claims, **30** alleged non-contact abuse only. Often, multiple types of abuse (contact and non-contact) were alleged in a single civil claim.

Grooming

A key finding of both the Board of Inquiry and the Royal Commission was that perpetrators would frequently groom not only an individual child, but also the community of adults around the child.⁶¹ The Board of Inquiry also found that a lack of societal awareness of grooming in the 1960s through to the 1980s further increased the vulnerability of children to this behaviour.⁶²

The Systemic Review observed that alleged perpetrators often cultivated relationships with the parents of victim-survivors, effectively grooming them along with their child. The Systemic Review observed that the ability to befriend a victim-survivor’s family was a significant factor in facilitating an environment conducive to regular abuse. This enabled alleged perpetrators to spend time with students outside of school hours or on weekends without arousing suspicion. For example, see the case study of *Timothy Richardson*.⁶³

The Systemic Review also observed that alleged perpetrators engaged in sophisticated grooming of the school community. It was not uncommon for alleged perpetrators to have glowing references in their personnel files or being seen as high-standing members of the school community. For example, see the case study of *Reginald Adrian Crick*.

⁵⁸ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, p iii.

⁵⁹ Non-contact abuse refers to sexual acts that do not involve physical contact but still constitute sexual abuse (e.g. voyeurism, exposure of sexual anatomy, forced viewing of sexual anatomy, the showing of pornography or the using of a child in the production of pornography).

⁶⁰ Contact abuse refers to sexual acts involving physical contact with a child. These activities include oral-genital, genital-genital, genital-rectal, hand-genital, hand-rectal, or hand-breast contact.

⁶¹ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, p 215; *Institutional Abuse Royal Commission report*, 2017, vol 2, pp 46–50.

⁶² *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, p 215.

⁶³ See also, for example, the reasons for sentence in the 2019 criminal trial of Timothy Richardson: *DPP v Richardson* [2019] VCC 512 at 3 [17], per Higham J.

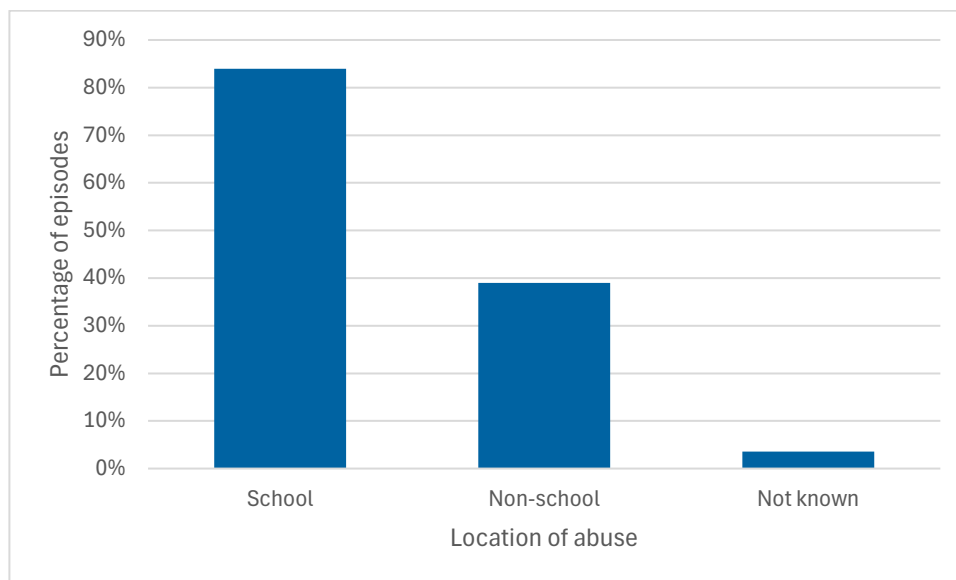
Location of abuse

The abuse disclosed in the civil claims occurred in a range of locations, on and off school grounds.

It was observed that, while the majority (**84%**) of episodes included instances of abuse at school locations (including on school camps), a substantial proportion of episodes also included abuse at non-school locations (**39%** of all episodes) such as private residences (**27%** of all episodes).

The below graph represents the locations of child sexual abuse disclosed in episodes, grouped into school and non-school locations, and those episodes with no known location.⁶⁴

Figure 10: Episodes (%) that mention abuse occurring in school vs non-school locations



Abuse locations on school premises and during school activities included in the classroom (including art rooms, drama rooms, and music rooms), offices, on school grounds (including sheds and playgrounds), and during school camps – see the table below. 'Other' locations included other rooms on campus such as dark rooms, boiler rooms and storage rooms, and the school bus.

Note that most episodes included multiple instances of abuse, and therefore an episode may be counted multiple times if abuse was reported at various locations. That is, each time a location was mentioned in an episode, it is counted below.

⁶⁴ In 18 episodes, the location of abuse was unable to be determined based on the information available to the Systemic Review.

Table 11: Abuse on school premises or during school activities

Location of abuse at school	Mention of location as % of total episodes
Classroom	46%
Office	16%
Grounds	15%
Camp	12%
Changeroom/toilets	10%
Library	8%
Sport events	2%
School hall	2%
Other	14%

The Systemic Review observed that the most frequent location of abuse was in a classroom, where historically:

- the only adult present was the alleged perpetrator
- classroom layout and design were not child safe (for example, the built design and layout may not have ensured external lines of sight)
- the children had no means of leaving.

These factors meant that the likelihood of discovery of abuse in a classroom was low.

Abuse at non-school locations and non-school activities included abuse on the weekends at a private residence or in a private vehicle – see the table below. ‘Other’ includes abuse at non-school sanctioned overnight trips at places other than a private residence (including camping trips, hotels and motels), local community sport clubs and events (for example, tennis and football clubs), movies theatres and beaches.

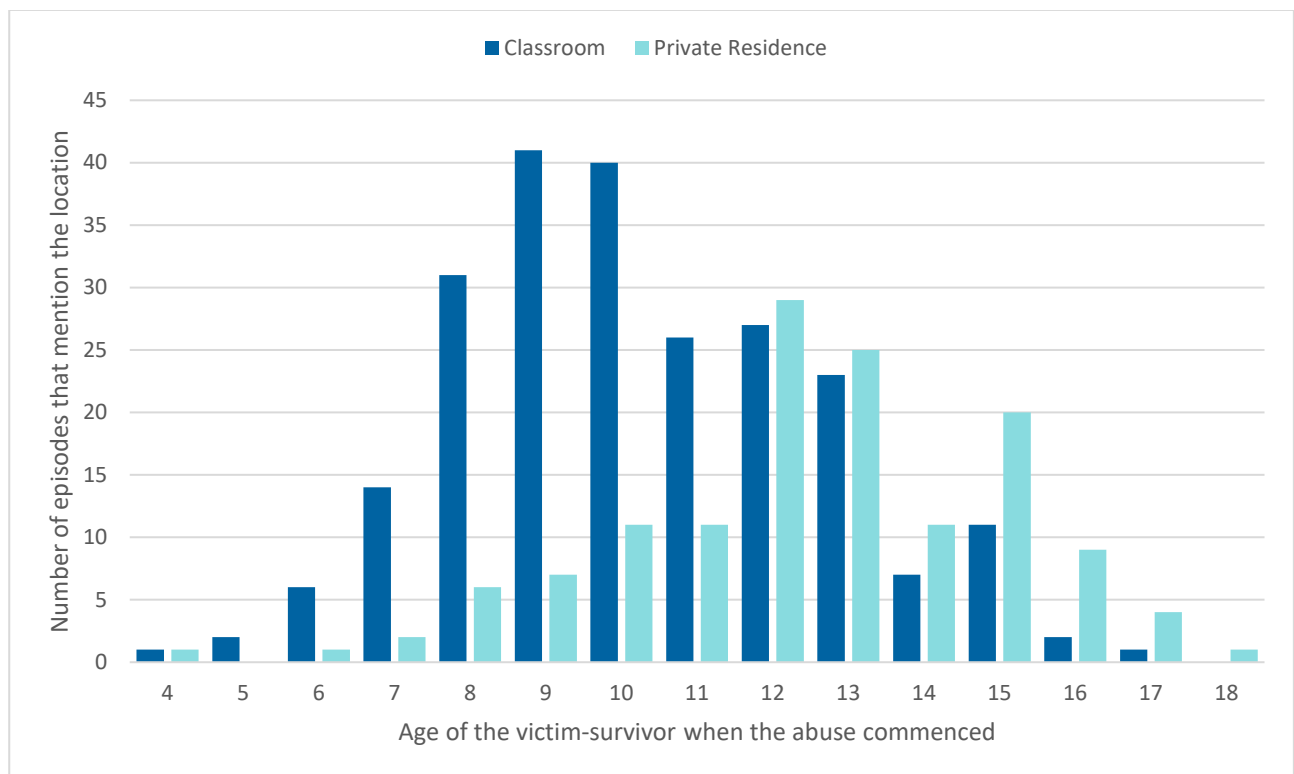
Table 12: Abuse at non-school locations or non-school activities

Location of abuse off school grounds	Mention of location as % of total episodes
Private Residence	27%
Vehicle	11%
Other	15%

Trends in the location of abuse differed based on the age of the victim-survivor. For example, the graph below demonstrates that those victim-survivors who were abused in classroom settings tended to be

younger (12 years of age or under), while those victim-survivors abused in private residences tended to be older (12 years of age or above).⁶⁵

Figure 11: Comparison of ages of victim-survivors by location of abuse – classrooms and private residences



Duration of abuse

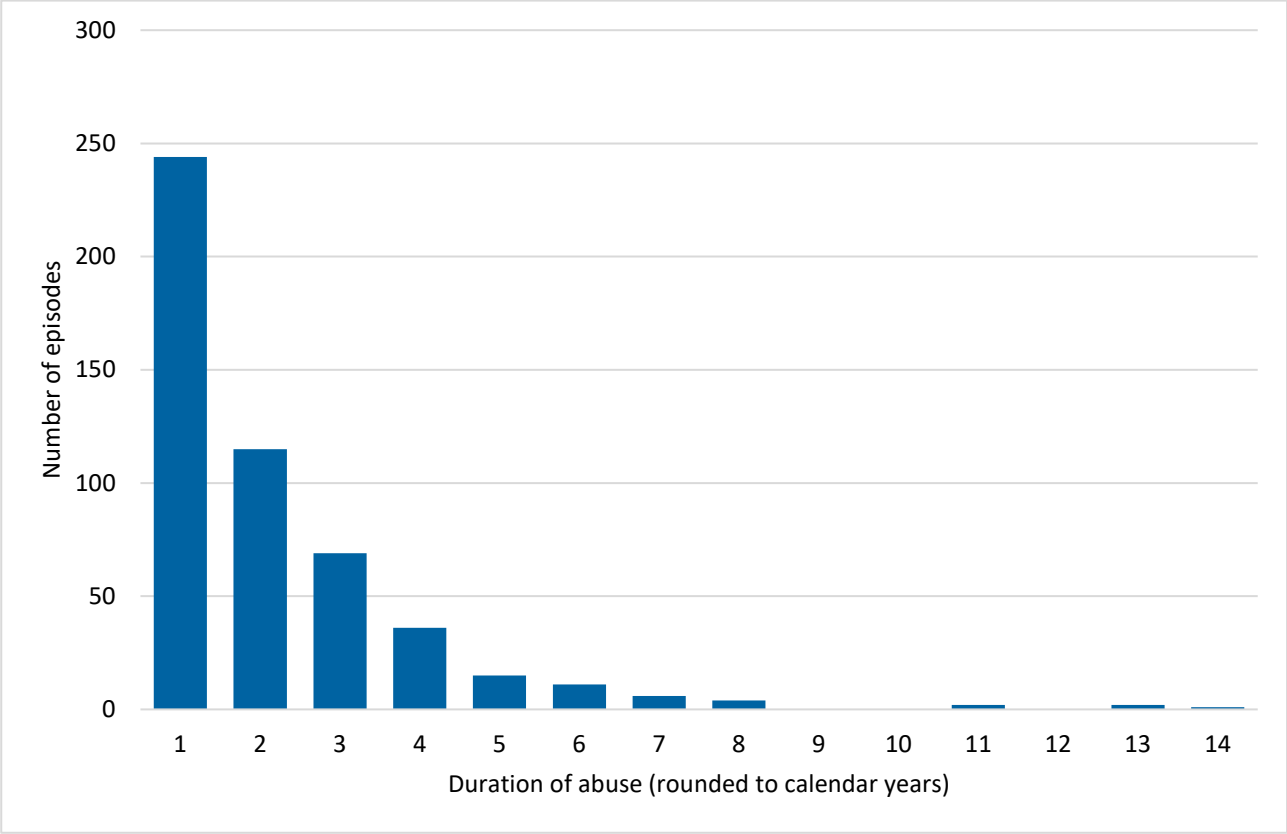
The graph below shows the duration (in calendar years) of each episode of abuse. The Systemic Review could not reliably determine exact dates of abuse and therefore the exact duration of the abuse. This was due to factors such as the passage of time since the abuse occurred and legal restrictions on the Systemic Review's ability to review all documents in the civil claim files. Therefore, the Systemic Review estimated duration based on the years the abuse occurred.

In the graph below, the number '1' indicates that the episode of abuse occurred within one calendar year. For example, the abuse may have been a single incident that occurred on a single day, or the abuse may have occurred on numerous occasions over some months. Both scenarios are captured by '1'. Importantly, it does not indicate that the episode of abuse occurred for one year (although in some civil claims this was the case). Similarly, the number '3' indicates that the abuse occurred over 3 calendar years (for example, from when the victim-survivor was in year 2 through to year 4).

