

Identify and respond to child abuse in the family

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

Identify child abuse

All staff

You can identify abuse by:

- witnessing an incident or grooming behaviours
- receiving a disclosure from a child, or someone who knows them
- observing:
 - physical/behavioural signs of abuse
 - signs of family violence trauma in children
 - family violence risk factors
 - narratives and behaviours that may suggest an adult is using family violence
 - something concerning online or on a device.

You only need to collect enough information to form a reasonable belief or to help you take next steps. If you form a reasonable belief:

- go to **Determine your pathway**
- **tell your service manager, nominated supervisor, and/or approved provider.**

If you have a concern that a child is experiencing, or at risk of, child abuse in the family and need more information:

- complete Family Violence Identification Tool
- provide to MARAM-nominated staff.

MARAM nominated staff

- complete the Family Violence Screening Tool.

If you form a reasonable belief that there is current family violence:

- tell service management
- go to **Determine your pathway**
- complete Basic Safety Plan.

Information Sharing staff/Child Link users

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

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.**

Determine your pathway

Report to Child Protection (including mandatory report)

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

Family violence (not a mandatory report or crime)

- **Refer** then **Support**

Crime

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

Family struggling with the care, wellbeing or development of a child

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

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

If you are unsure which pathway to take, contact The Orange Door for advice.

Support impacted children

- Engage children and parents/carers (if it is safe, reasonable, and appropriate) to find the best support.
- 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:

- **The Orange Door** for family violence or families struggling with the care, wellbeing or development of a child.
- **First Nations people** can also be supported by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO).
- **Local specialist support services** for dedicated support for young children.
- **Local sexual assault services** for sexual offences/harmful sexual behaviour.

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

Local sexual assault service



vic.gov.au/protect-early-childhood

Report abuse to authorities

Child Protection (including mandatory reports):

- 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.

Victoria Police (Crime)

- 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.

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 Child Protection and/or Victoria Police 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.