

POLICY

Port Phillip Specialist School understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse. We have a range of policies and measures in place to prevent child abuse from occurring at our school or during school activities.

Information for students

All students should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.

If a student does not know who to approach at Port Phillip Specialist School, they should start with the Principal/Assistant Principal.

Identifying child abuse

To ensure

Notify the principal, child safety officer, or a member of the leadership team as soon as possible, who will ensure our school follows the steps in these procedures.

NOTE for staff and volunteers:

If you are uncertain if an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion gives rise to a concern about child abuse you must always err on the side of caution and report the concern to the classroom teacher.

If the classroom teacher is unavailable, the Assistant Principal will take on this role.

If the concerns relates to the conduct of the classroom teacher, notify the principal or the regional office where the person nominated above is the principal who must then take on responsibility for ensuring our school follows these procedures.

Refer to Appendix B for guidance on how to respond to a disclosure of child abuse.

2. Reporting to authorities and referring to services

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, the classroom teacher must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible.

The following steps will ensure our school complies with the four critical actions as well as additional actions required under the Child Safe Standards.

The classroom teacher must ensure:

all relevant information is reported to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection, Victoria Police or relevant services where required

the incident is reported to the Department's [eduSafe Plus portal](#) or the Incident Support and Operations Centre (1800 126 126) in accordance with the severity rating outlined in the [Managing and Reporting School Incidents Policy](#)

all [reportable conduct](#) allegations or incidents are reported by the Principal to the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (03 7022 0005) – where a reportable conduct allegation is made against the Principal, the Regional Director must be informed who will

For further guidance, refer to [PROTECT Contacting parents and carers](#)

4. Ongoing protection and support

The Principal/Assistant Principal must ensure appropriate steps are taken by the school to protect the child and other children from any continued risk of abuse. These steps must be taken in consultation with any relevant external agency or Department staff such as DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police, Legal Division or Employee Conduct Branch. Ongoing protection will also include further reports to authorities if new information comes to light or further incidents occur.

Appropriate, culturally sensitive and ongoing support must be offered and provided to all affected students. Ongoing support will be based on any available advice from the Department, parents and carers, health practitioners, and other authorities (such as DFFH or Victoria Police) and may include referral to wellbeing professionals, development of a safety plan, student support group

report the matter to the relevant authorities where they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another staff member.

Staff must refer to Appendix A for further information on their obligations relating to reporting to authorities.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- available publicly on our school's website
- included in staff induction processes and annual staff training
- included in volunteer induction processes and training for relevant volunteers
- discussed an annual staff briefings or meetings
- hard copy available from school administration upon request.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the *Mandatory Reporting and Other*

For more information about reportable conduct see the Department's *Policy and Advisory Library: Reportable Conduct*

Reasonable steps to remove or reduce the risk may include removing the adult (ie persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

Further information

For more information about the offences and reporting obligations outlined in this fact sheet refer to: [Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#).

APPENDIX B: MANAGING DISCLOSURES OF CHILD ABUSE