The graph shows that **244** episodes of abuse occurred within 1 calendar year (**48%** of episodes). There were **5** episodes of abuse that lasted for over 10 years. The longest episode of abuse was **14 years**.

⁶⁵ In more than 75% of episodes where the abuse occurred in a classroom, the victim-survivor was 12 years of age or younger when the abuse started. In more than 75% of episodes where the abuse was at a private residence, the victim-survivor was 11 years of age or older when the abuse started.

Figure 12: Duration of episodes of abuse (rounded to a calendar year)



Reporting the abuse

Data from the Royal Commission demonstrated that on average victim-survivors took 23.9 years to disclose the abuse. Men usually took longer to disclose than women (the average for women was 20.6 years and for men was 25.6 years).⁶⁶ Some victim-survivors may never disclose the abuse.

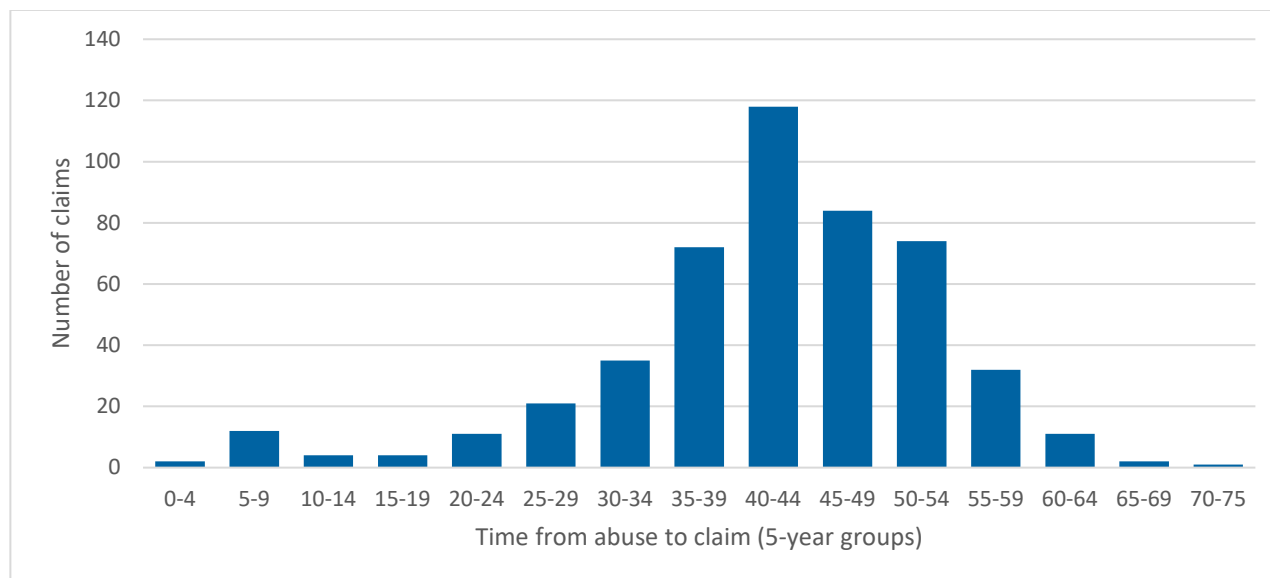
It was not possible for the Systemic Review to accurately capture the time taken for a victim-survivor to disclose the abuse. However, the Systemic Review was able to measure the time taken from when the abuse occurred to when a civil claim was made.

On average, a victim-survivor brought a civil claim **42 years** after the abuse occurred.⁶⁷ The time between the abuse and a victim-survivor bringing a civil claim ranged from **4 to 70 years**. The graph below shows the length of time (in 5-year groupings) it took each victim-survivor to bring their civil claim.

⁶⁶ *Institutional Abuse Royal Commission report*, 2017, vol 4, p 9.

⁶⁷ See 'Background to civil claims' for an explanation of legislative changes in the last 10 years designed to ensure greater access for victim-survivors to seek compensation.

Figure 13: Count of time (groupings of 5 years) between abuse and civil claim



The Systemic Review observed that in **97 episodes (19%)** it was alleged that a report was made to the school – either to the principal, a teacher or another staff member – at the time the abuse was occurring.

Of these matters, the Systemic Review observed a proactive response was recorded in **36 episodes (37% of reported matters)**. This indicates that the response by schools in most reported matters was either no action or no action recorded.

A common theme among victim-survivors – both in the Board of Inquiry and those whose claims were examined as part of this Systemic Review – was the dismissive attitude of adults to whom the abuse was reported. The Royal Commission found that the most common barrier to disclosure was a fear of not being believed or receiving a negative response to the disclosure, with 26.1% of complainants, who disclosed as a child, reporting a fear they would not be believed.⁶⁸ The Systemic Review observed that many victim-survivors who did make disclosures at the relevant time were often dismissed and accused of lying. Some teachers even engaged in punitive measures.

The Royal Commission observed that threats by a perpetrator would often make it more difficult for some children to discuss their experiences.⁶⁹ The Systemic Review observed that threats and intimidation were commonly reported by victim-survivors who brought civil claims. The Systemic Review also observed that physical abuse accompanied the sexual abuse in **59 episodes (12% of civil claims)**.

The Royal Commission also heard from victim-survivors that one of the most common barriers to disclosure was shame or embarrassment.⁷⁰

The power and status of perpetrators within an institution can also inhibit identification and disclosure. As outlined in **Table 8: Role of the alleged perpetrator (AP) in each episode of abuse**, the Systemic Review found that **44** perpetrators were the principal/head teacher or vice-principal of the school when they committed the abuse. This would have been a significant barrier to reporting the abuse at the time as the most accessible authority figure to whom a report could be made was the perpetrator.

Finally, the Systemic Review notes that many victim-survivors (**341 or 71%**) were 12 years old or under. They may not have had the language or understanding to express that what was being perpetrated against them constituted sexual abuse.

⁶⁸ *Institutional Abuse Royal Commission report*, 2017, vol 4, p 10.

⁶⁹ *Institutional Abuse Royal Commission report*, 2017, vol 4, p 11.

⁷⁰ *Institutional Abuse Royal Commission report*, 2017, vol 4, p 10.

Institutional responses to reports of child sexual abuse

Based on the information in the civil claim files, it was difficult for the Systemic Review to determine what action, if any, was taken by schools in response to reports of child sexual abuse.

The Systemic Review was able to identify evidence that:

- a report was passed on to the department at the time of the abuse in **29** episodes (**6%**), either by the school or by the victim-survivor's parents directly.
- **95** alleged perpetrators (**49%**) had a disciplinary record on their personnel file. Of these, **80** related to allegations of child sexual abuse (**41%**). Some disciplinary records were created years after the abuse occurred.

It is important to note that the above figures are indicative only, as:

- records held by a school or regional office that may relate to a child sexual abuse allegation may be difficult or impossible to identify in searches, if they exist at all. Also, some historical disciplinary files could be degraded or incomplete.
- child sexual abuse allegations may have been recorded in a way that was not decipherable as child sexual abuse (for example, the file may record 'disgraceful' conduct, which was a term used to include sexual abuse and misconduct but also other misconduct).

The recorded outcome of disciplinary processes was varied and often not clear. The Systemic Review found evidence that **7** alleged perpetrators were dismissed from their employment due to an allegation of child sexual abuse. It can be inferred from the low number of dismissals that allegations of sexual abuse were historically not reported, believed or properly investigated, or that employees chose to resign or retire in response to allegations and left their employment before any dismissal could occur.

The Systemic Review could not accurately capture how many allegations of child sexual abuse were reported to Victoria Police.

Analysis of redress applications

In considering National Redress Scheme applications for the purpose of the Systemic Review, the department is bound to comply with the strict privacy obligations on the use of protected information in the *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018* (Cth) (National Redress Scheme Act).

The department has relied on section 93(1)(e)(ii) of the National Redress Scheme Act to use protected information which relates to the institution – being school names and the role of the alleged perpetrators as department employees – for the purpose of the Systemic Review. The department has not used information relating to other persons, being any information about redress applicants or other personal information about alleged perpetrators (aside from their role at the school as identified in the application).

In producing the following information in this report, the department relies on section 93(2) of the National Redress Scheme Act to produce protected information in an aggregated form that does not disclose, either directly or indirectly, information about a particular person or institution. Accordingly, this report does not disclose any information that identifies victim-survivors, schools or alleged perpetrators named in redress applications.

The department confirmed this approach with the Commonwealth Operator of the National Redress Scheme.

Overview of redress data

As at 30 June 2025, the department had responded to **1041** requests for information from the National Redress Scheme. The National Redress Scheme will make a request for information to an institution where:

- an applicant for redress identifies a particular institution as being responsible for their abuse,
- the National Redress Scheme has reasonable grounds to believe that an institution is responsible; or

- the National Redress Scheme has reasonable grounds to believe that an institution has information which may be relevant to delivering an outcome on an application.⁷¹

The Systemic Review identified that **584** redress applications were within scope of the Systemic Review due to the time of the abuse (occurring before the year 2000) and the status of the alleged perpetrator as a departmental employee (as opposed to a contractor, volunteer or peer).

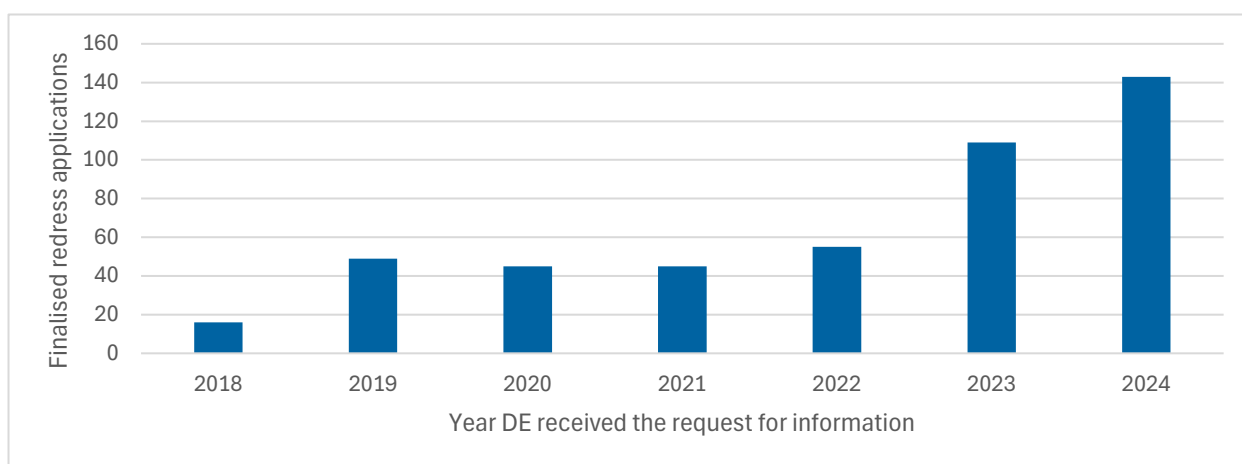
The National Redress Scheme determines whether an application is approved. An application will be approved if there is a 'reasonable likelihood' that the person is eligible for redress.⁷²

Of the **584** redress applications that fell within the scope of the Systemic Review, the Commonwealth Operator of the scheme advised that, as of 30 June 2025, **329** applications have been finalised. Of these, **293** applications were approved by the scheme where a Victorian Government school or the department was found to be either:

- the institution primarily responsible for the abuse. An institution is primarily responsible for abuse of a person if the institution is solely or primarily responsible for the abuser having contact with the person,⁷³ or
- the institution equally responsible for the abuse. An institution is equally responsible for abuse of a person if the institution and one or more other institutions are approximately equally responsible for the abuser having contact with the redress applicant, and no institution is primarily responsible.⁷⁴

Similar to the trend observed with the increase of civil claims over time, the department has seen a steady increase in requests for information since the redress scheme commenced in July 2018. This trend is demonstrated in the graph below, which shows the year that each of the finalised redress scheme applications within scope of the Systemic Review were received by the department.⁷⁵

Figure 14: Redress requests for information made to the department (DE) over time



Government schools in redress applications where historical child sexual abuse occurred

There were **253** Victorian government schools named in approved redress applications relating to historical child sexual abuse. Of these:

⁷¹ *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018* (Cth), ss 25(1)–(2).

⁷² *Ibid*, s 29(2)(a).

⁷³ *Ibid*, s 15(2).

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, s 15(3).

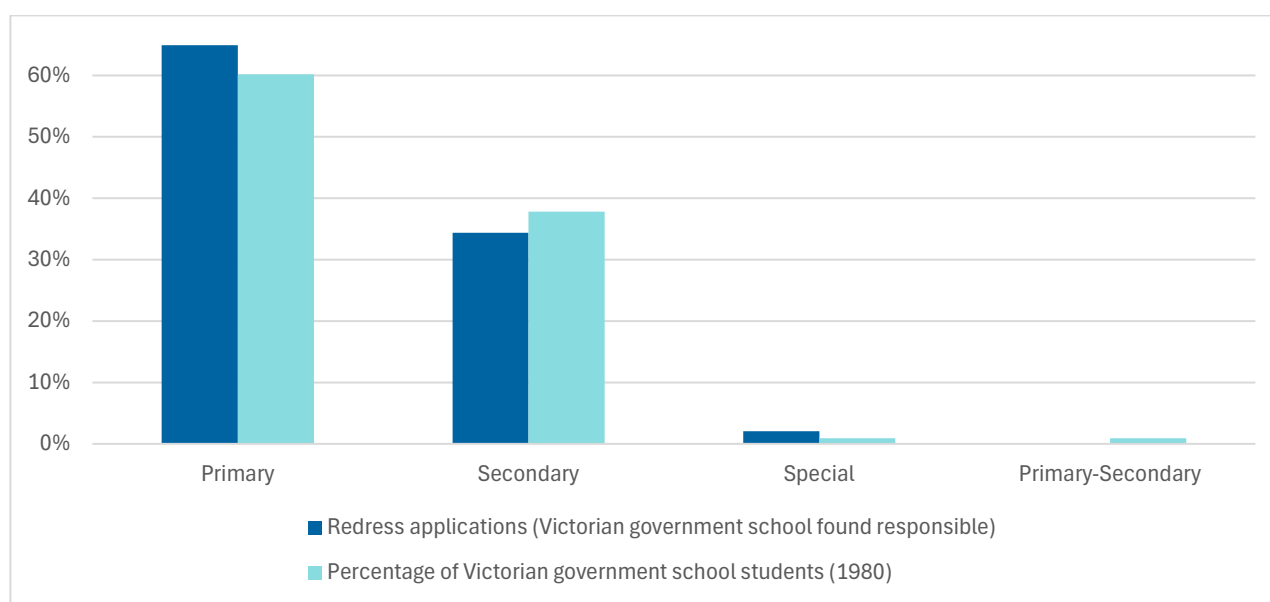
⁷⁵ As the Systemic Review did not consider material received after 30 June 2025, the number of redress applications for 2025 is not included in the graph to prevent any distortion caused by including a count for half a year.

