FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

1. RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to Action 2.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:
- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with police

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

2. REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

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.

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE
You must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.

You must also report internally to:
- Government Schools
  - School principal and/or leadership team
  - Employee Conduct Branch
  - DET Security Services Unit.
- Catholic Schools
  - School principal and/or leadership team
  - Diocesan education office.
- Independent Schools
  - School principal and/or school chairperson
  - Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 782 978.

All allegations of reportable conduct must be reported as soon as possible to:
- Government Schools
- Employee Conduct Branch
- Catholic Schools
- Diocesan education office
- Independent Schools
- Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 782 978.

3. CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

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

You must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:
- not to contact the parents/carers (e.g. if the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- to contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this may be made as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- how to communicate with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety

4. PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

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