##

**FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS**

Responding to Student Sexual Offending

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| **YOU MUST TAKE ACTION** As a school staff member, you play a critical role in protecting children in your care. * You **must** act, by following the 4 critical actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion that a student is a victim of a student sexual offending and/or a student has engaged in sexual offending.
* You **must** act even if you are unsure and have not directly observed student sexual offending (e.g. if the victim, or another person tells you about the offence).
* You **must** use the *Responding to Student Sexual Offending Template* to keep clear and comprehensive notes.
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**ACTION 1: immediate Response to An Incident**

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

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

* separating alleged victims and others involved
* administering first aid
* **calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
* identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

**Action 2: reporting to authorities**

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report incidents, suspicions and disclosures of student sexual offending as soon as possible.

Victoria Police

All instances on **000**

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

If you believe that:

* the victim’s parent/carers are unable or unwilling to protect the child
* The student who is alleged to have engaged in the student sexual offending is:
	+ Aged over 10 and under 15 years and may be in need of therapeutic treatment to address these behaviours
	+ May be displaying physical and behavioural indicators of being the victim of child abuse.

Internally

Also report internally to:

* **School Principal and/or leadership team** (all instances)
* **Government schools**: DET Security Services Unit
* **Catholic schools**: Diocesan education office

You must identify a contact person at the school for future liaison with Victoria Police and/or Child Protection and seek advice about contacting parents/carers (see **Action 3**)

\*See the Four Critical Actions for Schools: **Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse** for further guidance in these circumstances.

**ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS**

Your Principal **must** consult with **Victoria Police** or **DHHS Child Protection** to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

* **not to contact** the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where contacting the parents/carers is likely to adversely affect a Victoria Police investigation or where the student is a mature minor and has requested that their parent/carer not be notified.
* **to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

**ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT**

Your school **must** provide support for students who are victim to a student sexual offence AND students who have engaged in a sexual offence. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.

This support should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals outlining support strategies.

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

**CONTACT**

**DHHS CHILD PROTECTION**

*AREA*

North Division 1300 664 977

South Division 1300 655 795

East Division 1300 360 391

West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599

West Division (Metro) 1300 664 977

*AFTER HOURS*

After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78

**CHILD FIRST**

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

**VICTORIA POLICE**

**000** or contact your local police station

**DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT**

(03) 9589 6266

**STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT**

(03) 9651 3622

**EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH**

(03) 9637 2595

**DIOCESAN OFFICE**

Melbourne (03) 9267 0228 Ballarat (03) 5337 7135 Sale (03) 5622 6600 Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA**

(03) 9825 7200