- **167** were primary schools. This represents approximately **8%** of all primary schools in operation between 1950 and 1999.
- **83** were secondary schools (including secondary technical schools). This represents approximately **17%** of all secondary schools in operation between 1950 and 1999.
- **3** were special government schools. This represents approximately **2%** of all special schools in operation between 1950 and 1999.

In **2** approved applications, the department (rather than a school) was identified as the relevant institution.

The Systemic Review undertook analysis to determine the prevalence of abuse across school types. The Systemic Review compared the percentage of episodes of abuse identified in each finalised redress application that occurred in each school type against the percentage of students in each school type in 1980.⁷⁶ This analysis is shown in the figure below.

Figure 15: Redress applications by school type



While less pronounced than the prevalence of abuse in special schools observed in the civil claims, victim-survivors in special schools accounted for **2%** of redress applications despite less than **1%** (estimated at **0.9%**) of children in government schools having attended a special school during the review period. Therefore, based on the redress scheme data, a child attending a special school was **twice as likely** to experience child sexual abuse compared to all children attending a Victorian government school.

The graph also shows that:

- **65%** of applications referred to primary schools, and
- **34%** of applications referred to secondary schools

which broadly reflects the proportion of the estimated student population at these school types.

The victim-survivors

Due to the National Redress Scheme's strict privacy obligations, the Systemic Review has not used any information about redress applicants. For reference, general data published by the National Redress

⁷⁶ 1980 was chosen as a benchmark year as it is in the middle of the period under review. Student population data was extracted from ABS (1981) *Victorian Year Book 1981*, number 95, catalogue number 1301.2, p 591, accessed 4 February 2026.

Scheme on 30 June 2025 shows that in successfully lodged applications, 61% of redress applicants were male and 39% were female.⁷⁷

The alleged perpetrators

The department was unable to identify the alleged perpetrator for the purpose of the Systemic Review due to the restrictions on the use of personal information in redress applications in Part 4.3 of the National Redress Scheme Act. This meant that the Systemic Review was unable to consider whether:

- the same alleged perpetrator was identified in multiple redress applications, or
- an alleged perpetrator identified in a redress application was also identified in a civil claim.

However, the Systemic Review could use information from redress applications about the role held by the institutional employee identified as the alleged perpetrator, as this information related to the institution.

As observed in the analysis of civil claims, alleged perpetrators held a range of roles at the school. This is shown in the table below.

Table 13: Role of the alleged perpetrator (AP) in each redress application

Role	AP role at time of abuse
Principal/vice-principal	50
Classroom teacher	227
Extracurricular teacher	19
Cleaner/groundskeeper/caretaker	8
Administrative assistant	1
Totals	305⁷⁸

Similar to the alleged perpetrators identified in the civil claims, the abuse was overwhelmingly committed by a classroom teacher. Of note, the table above indicates that **50** alleged perpetrators were in a principal role (including head teachers for those primary schools which did not have a principal, vice-principals and assistant principals).

⁷⁷ The National Redress Scheme, *The National Redress Scheme's strategic success measures: June 2025*, Australian Government, 2025, p 12.

⁷⁸ The department was unable to identify the alleged perpetrators in redress applications by name for the purpose of the Systemic Review, due to the restrictions on the use of personal information in Part 4.3 of the *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018* (Cth). Therefore, the department was unable to count the number of individual perpetrators identified in the redress applications, so this total may not reflect the total number of perpetrators. Note that some redress applications may have included multiple alleged perpetrators.

Analysis of other relevant disclosures

On 28 June 2023, the department established a central function to provide initial assistance and support to former students who experienced child sexual abuse by an adult working in a Victorian government school. This function – restorative engagement and support – has a dedicated website, contact phonenumber and email.⁷⁹

The restorative engagement and support function supports victim-survivors, their family members, loved ones and supporters to:

- access their student records.
- understand reporting options.
- decide if a personal acknowledgment and apology from a senior representative of the department would be helpful.
- understand counselling and other community support options including accessing funding for counselling with a private practitioner.
- understand possible pathways for redress or compensation.
- connect with other relevant services.
- ensure there is a record of what happened, to help the department understand how and why past failures occurred and how it affected someone. This informs protections and supports for current and former students.

The restorative engagement and support function also:

- supports government schools to respond to disclosures, reports, queries or requests relating to historical child sexual abuse, including requests for memorials, with sensitivity, respect and accountability.
- supports government schools to communicate with their school communities about historical offending that the department becomes aware of through police or media reporting. This ensures an open, honest and accountable approach to failures of the past, and that the community is aware of how to report and seek support.
- supports participation of institutional representatives and coordination of Direct Personal Responses (DPRs) to victim-survivors as part of the National Redress Scheme.
- shares any learnings from their work with other areas of the department, to inform current and future policy and practice relating to current child safety and wellbeing, and support for former students.

Between 28 June 2023 and 30 June 2025, the restorative engagement and support function provided initial assistance and support to **65** individuals following disclosures relating to historical child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools. For some of these victim-survivors, the assistance was provided indirectly (including through a legal representative, Victoria Police or through a support person). In addition, the function has supported **58** schools to send communications in relation to **16** different alleged perpetrators of historical abuse. The nature of the assistance means that victim-survivors do not always provide detailed information about their experiences and, unless there is a particular purpose for doing so, the Restorative Engagement and Support team do not verify enrolment and employment records. This means that most of the reports made to the restorative engagement and support function were not within the scope of the Terms of Reference, and detailed information was not provided to the Systemic Review.

The restorative engagement and support function operates alongside the department's Sexual Harm Response Unit (SHRU). This is a team dedicated to supporting schools when charges are laid against a current staff member or when an investigation has substantiated sexual offending by an adult currently working at a school. This team ensures impacted students and their families get the support they need and assists schools with communicating openly and transparently with school communities so that others who

⁷⁹ Victorian Government, [Victim-survivor support for former students](https://www.vic.gov.au/victim-survivor-support-for-former-students), vic.gov.au, 10 March 2026, accessed 10 March 2026.

have experienced abuse know how to come forward. As the SHRU's work is focussed on current or recently employed staff, data from this team is not included in the above figures.

The Systemic Review affirms Board of Inquiry key findings

The observations made by the Systemic Review align with the findings made by the Board of Inquiry

The Board of Inquiry found that the department's response to allegations of child sexual abuse by perpetrators at Beaumaris Primary School at the time under examination was wholly inadequate and constituted a gross systemic failure.⁸⁰

In reaching this conclusion, the Board of Inquiry identified 6 significant and systematic failures which contributed to the inadequacy of the department's response at the time.⁸¹

- Finding 1: an absence of policies and procedures concerning child sexual abuse.
- Finding 2: an absence of guidance to staff on how to identify, report, manage, respond to and prevent child sexual abuse.
- Finding 3: a culture that prioritised the reputation of the education system over the safety of children.
- Finding 4: a lack of staff training to assist in the identification or recognition of child sexual abuse.
- Finding 5: poor record-keeping and information-sharing practices.
- Finding 6: no systemic reviews were conducted by the department into allegations of historical child sexual abuse.

Each finding was further observed by the Systemic Review through the review of the civil claims. These findings, along with the Systemic Review's further observations, are discussed below.

The department prepared a document outlining the policies and procedures in place today to respond to child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools (see **Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures**). This can be read alongside the observations that follow.

Board of Inquiry Finding 1: an absence of policies and procedures

The Board of Inquiry found that, between 1960 and 1994, the department did not have any policies or procedures regarding child sexual abuse, including procedures for responding to allegations, despite there being a legislative and regulatory framework available to empower the department to discipline staff.⁸²

Inadequate policies and procedures during this time resulted in inconsistent and ad hoc responses by schools and staff to allegations of child sexual abuse, and a lack of support for victim-survivors and their families.⁸³

The Systemic Review similarly observed inconsistent and inadequate responses to disclosures of child sexual abuse in the civil claims of historical abuse. Of the records examined by the Systemic Review, responses to child sexual abuse pre-2000 were characterised by a lack of action and were dealt with on an individualised basis, at the whim of the teachers, principals and District Inspectors who addressed them.

Based on the department's records in the civil claim files, the Systemic Review undertook an analysis to determine whether a disclosure to a school was met with a proactive response at the time. A proactive response was defined as the school taking an active step in response to a disclosure.

Based on victim-survivors' allegations in their Statements of Claim, reports appeared to have been made to the school at the time of the abuse in approximately **97 episodes (19%)**.

⁸⁰ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, pp 243–244.

⁸¹ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, pp xiii–xvi, 243–244.

⁸² *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, pp 163–168, 233–244.

⁸³ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, pp 163, 233.

Of these matters, the Systemic Review observed a proactive response was recorded in **36** episodes (**37%** of reported matters). This indicates that the response by schools in most reported matters was either no action or no action recorded.

It is important to note that records held by a school or regional office that may relate to a child sexual abuse allegation may be difficult or impossible to identify in searches, if they existed, and some historical disciplinary files could be degraded or incomplete. In addition, child sexual abuse allegations may have been recorded in such a way that it was not decipherable as child sexual abuse (for example, the file may record 'disgraceful' conduct, which was a term used to include sexual abuse and misconduct but also other misconduct). As such, records may not have been included in the civil claim file. For these reasons, the figures above are indicative only.

The case of Reginald Adrian Crick, who taught at Horsham Technical School between 1968 and 1988, is an illustrative example. Many victim-survivors expressed a strong belief that school staff were aware of Crick's conduct from the early 1970s. However, the first recorded complaint in Crick's personnel file was not until 2009, more than a decade after his death. In the absence of policies and procedures relating to child sexual abuse, disclosures of Crick's abuse were managed locally, at school-level, if at all. There were no records to suggest that the central department received any reports about Crick's conduct at the time.

Today, there are a suite of policies and procedures for prevention, identification, reporting, management of and response to child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools (see **Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures**).

Board of Inquiry Finding 2: an absence of guidance to staff

The Board of Inquiry found that school teaching and administrative staff at the time were not provided with any guidance on how to identify or report child sexual abuse, or what steps to take to investigate and respond to allegations. Any guidance that did exist then was focused primarily on the reputation and wellbeing of male teachers or related exclusively to the physical safety of children.⁸⁴

For instance, in 1952 the Secretary issued a memorandum at the request of head teachers for guidance about interactions between male teachers and female students.⁸⁵ The memorandum stated that it was advisable for male teachers to be warned 'in their own interests, against any action liable to misinterpretation'. A subsequent version of this memorandum was circulated to head teachers in 1960, providing similar guidance.⁸⁶

In 1963, the Secretary published a memorandum regarding the importance of record-keeping in relation to physical accidents by students at schools in the event of a civil claim being brought against the department. This guidance did not mention child sexual abuse.⁸⁷

The lack of guidance and support to staff at the time may partially explain the inadequate responses to disclosures observed by the Systemic Review. A common allegation in the Statements of Claim served on the department was that school employees were, or should have been, aware of the abuse being perpetrated against students at the time, yet nothing was done.

As explained in the Board of Inquiry report, during the 1960s and 1970s, society held significant respect for and trust in teachers.⁸⁸

The Systemic Review observed that it was acceptable practice at the time for teachers to drive students to and from extracurricular activities or host students privately in closed-off offices. It was also acceptable practice for teachers to take students on private, out-of-school excursions, including hosting students at their

⁸⁴ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, p 234.

⁸⁵ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, p 169.

⁸⁶ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, p 169.

⁸⁷ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, pp 169–171.

⁸⁸ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, p 69.

homes after school or on the weekends. This practice was demonstrated by the number of episodes that included abuse at non-school locations (39%).

The case studies of Reginald Adrian Crick and Timothy Richardson are examples. Crick sexually abused students at his private residence, inside his private vehicle and during overnight trips. Richardson sexually abused students at his private property.

Without clear guidance and training, staff frequently lacked any awareness of behaviours and circumstances that placed children at risk of child sexual abuse.

The Systemic Review also observed an over-reliance on police investigations. Where charges did not proceed or resulted in acquittal, schools and the department treated matters as resolved, without considering administrative or disciplinary action. This was seen in Robert Morris' case: after being charged in 1978 with indecent assault of seven children, he was acquitted later that year. Following the acquittal, his suspension was lifted and he was reinstated as a teacher.

Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures of this report provides the guidance available to staff today to identify, report, manage, respond to and prevent child sexual abuse.

