

Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures

Summary

Table 1 - Document details

Publication date	April 2023
section of legislation	Ministerial Order 1359
Related policies, procedures, guidelines, standards, frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x RSC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy x RSC Child Safety Code of Conduct x RSC Statement of Values and School Philosophy x RSC Student School Council
Approved by	Principal
Approval date	April 2023
Version	1.3

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures our school has in place to respond to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse and to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand and follow the various legal obligations that apply to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school (physical and online).

3. Definitions

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3. Contacting parents or carers

APPENDIX A: Legal obligations relating to reporting child abuse

Failure to disclose offence

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (ie persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 in Victoria. Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000, local police station or the Police Assistance Line 131 444) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

"Reasonable belief" is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- x a child states that they have been sexually abused
- x a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- x someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- x

APPENDIX B: managing disclosures of child abuse

Important information for staff

When managing a disclosure relating to child abuse you should:

- x listen to the student and allow them to speak
- x stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
- x be gentle, patient and nonjudgmental throughout
- x highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened
- x assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred
- x do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?"
- x be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words
- x do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals, and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times
- x reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do
- x use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non