

Identify and respond to child abuse in the community, including grooming

Speak up! Always put the child's safety, rights, and best interests first.

Identify child abuse

All staff

You can identify abuse by:

- witnessing grooming behaviours or an incident
- receiving a disclosure from a child, or someone who knows them
- observing:
 - physical/behavioural signs of abuse
 - something concerning online or on a device.

Tell your service manager, nominated supervisor, and/or approved provider if you become aware of any allegation, complaint, disclosure, or concern that:

- an adult within the community may be abusing a child, or
- a child is at risk of being abused.

Information Sharing staff/Child Link users

- Request information from Information Sharing entities or check **Child Link**.

Service management/nominated supervisors/approved providers:

- **Report**
- **Support** and **Refer**

You may need to take actions in support and refer at the same time.

At all times, you must also:

- **Respond to an emergency** – Call 000. Preserve evidence. Keep children safe.
- **Repeat/take different actions as circumstances change.**
- **Document your actions.**

Report abuse to authorities

Victoria Police

- If you believe a crime (e.g. physical or sexual assault or abuse, grooming, or threatening behaviour) may have been committed against a child, report to Victoria Police.

Child Protection (including Mandatory Reports)

- Report to Child Protection if you form a reasonable belief that the parents/carers have not, or are unlikely to, protect the child from significant harm.
- You must report all physical and sexual abuse to Child Protection.

Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority (VECRA)

- Your approved provider must notify VECRA:
 - **Within 24 hours** of a serious incident at an education and care service (or if someone makes a complaint that there was a serious incident at the service).
 - **Within 24 hours** of becoming aware of reportable sexual misconduct, including any sexual misconduct or sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of a child by a relevant staff member working or volunteering at the service (even if it did not happen at the service).¹
- If your service manager, nominated supervisor or approved provider does not notify VECRA of the concern, you can make a complaint to VECRA (including **anonymously**).

Notify parents/carers (if it is safe, reasonable, and appropriate)

- If Victoria Police and/or Child Protection are involved, seek their clearance on what can be shared before contacting parents/carers.
- Once you get clearance, contact parents/carers as soon as possible (same day preferred).

¹ This requirement is in effect from 12 August 2026.

Key contacts

Victoria Police

- 000 (emergencies)
- 131 444 or local police station (non-emergencies)

Child Protection

8:45am to 5pm, Mon-Fri

North 1300 598 521 East 1300 360 452

South 1300 555 526 West 1300 360 462

After hours 13 12 78

VECRA

- **Enquiries:** 1300 307 415 (9am-5pm, Mon-Fri)
- **Email:** vecra@education.vic.gov.au
- **Online complaint form**

The Orange Door

☎️ 📍

Local sexual assault service

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Support impacted children

- Engage children and parents/carers (if it is safe, reasonable, and appropriate) to find the best support.
- Arrange additional support for impacted children and staff.
- Tailor support to individual needs.
- Use **Child Link** and information sharing to better understand the situation for impacted children and to provide appropriate support.
- Support parents/carers to engage with their local Maternal and Child Health Service (MCH).
- Continue support for as long as necessary.

Refer to community services

Engage parents/carers and children to connect with services:

- **Local specialist support services** for dedicated support for young children.
- **First Nations people** can also be supported by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO).
- **Local sexual assault services** for sexual offences/harmful sexual behaviour.



vic.gov.au/protect-early-childhood