Board of Inquiry Finding 3: a culture that prioritised the reputation of the education system over the safety of children

The Board of Inquiry found that between 1960 and 1994, there was a concerning culture of prioritising the reputation of the education system above the safety of children.⁸⁹ This included the systemic use of teacher transfers during this time to move alleged perpetrators between schools or into non-teaching positions as a means of 'managing' concerns raised about their conduct.⁹⁰

The Board of Inquiry observed that, following the post-World War II population boom, there was a shortage of teachers in Victoria. A focus on the retention of adequate staffing levels in the education system arguably came at the expense of the wellbeing and safety of children.⁹¹

The Board of Inquiry also found that teachers were protected by robust teachers' unions from the 1960s onwards, making the dismissal or disciplining of teachers difficult.⁹²

The above circumstances resulted in teacher transfers being commonplace at the time, particularly in relation to managing allegations of child sexual abuse, and in lieu of disciplinary actions or reporting to authorities.⁹³ Evidence received by the Board of Inquiry indicated that the reason for a teacher transfer was often not provided to the principal of the school to which the teacher was sent and was not shared more broadly within the department.⁹⁴

The Systemic Review similarly observed that most Teacher Service Records did not record the reason for a teacher to be transferred to another school. This occurred in the case study of [Robert Leonard Morris](#). The civil claims alleged that Morris abused students at 4 of the 9 schools where he worked. The reason Morris was transferred between the 9 schools was not recorded in his personnel file.

The Board of Inquiry noted that the practice of transferring a teacher who allegedly committed child sexual abuse had been occurring for as long as 100 years, with the Royal Commission into the Administration,

⁸⁹ [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, p 173.

⁹⁰ [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, pp 171, 174, 235–237.

⁹¹ [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, pp 172–3.

⁹² [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, p 173.

⁹³ [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, pp 171, 174, 235–237.

⁹⁴ [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, pp 174, 239.

Organisation, and General Condition of the Existing System of Public Instruction making a finding that it was a commonplace practice in 1882.⁹⁵

The Systemic Review observed that the School Information Manual of 1991 provided that:

‘When the complaint against the teacher is not of the severe nature ... and it is the first such complaint against the teacher, the teacher may be offered a transfer to another school.’⁹⁶

Complaints of a ‘severe nature’ were described as ‘severe misconduct which represent an immediate danger to students, other teachers or property’.

This indicates that, by at least the 1990s, teacher transfers in response to complaints was only intended for less serious matters. This aligns with evidence provided by Dr David Howes to the Board of Inquiry, where he stated that there ‘was a distinct shift in culture relating to the handling of sexual abuse matters in schools in the early 1990s’.⁹⁷

The Systemic Review observed that, on average, alleged perpetrators were employed at **5** schools during their service. It was not possible to ascertain the reason for teacher transfers between schools based on the information in the civil claim files.

Board of Inquiry Finding 4: a lack of staff training

The Board of Inquiry found that, between 1960 and 1994, no training or instruction was provided to teachers in respect of how to identify and raise concerns about alleged child sexual abuse.⁹⁸ Although the *Teaching Service Regulations 1958* (Vic) required teachers to report misconduct, the Board of Inquiry found that the department provided no guidance at the time on how to report and provided no training for teachers on their reporting obligations, including recognising warning signs and how to deal with them.⁹⁹ As discussed above in Finding 2, the Systemic Review also observed cases where there was a lack of school community awareness of behaviour that is now known as child sexual abuse (including grooming).

District Inspectors were employed in the department during this period to monitor government schools and assess teacher performance. In practice, they would have been appropriate officers to receive and act on reports or allegations of child sexual abuse. However, during the 1960s and 1970s, the Board of Inquiry found that the role of District Inspectors was limited due to resourcing constraints and abolished entirely in the 1980s, resulting in limited regional governance.¹⁰⁰

In the absence of District Inspectors, the responsibility to respond to allegations of teacher misconduct or other disciplinary matters fell to school principals.¹⁰¹ In situations where the alleged perpetrator was the principal the conduct would have gone unchecked. The Systemic Review observed that in **101** episodes of abuse in civil claims (**20%**), and in **50** finalised redress applications (**17%**), the alleged perpetrator was a principal (including a head teacher in a primary school that did not have a principal) or vice-principal (including assistant principals). For example, Robert Morris held posts as principal and head teacher at a single teacher school. In such circumstances, channels for reporting allegations of abuse were not clear.

⁹⁵ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, pp 171, 174, 236, citing *Royal Commission into the Administration, Organisation and General Condition of the Existing System of Public Instruction* (First Report, 1882).

⁹⁶ Ministry of Education and Training (Office of Schools Administration) Victoria, *School Information Manual: Personnel (Teaching Service)* [internal school policy and procedure manual], 2nd edn, Ministry of Education and Training, 1991, para 15.1.5.

⁹⁷ David Howes, ‘Witness Statement of Dr David Howes PSM’ (Statement to the Board of Inquiry into Historical Child Sexual Abuse in Beaumaris Primary School and Certain Other Government schools, 3 November 2023), para 53(f).

⁹⁸ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, p 238.

⁹⁹ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, p 238.

¹⁰⁰ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, pp 166, 172.

¹⁰¹ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, p 172.

Evidence heard by the Board of Inquiry indicated that limited training and a lack of guidance for staff at the time meant that school principals, District Inspectors and other senior officials had a high degree of autonomy in how they dealt with allegations.¹⁰² This frequently meant that responses were ineffective or inconsistent, or that complaints were dismissed entirely.¹⁰³

An overview of current training requirements for staff and volunteers is found in **Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures; Identification** of this report.

Board of Inquiry Finding 5: poor record-keeping and information-sharing practices

The Board of Inquiry identified that from 1960 to 1994, the department did not have any policies, procedures or guidance regarding record-keeping that related to child sexual abuse. There was no formal guidance or policy requiring principals, District Inspectors or senior staff to record disclosures of child sexual abuse, or record any actions taken following a disclosure.¹⁰⁴

Evidence received by the Board of Inquiry indicated that, even where records were kept in relation to certain disclosures, these records were inconsistent, not comprehensive and often lacked details about investigations and/or findings.¹⁰⁵

The pervasive lack of contemporaneous records was a significant issue encountered by the Systemic Review. The absence of records supported the Board of Inquiry's findings and demonstrated the inadequacies of record-keeping practices at the time for allegations of child sexual abuse. Although some victim-survivors recall disclosures being made to school staff, in most cases there was no written record by the schools of these allegations or passing them on to the department.

As discussed above, other deficiencies reported by the Board of Inquiry included the lack of recording the reason a teacher was transferred to another school.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, the Systemic Review was often unable to identify – in personnel records in civil claim files – why a staff member was transferred to another school. Due to these poor practices, it was possible that a school receiving a transferred teacher was not aware of previous allegations of child sexual abuse made against that teacher.

In addition to inadequate information sharing within the government school system, the Systemic Review also observed cases where alleged perpetrators continued teaching outside of the government system. For example, while Robert Leonard Morris' case went before the Teachers Tribunal, the circumstances for his departure from the teaching service was not flagged with other institutions at the time. The Teachers Tribunal was a body which dealt with disciplinary matters specific to the department.¹⁰⁷ While its findings prevented Morris from pursuing future employment with the department, it did not prevent external employment. Morris went on to teach international students in Sydney and China from 2001 to 2008.¹⁰⁸ Morris' ability to find employment as a teacher in other jurisdictions highlights the importance of statewide disciplinary and oversight bodies, such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching,¹⁰⁹ and sharing disciplinary proceeding outcomes with interstate counterparts.

¹⁰² [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, p 234.

¹⁰³ See, e.g., [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, pp 233–238.

¹⁰⁴ [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, pp 170, 239.

¹⁰⁵ [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, p 239.

¹⁰⁶ [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, pp 174, 239.

¹⁰⁷ [Board of Inquiry report](#), 2024, pp 166–167.

¹⁰⁸ *DPP v Morris* [2019] VCC 409 at [29] per Mullaly J.

¹⁰⁹ The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) was established in 2001. The VIT manages the teacher registration scheme and has the power to investigate and remove registration. For more information, see: Victorian Institute of Teaching, [About VIT](#), VIT website, accessed 19 February 2026.

While noting the lack of records available in civil claims files, it also seems likely that communication between Victoria Police and the department was inconsistent at the time. The Board of Inquiry found that there were no information sharing policies between them to ensure open communication about relevant matters.¹¹⁰ Similarly, in most civil claims, the files did not hold any record of communication between the department and Victoria Police about alleged perpetrators at the relevant time. For example, there were no records to indicate that the department was informed of charges in 1996 against Reginald Adrian Crick (who had, by then, retired from teaching).

An overview of the current information sharing and record-keeping requirements is found in **Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures; Reporting and Management** of this report.

Board of Inquiry Finding 6: no systemic reviews

The Board of Inquiry found that investigations in response to allegations of child sexual abuse at Beaumaris Primary School were wholly inadequate. They were either not comprehensive or failed to examine concerning behaviour.¹¹¹

This finding echoes the observations of this Systemic Review. In individual cases, there appears to have been an overreliance on police investigating allegations and, in the absence of criminal charges, an acceptance that the investigation had concluded with no further administrative or disciplinary action being taken. For example, in 1978, Robert Morris was charged but ultimately acquitted of the indecent assault of 6 children. Following the acquittal, his teaching suspension was lifted, and he resumed teaching later that year. In 1980, Morris faced fresh charges and was subsequently convicted. It was only then that he resigned and a written notation was made on his personnel file 'to never be considered for employment'.

As part of this finding, the Board of Inquiry also found that the department had more broadly failed to adequately investigate historical child sexual abuse in government schools.¹¹² In response to this finding and Recommendation 3 of the Board of Inquiry report, the Victorian government committed the department to undertake this Systemic Review.

Information as to the current policy and practices on investigating allegations and post-incident reviews can be found in **Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures; Responding and Management** of this report.

¹¹⁰ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, pp 171, 240.

¹¹¹ *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, pp 241–2.

¹¹² *Board of Inquiry report*, 2024, p 243.

Closing

The purpose of the Systemic Review was to acknowledge historical child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools, confront past institutional failures and contribute to the public record.

Reflecting on the past is critical to ensure that historical institutional failures are not repeated. Work continues in the department to embed the lessons learned from the Board of Inquiry and this review. As custodian of the Victorian government school system, the department recognises that safeguarding children is paramount and requires ongoing attention. This report is a demonstration of the department's commitment to public accountability.

Significant reforms have been implemented to better protect children in government schools today. These reforms include:

- implementing Child Safe Standards, with regular and rigorous reviews of government schools to ensure compliance
- mandatory reporting of suspected child sexual abuse and inappropriate staff conduct through the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- improved information sharing mechanisms and tools
- effective systems of complaints handling
- robust screening of employment candidates, and
- ongoing staff supervision.

The current suite of measures is detailed in **Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures** of this report.

Appendix 1 – Acquittal of the Terms of Reference

Table 14: Acquittal of each Term of Reference

Term of reference (TOR)	Acquittal in the report
4(a)(i) - The number and names of government schools referred to in a civil claim where victim-survivors have experienced abuse.	See Analysis of civil claims files and Appendix 2 – List of schools named in a settled civil claim relating to historical child sexual abuse .
4(a)(ii) - The number of victim-survivors in civil claims who experienced abuse at each school	Departure. The Systemic Review has only published the number of victim-survivors for schools with 6 or more civil claims. This is to prevent identification of victim-survivors, of which there is an increased likelihood with smaller numbers. See Table 1: Schools named by 6 or more victim-survivors. Schools with 5 or less victim-survivors are listed without the number of victim-survivors in civil claims. See Appendix 2 – List of schools named in a settled civil claim relating to historical child sexual abuse.
4(a)(iii) - The time period over which the abuse occurred and the date the civil claim was made.	Departure. The Systemic Review has not published the time period in which the abuse occurred or the date the civil claim was made for each civil claim. This is to prevent identification of victim-survivors, of which there is an increased likelihood if specific information is disclosed. Instead, this information has been reported in the aggregate. See The victim-survivors for the average time period of abuse observed across all civil claims. See Background to civil claims for the average time taken to bring a civil claim.
4(a)(iv) - Schools where there were civil claims about perpetrators with multiple victim-survivors	Departure. As explained above in relation to Term of Reference 4(a)(ii), the Systemic Review has limited this list to schools with 6 or more civil claims that name a perpetrator. This is to prevent the identification of victim-survivors, of which there is an increased likelihood with smaller numbers. See Table 1: Schools named by 6 or more victim-survivors.
4(a)(v) – Schools where there were civil claims about more than one perpetrator working within a five year period	See Table 2: Schools named with 2 or more alleged perpetrators (AP) .
4(a)(vi) - Observations and learnings from civil claims about historical child sexual abuse in a government school regarding patterns of offending and failures to prevent, detect or respond to abuse. This may include case studies of historical child sexual abuse and information about the Department of	See Analysis of civil claims files and The Systemic Review affirms Board of Inquiry key findings. See Appendix 3 – Perpetrator case studies. See Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures for information about the department’s current child safety policies and procedures.

Education's contemporary child safety practices.

4(a)(vii) - Any other information determined to be relevant to provide a greater visibility of historical child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools, based on the information held by the Department of Education in its civil claims files and from applications under the Commonwealth Redress Scheme about historical child sexual abuse in a government school	See Analysis of civil claims files and The Systemic Review affirms Board of Inquiry key findings. See Analysis of redress applications.
4(a)(viii) - The number and names of government schools where a victim-survivor has reported historical child sexual abuse to the Department of Education's SHRU (now called the Restorative Engagement and Support Unit) from 1 July 2023, being the time when the direct central phone number and email address of this function was published on the Department of Education's website, and in circumstances where it has been confirmed that the former student and employee (or former employee) were at the identified government school at the same time	See Analysis of other relevant disclosures.

