Reporting to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

1. Responding to an Emergency
   - If there is no risk of immediate harm, go to Action 2.
   - If the child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:
     - separating alleged victim and others involved
     - administering first aid
     - calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance
     - responding to immediate health or safety concerns
   - Identifying a contact person at the service for future liaison with police

2. Reporting to Authorities
   - As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.
   - DHHS Child Protection
     - You must report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be
       - in need of protection from child abuse
       - at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has, or is likely to have a serious impact on the child’s safety, stability or development.

3. Contacting Parents/Careers
   - You must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/careers. They may advise:
     - not to contact parents/careers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
     - to contact the parents/careers and provide agreed information as soon as possible (for licensed and approved services it is a requirement that parents/careers are notified within 24 hours if the suspected abuse occurred at the service).

4. Providing Ongoing Support
   - Your service should take reasonable steps to make a child feel safe and supported whilst they are attending the service.
   - You must follow the Four Critical Actions every time you become aware of a further incident or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

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

Within the Service
- Victoria Police
  - You must report all instances of child abuse which are led by a staff member, contractor or volunteer, or child* to Victoria Police.

Within the Family or Community
- DHHS Child Protection
  - You must report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be
    - in need of protection from child abuse
    - at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has, or is likely to have a serious impact on the child’s safety, stability or development.

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act.
This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child First (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

Contact
- DHHS Child Protection
  - Area
    - North Division 1300 664 9777
    - South Division 1300 655 795
  - East Division 1300 360 391
  - West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599
  - West Division (Metro) 1300 664 9777

- After hours
  - After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78

- Child First
  - www.dhs.vic.gov.au
  - Victoria Police
    - 000 or your local police station

Quality Assessment and Regulation Division
- North Western
  - Loddon Mallee (03) 5440 3111
  - Northern Metropolitan (03) 8397 0372

- North-Eastern
  - Gippsland Area (03) 5127 0400
  - Southern Metropolitan (03) 8765 5787

- South-Western
  - Barwon South West (03) 5225 1001
  - Western Metropolitan (03) 8397 0246
  - Grampians (03) 5337 8444