Appendix 2 – List of schools named in a settled civil claim relating to historical child sexual abuse

This appendix lists all schools (with school number) identified in a settled civil claim relating to historical child sexual abuse.

Many schools have been renamed, closed, or merged with other schools over time. This appendix lists the name of the school at the time the abuse occurred.¹¹³

Albanvale Primary School (5179)	Bayswater High School (7560)	Brunswick Girls High School (7666)
Altona East Primary School (4805)	Beaumaris North Primary School (4803)	Brunswick High School (7665)
Ardeer High School (7522)	Beaumaris Primary School (3899)	Brunswick West Primary School (2890)
Ardeer Primary School (4848)	Beechworth Primary School (1560)	Burwood East State School (454)
Ardoch High School (7523)	Bell Park High School (7580)	Burwood State School (461)
Ashwood Primary School (4698)	Bellfield Primary School (4656)	Burwood Technical School (7070)
Aspendale Primary School (4193)	Bemm River Primary School (4909)	Cambarville State School (4600)
Aspendale Technical School (7010)	Bendigo High School (7595)	Caulfield Secondary College (8732)
Auburn South Primary School (4183)	Bendigo Primary School (877)	Chaffey Secondary College (7250)
Ballam Park Technical School (7019)	Black Hill Primary School (2043)	Chelsea Primary School (3729)
Ballarat Children's Home School (1256)	Boorhaman East Primary School (3317)	Churchill Primary School (4970)
Ballarat Primary School (4936)	Boroondara North Primary School (4960)	Clayton North Primary School (734)
Ballarat Special School (4762)	Box Hill Primary School (2838)	Clifton Hill Primary School (3146)
Baltara Special School / Baltara School / Royal Park Special School (3552)	Box Hill Salvation Army Boys' Home School (4151)	Coatesville Primary School (4712)
Bandiana Primary School (4691)	Brandon Park Technical School (7053)	Cobram Consolidated School (6209)
Bannockburn Primary School (932)	Brauer College (7395)	Cobram High School (7725)
Barwon Downs Primary School (2866)	Braybrook Primary School (1102)	Coburg High School (7730)
Bayside Secondary College (8800)	Brighton Primary School (1542)	Colac Technical School (7095)
	Broadmeadows High School (7660)	Collingwood Technical College (7100)
	Broadmeadows Technical School (7060)	

¹¹³ The school number can be used to search the Victorian Government Schools Directory for further information about a named school: Victorian Government, [Victorian Government Schools Directory](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-schools-directory), vic.gov.au, 3 March 2026.

Craigieburn Primary School (4770)	Gardiner Central School (3888)	Kerang Technical High School (7945)
Cranbourne High School (7747)	Geelong East Technical School (7165)	Lakeside High School (7980)
Cranbourne North Primary School (4887)	Geelong North Primary School (1889)	Lancefield Primary School (707)
Croydon High School (7755)	Geelong West Primary School (1492)	Liddiard Road Primary School (4700)
Dandenong High School (7760)	Glen Park Primary School (1135)	Lilydale High School (7995)
Dandenong North Primary School (4723)	Glendonald School For Deaf Children (4683)	Linton Primary School (880)
Dandenong Technical School (7110)	Glenhuntly Primary School (3703)	Lower Plenty Primary School (1295)
Dandenong West Primary School (4217)	Golden Square High School (7870)	Lyndale High School (8000)
Debney Meadows Primary School (5068)	Greenwood High School (7874)	Lyndale Primary School (4771)
Dederang Primary School (1772)	Hadfield High School (7880)	Mansfield Secondary College (8010)
Deer Park Secondary College (7764)	Hallam Primary School (244)	Maroondah High School (8017)
Deer Park West Primary School (5032)	Hallora Primary School (2377)	Maryborough High School (8020)
Derinya Primary School (4996)	Hamilton Technical School (7185)	Mead Primary School (3745)
Dimboola Memorial High School (7770)	Hazel Park State School (4363)	Meglin Special School (3660)
Dimboola Primary School (1372)	Heatherhill High School (7903)	Melbourne High School (8025)
Doncaster East Primary School (2096)	Heidelberg Primary School (294)	Melrose Primary School (5141)
Drouin High School (7785)	Heidelberg West Primary School (4267)	Melton Primary School (430)
Eaglehawk Primary School (210)	Hillside Special School (4841)	Menzies Creek Primary School (2457)
Eastwood Primary School (4702)	Horsham Technical School (7195)	Mildura High School (8045)
Echuca East Primary School (2667)	Huntingdale High School (7930)	Mitchell Secondary College Wodonga (7420)
Eltham High School (7805)	Inglewood Higher Elementary School (1052)	Monbulk High School (8065)
Essendon State School (483)	Inverloch Primary School (2776)	Monterey High School (8067)
Fawkner High School (7825)	Ivanhoe East Primary School (4386)	Moorabbin Primary School (4687)
Fawkner Technical School (7140)	Jordanville Technical School (7200)	Moorabbin Technical School (7255)
Footscray North State School (4160)	Karingal Secondary College (7940)	Mornington High School (8085)
Foster High School (7845)	Kent Road Primary School (4847)	Mount Beauty High School (8100)
Gardenvale Central School (3897)		Mount Clear Primary School (427)
		Mount Evelyn Primary School (3642)
		Mount Evelyn Technical School (7268)

Mount View Primary School (4923)	Port Welshpool Primary School (3375)	Templestowe High School (8375)
Mount Waverley High School (8105)	Prahran High School (8233)	Thomastown West Primary School (4999)
Mullauna Secondary College (8744)	Pyalong Primary School (2005)	Turana Youth Training Education Centre / Royal Park Special School (4609)
Murtoa Secondary College (8115)	Research Primary School (2959)	Verdale Primary School (4987)
Myrniong Primary School (487)	Ringwood Technical School (7310)	Vermont State School (1022)
Myrree Primary School (2677)	Rollins Primary School (4867)	Wangaratta West Primary School (4642)
Myrtleford Primary School (6241)	Romsey Primary School (366)	Warncoort Primary School (2218)
Nambrok West Primary School (3648)	Rosebery State School (3190)	Warrnambool North Technical School (7396)
Nayook Primary School (3227)	Rosebud High School (8290)	Warrnambool West Primary School (4899)
Newborough Primary School (4650)	Rushworth High School (8295)	Wattle Park High School (8450)
Newstead State School (452)	Sandringham Secondary College (8739)	Weerite Primary School (3383)
Newtown Primary School (1887)	Sandringham Technical School (7320)	Wellington High School (8462)
Noble Park Primary School (3675)	Sebastopol Technical School (7325)	Wendouree Primary School (1813)
North Geelong High School (7856)	South Melbourne Technical School (7335)	Werribee Secondary College (8465)
Oakleigh High School (8200)	Spotswood Primary School (3659)	Westall High School (8470)
Oakleigh Primary School (1601)	St Albans East Primary School (4741)	Westall Primary School (4851)
Ormond East Primary School (4366)	Stawell High School / Stawell Secondary College (8340)	White Hills Technical School (7405)
Osborne Primary School (2655)	Sunshine Primary School (3113)	Wodonga West Secondary College (8477)
Pleasant Creek Special School (4549)	Surrey Hills Primary School (2778)	Wonthaggi Technical School (7425)
Port Melbourne Primary School / Nott Street Primary School (1427)	Swan Hill North Primary School (4743)	Yackandandah Primary School (1103)
	Tally Ho Special School (3588)	Yarra Junction Primary School (3216)

Appendix 3 – Perpetrator case studies

Below are 3 alleged perpetrators who are still alive and may be subject to future criminal proceedings. For this reason, pseudonyms have been used and limited information provided.

Perpetrator A

Perpetrator A taught at 3 Victorian government high schools over approximately 15 years.

The department has settled 22 civil claims of historical child sexual abuse involving *Perpetrator A*.

The department investigated *Perpetrator A*'s behaviour on 3 separate occasions while he taught at 3 different schools.

Perpetrator A has retired. To date, the department understands that *Perpetrator A* has not been charged with any criminal offences.

Perpetrator B

Perpetrator B taught at 11 Victorian government schools over 35 years.

The department has settled 10 civil claims relating to historical child sexual abuse involving *Perpetrator B*.

The department investigated *Perpetrator B* on one occasion.

Perpetrator B resigned following police charges being laid for child sexual abuse.

Perpetrator C

Perpetrator C taught at 13 Victorian government schools over 30 years.

The department has settled 50 civil claims relating to historical child sexual abuse involving *Perpetrator C*.

The department investigated *Perpetrator C* on 3 separate occasions while he taught at 3 different schools.

Perpetrator C resigned following a guilty plea to charges of child sexual abuse.

Reginald Adrian Crick

Reginald Adrian Crick was born in England on 10 August 1927. It is understood that he died by suicide in 1997.

Between 1968 until he retired in 1988, Crick taught music at Horsham Technical School. Crick was employed as a 'temporary assistant' and 'temporary music teacher' as he never completed formal teacher training. Crick was also a visiting music teacher at other local high schools.

The recorded reason for Crick's retirement in his personnel file was for 'having reached the age of 60 years'. Following his retirement, Crick applied for, and was placed on, the Post-Primary Employment Register as an instrumental music teacher. The civil claims files did not include any records that indicated whether Crick was reemployed as a teacher or engaged as an emergency teacher.

The department has settled 11 civil claims relating to historical child sexual abuse involving Crick.

The Systemic Review understands that Crick was charged in relation to sexual offending against children in 1996. Crick died before the matter could proceed to trial.

Details of alleged child sexual abuse

From review of the civil claim files, the Systemic Review understands that Crick sexually abused boys as young as 11 years of age. The abuse often continued throughout the duration of, and sometimes beyond, the victim-survivor's time at school.

Crick groomed students by praising their talent, treating them to gifts, and developing close relationships with their parents or caregivers prior to and during the sexual abuse.

Crick sexually abused students in various school locations such as in his office, in classrooms and on school camps. He also sexually abused students at his private residence, inside his private vehicle and during overnight trips.

Department's state of knowledge and response

In the civil claims' records, many victim-survivors expressed a strong belief that school staff were aware of Crick's behaviour towards his students from the early 1970s.

Despite multiple victim-survivors stating that reports were made to staff members in the early 1970's, the first recorded complaint in Crick's personnel file was received as part of a Freedom of Information request made by a former student's legal representative in 2009.

A Horsham Technical School magazine published in 1987 quoted Crick saying that he 'gets a lot of satisfaction from spending time with students at recess, lunchtime and at his house on the weekends'. This suggests that the additional time Crick spent with his students outside school hours was known among the school community and considered acceptable.

Table 15: Year that civil claims were received

Year	Number of claims received
2019	1
2020	7
2021	2
2022	1
Total	11

Robert Leonard Morris

Robert Leonard Morris was born on 20 April 1945. He died on 27 January 2022.

Morris was a classroom teacher and a principal in Victorian government primary schools for 14 years between 1966 and 1980. He taught at the following 9 primary schools:

- Bahgallah Primary School
- Cambarville State School
- Coolaroo Primary School
- Cranbourne North Primary School
- Eastwood Primary School
- Marysville Primary School
- Ringwood Primary School
- Sassafras Creek Primary School
- Yarra Junction Primary School

The department has settled 20 civil claims relating to historical child sexual abuse involving Morris.

Morris faced charges for indecent assault against children in 1978 and 1980. The department accepted Morris' resignation on 9 October 1980 following a criminal conviction and declared that he was never again to be considered for employment by the department.

In 2016, he was convicted of sexual assaults committed against 6 students during his teaching career. In 2018 in New South Wales, he was also convicted of sexual offences against a child outside of a school environment.

Details of alleged child sexual abuse

On review of the civil claim files, the Systemic Review understands that Morris' victim-survivors were boys aged between approximately 7 and 12 years of age. He sexually abused students under the guise of helping them with their schoolwork during class time, in the school yard, during school camp, on bus trips and after swimming lessons.

Criminal proceedings

Morris was first charged with the indecent assault of 7 children in February 1978. At this time, the department suspended Morris from teaching. Morris was acquitted in the Melbourne County Court on 13 November 1978. The teaching suspension was lifted on 1 December 1978, and Morris was reappointed to teach.

Morris was suspended again in March 1980 after further charges of indecent assault of at least one child. In July 1980, Morris was charged before the Teachers Tribunal for disgraceful and improper conduct under the *Public Service Act 1958* (Vic). The Teachers Tribunal hearings were deferred until the resolution of the criminal charges.

In October 1980, Morris pleaded guilty to the indecent assault of a male under the age of 16 at the Prahran Magistrates' Court. He was placed on a good behaviour bond.

Morris resigned on 9 October 1980 and, as a result, the charges before the Teachers Tribunal were withdrawn. There was a written notation on his personnel file 'never to be considered for employment'.

In March 2016, Morris was convicted of 6 charges of indecent assault against 6 male persons under the age of 16 between 1971 and 1977. The sentencing judge commented that the offences that were the subject of this matter were similar to those arising in 1980 in that Morris committed them against a child in the course of his employment as a teacher. Morris pleaded guilty and was sentenced in the Melbourne County Court to 6 years imprisonment with a non-parole period of 4 years. Morris' application to appeal the sentence was dismissed by the Victorian Supreme Court in December 2016.

Outside of his teaching career, in November 2018, Morris pleaded guilty in the NSW District Court to multiple serious sexual assaults of a child between 1996 and 1998.

Department's state of knowledge and response

On review of civil claim records, the Systemic Review identified an allegation made by a mother of a victim-survivor, who reported the abuse her child experienced at school (School A) as early as 1967. As School A was a single teacher school (and Morris was the teacher), the mother reported the abuse to the Head Teacher of a nearby school. The Systemic Review has been unable to locate any records about this report.

Morris was moved from School A in 1968. The reason for the move is not recorded in Morris' personnel file, so it is unclear whether this was in response to the report.

At least 2 reports are alleged to have been made to the principal of School B by 1974. Morris departed School B soon after the 1974 reports. The reason for his departure is not recorded in his personnel file.

Table 16: Year that civil claims were received

Year	Number of claims received
2016	11
2017	3
2018	2
2019	1
2020	2
2025	1
Total	20

Timothy Richardson

Timothy Leighton Richardson was born on 27 October 1936. He died in prison on 17 July 2019.

Richardson was a high school teacher in Victorian government schools over a 24-year period (not continuously) between 1962 and 1986. He taught at Dandenong High School. The civil claims files indicate that he also worked at Ferntree Gully Technical School and Hallam High School.

The department has settled 11 civil claims relating to historical child sexual abuse involving Richardson.

Richardson's employment records held on the civil claim files indicate that he resigned on multiple occasions – in 1965, 1966, 1979, 1980 and finally in 1986 on the basis that a requested transfer to another school was refused. There was no record identified in the civil claim files that explained why the transfer was refused. He did not recommence employment with the department. However, Richardson may have continued teaching in a casual capacity until 2006. This was unable to be confirmed based on the information in the civil claim files (noting that, at the relevant time, casual teaching staff were engaged directly by the relevant school council rather than the department, so no centrally-held records exist).

In 2018, Richardson faced criminal proceedings involving 5 complainants from Dandenong High School and one complainant who was friends with one of the Dandenong High School victims.

On 12 April 2019, Richardson was found guilty of 9 charges of indecent assault on a male person under the age of 16, and 2 charges of buggery. He was sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment with a non-parole period of 4 years and 9 months.

Details of alleged child sexual abuse

Richardson's victim-survivors were boys aged between approximately 11 and 14 years old.

In the Reasons for Sentence handed down on 12 April 2019, his Honour Judge Higham of the County Court of Victoria noted that Richardson's behaviour was sustained and predatory and was neither spontaneous nor opportunistic. Victim-survivors were invited to Richardson's private property. His Honour commented that as Richardson was a teacher, he was in a position of trust and authority at the school and was so regarded in the community. His Honour opined that each of the victim-survivors was at the private property because Richardson exploited his position of trust and authority.

Department's state of knowledge and response

The department's civil claims records indicate that a victim-survivor allegedly disclosed sexual abuse to a staff member at Dandenong High School in or around 1964 but was not believed. The Systemic Review was unable to find any record of this disclosure in the civil claim files.

The Systemic Review has been unable to identify any record of complaints made against Richardson in the review of his personnel and disciplinary files in the civil claim records. This does not imply that victim-survivors did not raise complaints with school staff. As in the above example, it may have been the case that complaints were not recorded or escalated to the department.

Table 17: Year that civil claims were received

Year	Number of claims received
2019	7
2020	2
2024	1
2025	1
Total	11

Appendix 4 – Current child safety policies and procedures

The Board of Inquiry found that the department has significantly improved its approach to preventing and responding to child sexual abuse compared with the period between 1960 and 1994 (the period under review).

The tables below outline the key measures and current approach to prevention, identification, reporting, management and response to child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools, as at the date of this report. Note that these policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated.

Prevention

The department’s prevention approach is founded in a robust framework of policy and procedures based on the Child Safe Standards to assist schools in preventing child sexual abuse. Prevention measures at schools include stringent suitability screening for staff and volunteers, supervision of staff and volunteers, supervision of students, empowering children and young people, and actions to create and maintain a child safe culture, including child safety risk management practices.

Measures	The current approach
Child safety policies and procedures in Victorian government schools	Victorian government schools follow several important policies and frameworks to help keep children safe from harm and abuse. These are underpinned by: - the Child Safe Standards.¹¹⁴ These are a set of requirements that help schools create safe environments for all students. All schools must meet these standards to keep their registration.¹¹⁵ The standards aim to prevent abuse and ensure students feel safe and supported. - Ministerial Order 1359 (MO 1359).¹¹⁶ This Ministerial Order outlines what schools and school boarding premises must do to meet the Child Safe Standards. It sets out clear actions that every registered school in Victoria must take to build and maintain a child-safe culture. The department has developed a range of resources to help schools meet the Child Safe Standards and the requirements of MO 1359: - Guidance is available that provides practical advice on how schools can meet the requirements of the Child Safe Standards and MO 1359.¹¹⁷ - The School Policy Templates portal (internal access only) includes ready-to-use policy and other templates to support government schools to implement the Child Safe Standards, including a template Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

¹¹⁴ The Child Safe Standards are operationalised in schools through Ministerial Order Number 1359: Minister for Education (Vic), *Ministerial Order No. 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards: Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises*, 31 January 2022.

¹¹⁵ The *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) provides that schools must comply with the Child Safe Standards: subs 20(1), sch 1 item 1. The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) requires compliance with the Child Safe Standards for a school to be registered and keep their registration: subs 4.3.1(6)(e), 4.3.4(2).

¹¹⁶ *Ministerial Order No. 1359*.

¹¹⁷ Victorian Government, ‘*Schools – guidance*’, *Child Safe Standards*, vic.gov.au, 2 October 2024, accessed 8 September 2025.

- The Policy and Advisory Library,¹¹⁸ which is a central resource with a wide range of policies and procedures that apply to all government schools. This includes guidance on responding and reporting obligations in the Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations Policy and the Reportable and Notifiable Conduct Policy. These policies outline the school staff members' obligations when responding to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, and clear advice on how schools should respond to and report child safety concerns.¹¹⁹
- The Report Child Abuse in Schools website, which includes guidance on the Four Critical Actions that must be taken when responding to an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse.¹²⁰
- The Child Protection and Child Safe Standards (PROTECT) website, which provides clear information for all Victorian schools on how to prevent and recognise the signs of child abuse – whether physical or behavioural – and what steps to take in response.¹²¹

Screening of staff and volunteers to work with children	The department has a range of Human Resources (HR) policies to help make sure all employees, contractors, and volunteers working in department schools are suitable to work with children. These policies support: • Safe and thorough hiring practices • Clear expectations for duty of care and supervision • Careful record keeping • Strong screening and background checks. School leaders can contact the Workplace Relations and Policy - Schools Branch for help understanding or applying these policies. Key HR policies that support child safety include: • Suitability for Employment policy.¹²² This policy explains how the department screens potential staff to ensure they are suitable to work with children. This includes criminal record checks for both school-based and non-school-based staff, and sighting Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration and/or Working with Children Checks, depending on the class of employee. • Recruitment in Schools Guide.¹²³ This provides detailed guidance for establishing whether an applicant is suitable for child-connected work, including contacting the preferred candidate's current or immediate past employer and asking a set of prescribed questions about the applicant's
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¹¹⁸ DE, [Policy and Advisory Library](#), n.d, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹¹⁹ DE, ['Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations: Policy'](#), *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 13 February 2025, accessed 8 September 2025; DE, ['Reportable and Notifiable Conduct: Policy'](#), *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 2 October 2025, accessed 29 January 2026.

¹²⁰ Victorian Government, [Report child abuse in schools](#), Schools website, 22 January 2026, accessed 29 January 2026.

¹²¹ Victorian Government, [Child Protection and Child Safe Standards \(PROTECT\)](#), Schools website, 10 December 2025, accessed 29 January 2026.

¹²² DE, ['Suitability for Employment Checks: Overview'](#), *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 5 December 2024, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹²³ DE, ['Recruitment in Schools: Overview'](#), *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 6 February 2026, accessed 11 March 2026.

history of working with children and whether there have been any concerns or disciplinary action.

- **Employment Limitation policy.**¹²⁴ The department may apply an 'employment limitation' to limit a person's eligibility for employment or engagement with the department when a concern arises or a finding is made about a person's conduct, performance and/or suitability to be employed in a Victorian government school. An employment limitation is also flagged as part of pre-employment screening and suitability checks.
- **Managing Conduct and Unsatisfactory Performance in the Teaching Service Guidelines.**¹²⁵ This policy provides that, while confidentiality must be maintained when managing employee conduct and performance, confidentiality does not prevent the provision by principals or managers of honest references or pre-employment child safety checks in regard to an employee. It is vital that when providing a reference or pre-employment check for an employee that the person providing the information discharges their duty of care to students. This means that they must be transparent about any allegations of a child safety nature that have been raised about the employee, even if those allegations were found to be unsubstantiated at the time. This is important information for any prospective employer because they will need to put in place appropriate child safety supervision measures in order to discharge their duty of care and meet their obligations under the Child Safe Standards.
- **Working with Children Checks and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors policy.**¹²⁶ This policy explains schools' legal responsibilities when screening volunteers and visitors. It requires schools to:
 - Have local policies in place to assess whether volunteers or visitors are suitable for child-related or child-connected work.
 - Maintain a register of Working with Children Checks.
 - Verify Working with Children Checks at least once a year.
- **Principal Selection.**¹²⁷ This policy and guidelines set out the process for selecting school principals, including rigorous assessment of candidates' leadership capability.
- **Records Management.**¹²⁸ These policies require accurate and secure records of staff and student information. Keeping records supports child safety by ensuring documentation about student welfare, incidents, and staff conduct is properly retained and accessible for investigations, if needed.

¹²⁴ DE, '[Employment Limitation: Policy](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 13 June 2025, accessed 17 December 2025.

¹²⁵ DE, '[Managing Conduct and Unsatisfactory Performance in the Teaching Service: Overview](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 17 December 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹²⁶ DE, '[Working with Children Checks and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors: Policy](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 26 November 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹²⁷ DE, '[Principal Selection: Overview](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 19 January 2026, accessed 29 January 2026.

¹²⁸ DE, '[Records Management – Employee Information: Overview](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 30 December 2025, accessed 19 January 2026; DE, '[Records Management: Policy](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 24 November 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

- **Roles and Responsibilities - Teaching Service.**¹²⁹ These guidelines outline what is expected of teaching staff, including providing a child safe environment in accordance with the child safe standards.
- **School Council Employment.**¹³⁰ This policy and guidelines set out how school councils should employ staff. They ensure recruitment is consistent with child safety requirements, including appropriate screening and oversight.
- **Teacher Registration.**¹³¹ All teachers must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).¹³² Registration requires background checks and maintaining professional standards, including the VIT Code of Conduct, to ensure that only suitable and qualified individuals work with children.

Supervision of staff and volunteers, and mandatory training	School principals play a key role in keeping students safe. They are responsible for making sure that staff supervision and management prioritises child safety and wellbeing.¹³³ The PROTECT framework provides practical guidance to help schools create a child-safe environment through effective staff supervision and people management. Recommended strategies include: • leadership walk-throughs – regularly moving through classrooms and school spaces to observe staff interactions with students. • formal and informal observations – watching how staff work with children to ensure their behaviour is appropriate and supportive. • providing early feedback to staff to address any concerning or unsafe behaviour as soon as possible.¹³⁴ These strategies help build a strong culture of child safety and ensure that any issues are identified and acted on quickly. A Monitoring and Supervision template – risk mitigation plan document (internal access only) is available on the Policy and Advisory Library to support school principals to plan and document any monitoring and supervision measures put in place to mitigate risks to child safety.¹³⁵ Most often this will be required during or after an investigation into allegations against a staff member. Enhanced monitoring or supervision can be appropriate even where allegations are not substantiated.
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¹²⁹ DE, '[Roles and Responsibilities – Teaching Service: Overview](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 27 February 2025, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹³⁰ DE, '[School Council Employment: Policy and Guidelines](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 8 January 2026, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹³¹ DE, '[Teacher Registration: Overview](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 3 March 2025, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹³² *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), subs 2.4.7(3).

¹³³ Victorian Government, '[Schools – suitable staff and volunteers guidance](#)', *Child Safe Standards*, vic.gov.au, 23 October 2024, accessed 8 September 2025; Minister for Education (Vic), *Ministerial Order No. 1359*, cl 10.4(c).

¹³⁴ See, e.g., Victorian Government, '[Schools – suitable staff and volunteers guidance](#)', *Child Safe Standards*, vic.gov.au, 23 October 2024, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹³⁵ DE, *Monitoring and supervision plan template (Teaching Service)* [unpublished internal template], DE, 1 August 2025.

Staff and volunteers are also required to undertake training – see ‘Identification’ below for further information on training requirements.

Supervision of students	The Victorian School Building Authority incorporates child safety into school design through the Building Quality Standards Handbook, which promotes lines of sight (for example, using glass walls where possible and glass panels in doors).¹³⁶ The Supervision of Students policy provides guidance to schools to ensure schools satisfy their duty of care in supervising students.¹³⁷ When determining appropriate supervision for various school activities, principals must ensure that consideration has been given to local environmental factors that may impact compliance with the Child Safe Standards. This may include, for example: • the range of school environments and the nature of physical spaces (including buildings and grounds, classrooms, corridors, and pick-up and drop-off areas), • the risks posed by dark spaces, stairwells, private spaces and corners, • the risks posed by the introduction of third parties (such as visiting speakers, tutors, coaches or vocational training providers, onsite or offsite), and • the specific risks of online spaces.
Empowering children and creating a child safe culture	The Child Safe Standards require schools to empower children and young people by: • supporting them to understand their rights, • giving them opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them, and • listening to and taking their views seriously.¹³⁸ To meet these requirements, schools are expected to: • create a culture that values and encourages student participation. • provide access to age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention programs and information. • inform students about their rights. • facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, raise concerns, and participate in decision making.¹³⁹ Key resources and programs PROTECT and the Four Critical Actions provides clear steps for creating a child-safe culture, including what to do when a child safety concern or disclosure arises.¹⁴⁰ Respectful Relationships education is taught as part of the Victorian Curriculum and delivered in all Victorian government schools and participating Catholic and

¹³⁶ DE, ‘[Building Quality Standards Handbook \(BQSH\) – School Construction and Design Standards: Policy](#)’, *Policy and Advisory Library*, 28 May 2025, accessed 17 December 2025.

¹³⁷ DE, ‘[Supervision of Students: Policy](#)’, *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 30 September 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹³⁸ [Ministerial Order No. 1359](#), subcl 7.1. Guidance for schools is located at Victorian Government, ‘[Schools – child and student empowerment guidance](#)’, *Child Safe Standards*, vic.gov.au, 20 June 2025, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹³⁹ [Ministerial Order No. 1359](#), subcls 7.2–7.5.

¹⁴⁰ Victorian Government, [Child Protection and Child Safe Standards \(PROTECT\)](#), Schools website, 10 December 2025, accessed 29 January 2026; Victorian Government, [Report child abuse in schools](#), Schools website, 22 January 2026, accessed 29 January 2026.

independent schools as part of a whole-school approach.¹⁴¹ Respectful Relationships education teaches children their right to be safe from abuse and how to seek help from trusted adults. Education is a key part of preventing abuse before it happens.

The Sexuality and Consent Education policy supports schools in delivering sexuality education in Victorian government schools, including the teaching of consent.¹⁴² It ensures students learn about safe, respectful relationships in an age-appropriate way.

Identification

Early identification of child sexual abuse or behaviours that may place a child at risk of child sexual abuse is critical for protecting children. Identification measures that schools adopt include staff training and guidance on signs of child sexual abuse, and an accessible process for both staff, children and families to raise issues and concerns.

Measures	The current approach
Staff training on child safety	To help keep children safe, all school staff and volunteers who work with children must receive regular training in child safety. Who needs training and when • All staff and volunteers engaged in ‘child-connected work’ must be equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe.¹⁴³ • All staff engaged in child-connected work must complete an induction and child safety training at least once every year.¹⁴⁴ • Volunteers engaged in child-connected work must receive an induction regarding child safety and wellbeing, and receive training and information that equips them with the knowledge, skills and awareness required to keep children safe, appropriate to the nature and responsibilities of their role.¹⁴⁵ • School council members must also be trained at least every year.¹⁴⁶ This training helps them understand: • the risks to child safety and wellbeing • their individual and shared responsibilities for meeting the Child Safe Standards • how to manage the risk of child abuse within the school community. What the training covers Annual training for staff must include information on:

¹⁴¹ Victorian Government, [Respectful Relationships](#), Schools website, 23 May 2025, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹⁴² DE, [‘Sexuality and Consent Education: Policy’](#), *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 28 October 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹⁴³ [Ministerial Order No. 1359](#), subcl 12.2(a). ‘Child-connected work’ is defined as ‘work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present’: subcl 4.1(a).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, subcls 10.4, 12.2(a).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, subcls 10.4, 12.2(b).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, subcl 12.2(e).

- the school’s child safety and wellbeing policy.
- the school’s child safety code of conduct.
- the school’s procedures for responding to complaints or concerns of abuse.
- how to recognise signs of child harm.
- how to respond effectively to child safety and wellbeing issues.
- how to build culturally safe environments.
- how to recognise and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.
- recordkeeping and information sharing obligations.¹⁴⁷

Training resources

The department provides a range of training resources to support school staff, volunteers and school councils.¹⁴⁸ These ensure everyone understands their roles in protecting children, is equipped to be able to identify potential abuse and knows how to respond when a child may be at risk.

The Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations policy explains the legal responsibility of all staff, including:

- mandatory reporting
- Reportable Conduct obligations, and
- how to respond to child sexual abuse.¹⁴⁹

Mandatory reporting training

School staff who are:

- mandatory reporters must complete the module once per calendar year
- not mandatory reporters are strongly encouraged to complete the module once per calendar year.

In government schools, staff who are mandatory reporters are automatically enrolled in this training each year.

Additional resources

The PROTECT website gives staff clear guidance on how to recognise the physical or behavioural signs of child abuse and what to do next.¹⁵⁰

Supporting children and families to raise complaints

All Victorian government schools must have complaints policies and procedures which are child-focused, publicly available, accessible, culturally safe and easily understood by the school community.¹⁵¹ The policy must contain a clear procedure for responding to complaints or concerns of child abuse.

How schools are supported

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, subcl 12.2.

¹⁴⁸ See, e.g., Victorian Government, ‘[Child safe standards – training material](#)’, *Child Safe Standards*, vic.gov.au, 19 January 2026, accessed 29 January 2026; Victorian Government, ‘[Protecting children: Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#)’, Schools website, 22 January 2026, accessed 29 January 2026.

¹⁴⁹ DE, ‘[Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations: Policy](#)’, *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 13 February 2025, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹⁵⁰ Victorian Government, ‘[Child Protection and Child Safe Standards \(PROTECT\)](#)’, Schools website, 10 December 2025, accessed 29 January 2026.

¹⁵¹ *Ministerial Order No. 1359*, cl 11. See also Victorian Government, ‘[Schools – complaints processes guidance](#)’, *Child Safe Standards*, vic.gov.au, 12 June 2025, accessed 9 September 2025.

The department has a Complaint Resolution Policy, which helps schools:

- respond to complaints with a focus on student wellbeing
- resolve issues with the best interests of the student in mind.¹⁵²

The department also offers guidance on:

- building a child safe culture in schools
- strengthening school leadership and governance to prevent abuse and
- ensuring child abuse is never tolerated.¹⁵³

The department provides schools with a template local school complaints policy on the School Policy Templates Portal (internal access only).

Help for students

The department has released resources to help Victorian school students understand the steps they can take to raise a problem or issue at school, including their rights and responsibilities during the complaints process.¹⁵⁴ This includes advice about escalating issues that cannot be resolved at the school level to the department's complaints team.

Help for families

The department has released resources to support parents in making a complaint about their school.¹⁵⁵

Reporting

The department provides guidelines to all school staff on their reporting and legal obligations, including on mandatory reporting and the Reportable Conduct Scheme, and how to notify key regulators and Victoria Police about child sexual abuse in a school.

Measures	The current approach
Guidance to staff on reportable conduct	The Reportable Conduct Scheme applies to all schools.¹⁵⁶ It is designed to ensure that allegations of child abuse made against workers and volunteers are properly managed and reported. The Reportable and Notifiable Conduct policy provides guidance to employees on how to notify the department where there is an allegation of reportable or notifiable conduct.¹⁵⁷ Under the scheme, reportable conduct includes where a person has a 'reasonable belief' that another person has engaged in:

¹⁵² DE, '[Complaint Resolution: Policy](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 24 December 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹⁵³ Victorian Government, '[Schools – leadership, governance and culture guidance](#)', *Child Safe Standards*, vic.gov.au, 23 October 2024, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹⁵⁴ Victorian Government, '[Raising and resolving issues at school: A resource for students](#)', Victorian Government website, 11 December 2025, accessed 21 January 2026.

¹⁵⁵ Victorian Government, '[Make a complaint about your school](#)', *Education – Information for parents*, vic.gov.au, 11 December 2025, accessed 21 January 2026.

¹⁵⁶ *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), pt 5A.

¹⁵⁷ DE, '[Reportable and Notifiable Conduct: Policy](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 2 October 2025, accessed 29 January 2026.

- a sexual offence against, with, or in the presence of a child
- sexual misconduct against, with, or in the presence of a child.¹⁵⁸

What schools must do

All allegations of reportable conduct must be reported to the department's Conduct and Integrity Division (CID) even if:

- it is unclear whether the conduct is reportable under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, or
- it is unclear the adult involved is covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Principals are not expected to make the above determinations themselves. CID must be contacted for advice.

The department's role and support

CID will:

- provide advice and support to principals,
- support principals to follow the Four Critical Actions, including reporting any criminal behaviour to Victoria Police,
- ensure allegations of reportable conduct involving certain adults (e.g. those engaged by the department, schools or school councils) are reported to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)/Social Services Regulator, and
- notify the VIT, if relevant.

Notifying the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP). Note that under Chapter 3 of the <i>Social Services Regulation Amendment (Child Safety, Complaints and Worker Regulations) Act 2025</i>, the Reportable Conduct Scheme transferred to the Social Services Regulator on 23 February 2026.	The department's Conduct and Integrity Division (CID) is responsible for reporting allegations of reportable conduct to the CCYP (noting this function transferred to the Social Services Regulator in early 2026) on behalf of the department. When an allegation is made, the following timeframes apply: • Within 3 business days, CID must notify CCYP/Social Services Regulator that a reportable allegation has been made against a worker or volunteer. • Within 30 calendar days, CID must provide the CCYP/Social Services Regulator with updated information, including action taken to respond to the allegation and any progress on the investigation. • At the conclusion of the investigation, CID must notify the CCYP/Social Services Regulator as soon as practicable of the outcome of the investigation, including findings and any disciplinary action taken.¹⁵⁹ The CCYP/Social Services Regulator may refer allegations and findings to other relevant regulators such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching or other professional accreditation bodies.¹⁶⁰
Notifying the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)	The department must notify the VIT if it:

¹⁵⁸ *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), s 3(1) (definitions of 'reportable allegation' and 'reportable conduct').

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, ss 16M(1)(a), (b), 16N(3).

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, subs 16V(1).

- takes any action against a registered teacher in response to allegations of serious misconduct or takes any other action against a registered teacher that is relevant to the registered teacher's fitness to teach¹⁶¹
- becomes aware that a registered teacher has been given a Working with Children exclusion or been charged or convicted of certain offences, including sexual offending committed against a child and/or child abuse material.¹⁶²

The VIT also publishes and maintains a Register of Disciplinary Action (RODA) in accordance with VIT's legal obligations under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic).¹⁶³ The RODA publishes formal disciplinary outcomes involving registered teachers.¹⁶⁴

Notifying senior leaders in the department about child sexual abuse	The Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, Schools and Regional Services (SRS), and Regional Directors are decision makers regarding disciplinary processes in the Teaching Service. When reportable allegations are made that may amount to serious misconduct, CID notifies the appropriate decision maker to determine commencement of a misconduct investigation and risk mitigation action. If an employee is arrested or charged, the Secretary and Deputy Secretary SRS are notified and, where needed, an Incident Management Team is established consisting of senior leaders from across the department to support the school to manage the incident. The SHRU provides dedicated support to the principal and school community.
Notifying Victoria Police about an allegation of child sexual abuse	School staff members and the department must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse to Victoria Police. Failure to report a reasonable belief that child sexual abuse has been committed can constitute a criminal offence. ¹⁶⁵
Sharing information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme	The department is an information sharing entity (ISE) under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS). ¹⁶⁶ The CISS enables professionals who work with children, including teachers, to share information with each other to support the wellbeing or safety of children. Examples of ISEs include Victoria Police, Before and/or After School Hours Care Services, homelessness and community housing services, family support services, nurses and doctors, kindergartens and Long Day Care services. Professionals from these services are able to share information with each other in certain circumstances to support the wellbeing or safety of children.

¹⁶¹ *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (VIC), subs 2.6.30(1). See also the VIT's Conduct Reporting Guides for schools and registered teachers: Victorian Institute of Teaching, [Conduct reporting guide](#), VIT website, 28 May 2025, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, subs 2.6.30(2).

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, subs 2.6.54B(1).

¹⁶⁴ See the Victorian Institute of Teaching, [Register of Disciplinary Action \(RODA\)](#), 6 March 2026, accessed 10 March 2026.

¹⁶⁵ *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic), subs 327(2) (failure to disclose sexual offence committed against child under the age of 16 years).

¹⁶⁶ *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) pt 6A; see also Victorian Government, ['Child Information Sharing Scheme'](#), *Information Sharing*, vic.gov.au, 14 November 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

Other information sharing arrangements	In addition to the above, the department has also formalised agreements with key organisations, including: • a collaborative information sharing agreement to promote the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people, with: ○ the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing ○ Family Safety Victoria ○ the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, and ○ Independent Schools Victoria.¹⁶⁷ • an agreement with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), which includes a requirement for the department to notify the VRQA within 7 days of actual or potential significant breaches of the minimum standards for school registration, in particular breaches of Ministerial Order 1359, that may move into the public domain or attract media or parliamentary attention and for which the VRQA might be requested to comment.¹⁶⁸
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Responding

Responding involves the school's immediate response to incidents, disclosures, concerns or suspicions of child sexual abuse, including the complaints handling approach.

Measures	The current approach
School responses to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child sexual abuse	Schools must have clear procedures for responding to all types of child abuse, including: • abuse within the school (known as reportable conduct), • abuse within the family or community (mandatory reporting), and • abuse between students.¹⁶⁹ The department provides a number of sources of information to assist schools in preparing local policies, including: • PROTECT and the Four Critical Actions.¹⁷⁰ • Managing and Reporting School Incidents (Including Emergencies).¹⁷¹ • Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ [*Memorandum of Understanding between Department of Education and Training and Department of Health and Human Services and Family Safety Victoria and Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd and Independent Schools Victoria Inc.*](#), signed 24 October 2019.

¹⁶⁸ [*Memorandum of Understanding between Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority and State of Victoria, as represented by the Department of Education and Training*](#), signed 5 December 2025.

¹⁶⁹ DE, [*Protecting Children: Reporting and other legal obligations*](#), DE Policy and Advisory Library website, 13 February 2025, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹⁷⁰ Victorian Government, [*Child Protection and Child Safe Standards \(PROTECT\)*](#), Schools website, 10 December 2025, accessed 29 January 2026; Victorian Government, [*Report child abuse in schools*](#), Schools website, 22 January 2026, accessed 29 January 2026.

¹⁷¹ DE, [*'Managing and Reporting School Incidents \(Including Emergencies\): Policy'*](#), *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 20 January 2026, accessed 20 January 2026.

¹⁷² DE, [*'Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations: Policy'*](#), *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 13 February 2025, accessed 8 September 2025.

- Report child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools.¹⁷³

In addition to these public websites, governments schools are required to have local procedures which are consistent with department policies.¹⁷⁴

A template is provided to schools to ensure this consistency — the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures via the School Policy Templates Portal (internal access only).¹⁷⁵ Schools must customise the template to insert relevant contact details for their own local environment and must publish on their school website so that it is accessible to whole school community, including parents and carers.

Every government school's local Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures is assessed for compliance at least once every 4 years, if not sooner.

What school staff must do

All government school staff must follow the Four Critical Actions when responding to any incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse.¹⁷⁶

Requirements for school processes

Processes for managing complaints and concerns must be:

- child focused,
- accessible,
- culturally safe and
- easy to understand.

In addition, these processes must:

- include a clear procedure for:
 - responding to complaints or concerns about child abuse,
 - reporting complaints and concerns to school leadership and other relevant authorities, even if not legally required to do so
 - cooperating with law enforcement
- ensure responses are compliant with legal obligations about:
 - recordkeeping
 - privacy, and
 - employment, and
- meet the various legal reporting obligations related to child abuse.¹⁷⁷

Notifying the child's parents about the	A school principal must seek clearance from Victoria Police (in situations involving a police response) and the department (Conduct and Integrity Division) before contacting a child's parents or carers. ¹⁷⁸ Once clearance has been
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¹⁷³ Victorian Government, [Report child sexual abuse in Victorian government schools](#), Department of Education website, 3 December 2025, accessed 20 January 2026.

¹⁷⁴ Victorian Government, ['Child safety and wellbeing policy'](#), *Child Safe Standards*, vic.gov.au, 26 April 2022, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹⁷⁵ A copy of the template is accessible to the public at Victorian Government, ['Develop your school's child safety and wellbeing policy'](#), *Child Safe Standards*, vic.gov.au, 25 November 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹⁷⁶ Victorian Government, [Report child abuse in schools](#), Schools website, 22 January 2026, accessed 29 January 2026.

¹⁷⁷ [Ministerial Order No. 1359](#), 31 January 2022, cl 11. See also Victorian Government, ['Schools – complaints processes guidance'](#), *Child Safe Standards*, vic.gov.au, 12 June 2025, accessed 9 September 2025.

¹⁷⁸ Victorian Government, [Action 3: Contacting parents or carers](#), Schools website, 28 May 2024, accessed 12 March 2026.

allegation of child sexual abuse	provided, the principal must inform the student's parents or carers as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion. This is a critical step to help parents or carers support their child in partnership with the school, authorities and support services. The principal's primary responsibility is to ensure the safety of the student. Therefore, before engaging with parents, principal's must consider whether it is safe to do so (for example, if it could jeopardise a child's wellbeing or safety, or if it would be inappropriate if a young person is living independently and their family members no longer have access to their personal information).
Central department support to school principals and staff	Several divisions in the department provide expert support to principals and school staff when responding to child sexual abuse, in addition to the regional support provided to schools by Regional Executive teams and regional health and wellbeing teams. 1. Security and Emergency Management Division (SEMD) SEMD receive reports about and support schools to respond to emergencies or incidents of high or extreme severity through the Incident Support and Operations Centre. 2. Conduct and Integrity Division (CID) CID must be contacted immediately if there are any allegations of child abuse by an adult engaged by a school.¹⁷⁹ CID provides advice and support to principals, including • following the Four Critical Actions • how to report and work with Victoria Police • notifying the VIT, if required • reporting allegations to the CCYP/Social Services Regulator, which CID manages on behalf of schools and the department. • immediate risk management within the school. 3. SHRU SHRU is notified whenever a school reports an allegation of child sexual offending by an adult working in a Victorian government schools to CID. SHRU's role is to support the school and relevant department areas to appropriately respond to the allegation, including ensuring that appropriate supports are offered to child victim-survivors, families and impacted school staff. In addition, when criminal charges are laid, SHRU works with the victim-survivor, their family and the school to ensure that appropriate notifications are sent to the school community (and past students where relevant, including at other government schools where the alleged perpetrator has worked) to inform them of criminal charges and the supports that are available.¹⁸⁰ 4. Employee Safety and Wellbeing Division (ESWD)

¹⁷⁹ See, e.g., DE, '[Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations: Policy](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 13 February 2025, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

ESWD supports staff wellbeing and safety, working in partnership with SHRU and CID.¹⁸¹ One key support service is the Employee Wellbeing Support Services which is available to all staff affected by child sexual abuse incidents in schools. This program provides free and confidential advice to proactively support staff wellbeing, as well as crisis support.¹⁸² In addition, staff who may be at risk of mental injury due to their exposure to child sexual abuse incidents in schools are eligible for the Early Intervention Program.¹⁸³ Through the Early Intervention Program staff work with a care coordinator to access a range of services including psychology, physiotherapy, exercise physiology and dietetics.

Notifying the school community about child sexual abuse	If a staff member is charged with a sexual offence involving a child, or if an allegation of a sexual offence against, with or in the presence of a child is substantiated following a Reportable Conduct investigation, the SHRU will support the school.¹⁸⁴ SHRU works with the school to ensure that clear, appropriate and timely notifications are provided to the school community, while protecting the privacy of any victim-survivor and meeting any other legal requirements.¹⁸⁵ Any notifications to the community will include a list of available internal supports (such as school wellbeing services) and external services so that other impacted students and their families know how to report abuse and get support.
Supporting adult victim-survivors who report child sexual abuse	Former students who were sexually abused by an adult working in a Victorian government school can contact the department's Restorative Engagement and Support team for assistance.¹⁸⁶ The Restorative Engagement and Support team can offer the department's counselling assistance payments program, the opportunity for a restorative engagement process, support with finding records, and can also provide general information on support services and options for compensation and redress. Information on department supports for adult victim-survivors of child sexual abuse in a Victorian government school is available on the department's webpage for former students sexually abused by an adult working at a Victorian government school.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸¹ See, e.g., DE, '[Managing Conduct and Unsatisfactory Performance in the Teaching Service: Part 1 – Introduction](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 25 August 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹⁸² DE, '[Occupation Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management in Schools: 6. Employee Wellbeing Support Services](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 20 January 2026, accessed 20 January 2026.

¹⁸³ DE, '[Occupation Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management in Schools: 7. Further expert health, safety and wellbeing supports](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 30 December 2025, accessed 20 January 2026.

¹⁸⁴ DE, '[Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations: Policy](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 13 February 2025, accessed 8 September 2025.

¹⁸⁵ DE, '[Managing Conduct and Unsatisfactory Performance in the Teaching Service: Part 1 – Introduction](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 25 August 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹⁸⁶ Victorian Government, '[Report sexual abuse if you're a current or former student](#)', Victorian Government website, accessed 9 September 2025.

¹⁸⁷ Victorian Government, '[Victim-survivor support for former students](#)', vic.gov.au, 10 March 2026, accessed 10 March 2026.

Management

Management of concerns and allegations of child sexual abuse at a school involves the ongoing management and investigation of allegations, record keeping and retention, as well as post-incident reviews.

Measures	The current approach
Central department support in conducting investigations	School principals and managers must report any information, concerns or allegations of child abuse by an adult engaged in a school to the Conduct and Integrity Division (CID) as soon as possible.¹⁸⁸ Allegations are managed in accordance with the Guidelines for Managing Conduct and Unsatisfactory Performance in the Teaching Service.¹⁸⁹ Once notified, CID will: • assess whether the allegations fall under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, and if so, report it to the CCYP/Social Services Regulator. • where required, notify the VIT if the allegation involves a registered teacher. • advise and support school leaders with next steps, which may include: ○ following the Four Critical Actions. ○ liaising with Victoria Police, if required. ○ preserving evidence and collecting statements. ○ steps to take and measures to put in place to monitor and mitigate risk, such as suspension from duties or a direction to work from home. ○ investigative steps and putting concerns forward under the guidelines for Managing Conduct and Unsatisfactory Performance. Where there are grounds for action to commence a misconduct inquiry, the Secretary's delegate will determine whether to commence an inquiry and nominate an investigator to conduct the investigation in line with the Guidelines. Procedures for an investigation and determination of a misconduct inquiry under Division 10 of Part 2.4 of the ETRA generally involve the following key steps: • the Secretary's delegate nominating an investigator to conduct an investigation • the investigator preparing a Notice of Allegations in relation to the person who is the subject of the allegations and giving them an opportunity to respond • the investigator preparing an investigation report • if the allegations are substantiated in the investigation report, the Secretary's delegate giving the respondent an opportunity to respond to the report, the grounds for action and the proposed disciplinary outcome • the Secretary's delegate making a decision on whether there are grounds for action and the disciplinary outcome to be taken, after considering the respondent's response.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ DE, '[Managing Conduct and Unsatisfactory Performance in the Teaching Service: Part 1 – Introduction](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 25 August 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ DE, '[Managing Conduct and Unsatisfactory Performance in the Teaching Service: Part 3 – Managing misconduct under Division 10 of Part 2.4 of the ETRA](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 3 December 2024, accessed 19 September 2025.

The Secretary may terminate the employment of an employee under subsection 2.4.61A(1) of the ETRA if they reasonably believe that the employee has engaged in serious misconduct. Serious misconduct includes conduct that may cause serious and imminent risk to the health or safety of a person or the reputation of the department, such as theft, fraud, assault or the violation of a relationship of trust and influence in relation to a student.¹⁹¹

Reviews following child safety incidents	After any significant child safety incident, or at least every 2 years, schools are required to review and evaluate their child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and make improvements where needed.¹⁹² The outcomes of reviews must be reported to school staff, volunteers, the school community and families and students. The department's School Compliance Unit (SCU) checks whether government schools have undertaken post-incident reviews after significant child safety incidents when completing 4-yearly cyclical Minimum and Child Safe Standards compliance assessments. If a review has not been completed, SCU supports the school to complete the review as part of the compliance assessment process. In addition, the SCU and the SHRU support schools to complete post-incident reviews outside of cyclical compliance assessments where there is a significant child safety incident involving: • criminal charges for child sex offences, or • substantiated reportable conduct finding of a sexual offence of sexual misconduct involving an adult working in a government school. CID, SCU and SHRU each share data and insights from their work with: • Executive Board (including the dedicated Child Safety Committee), which includes the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries, • Minimum and Child Safe Standards Working Group, which includes Executive Directors and meets every term on emerging child safety themes and compliance with the Child Safe Standards, and • Regional Executives working directly with schools.
General record keeping requirements	All Victorian government schools must meet mandatory recordkeeping requirements under the <i>Public Records Act 1973</i> (Vic). These requirements are set out in the department's Records Management policy.¹⁹³ Schools' records must be created, managed, stored and lawfully disposed of in accordance with the Act. To comply with this requirement, schools must: • Follow the Records Management policy. • Create, maintain and dispose of child safety and wellbeing records in accordance with Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards, including minimum retention periods.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² *Ministerial Order No. 1359*, 31 January 2022, subcl 14.2; Victorian Government, *Schools – review of child safety practices guidance*, *Child Safe Standards*, vic.gov.au, 21 February 2024, accessed 9 September 2025.

¹⁹³ DE, 'Records Management: Policy', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 24 November 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹⁹⁴ Public Record Office Victoria, *Recordkeeping Standards*, Public Record Office Victoria website, 23 June 2025, accessed 9 September 2025.

- Ensure staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities on information sharing and recordkeeping.¹⁹⁵
- Ensure all recordkeeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints and concerns.¹⁹⁶

School staff must keep clear and comprehensive notes relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse.¹⁹⁷

Retention of child safety and wellbeing records	The department's guidance on recordkeeping outlines that schools must keep child safety and wellbeing records in a way that ensures they are searchable and retrievable and protected from unauthorised use.¹⁹⁸ The department's Records Management Policy outlines the retention policy for different types of school records, including student files. For example, schools must retain all records documenting the reporting and investigation of sexual abuse incidents, allegations and disclosures for a minimum period of 99 years.¹⁹⁹
Access to school records	The department provides guidance on how a person can access their own Victorian school records on the School Records website.²⁰⁰ The website also provides information, using trauma-informed principles, about other records that may be available publicly or upon request, and reasons for why some records are not available. If the school is still open, the person making the request will need to contact the school directly. They may be referred to the department if the records have been transferred to the department's secure central records storage. If the school has closed, merged or changed names, then the department's Archives and Records team can assist with the request. In addition to this general information, the department's webpage for former students sexually abused by an adult working at a Victorian government school provides specific information about the types of records and information victim-survivors can access and how the department can assist them with finding those records.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ DE, '[Records Management: Policy](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 24 November 2025, accessed 19 January 2026.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Victorian Government, '[Report child abuse in schools](#)', Schools website, 22 January 2026, accessed 29 January 2026.

¹⁹⁸ DE, '[Records Management: Chapter 11: Recordkeeping – child safety and wellbeing](#)', *Policy and Advisory Library*, PAL website, 4 October 2024, accessed 9 September 2025.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid; Public Record Office Victoria, '[Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Organisational Response to Child Sexual Abuse Incidents and Allegations](#)', Victorian Government, authority number PROS 19/08, 10 July 2019, accessed 9 September 2025.

²⁰⁰ Victorian Government, '[Get school records](#)', *School records*, vic.gov.au, 10 February 2026, accessed 10 February 2026.

²⁰¹ Victorian Government, '[Accessing school records as a victim-survivor](#)', *Victim-survivor support*, vic.gov.au, 8 December 2025, accessed 21 January 2026.