FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

You must act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief * that a child has, or is at risk of being abused. You must act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse). It is strongly recommended that you use the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template to keep clear and comprehensive notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

1

7

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

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering rst 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.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.



3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

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

- not to contact the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- 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)
- how to communicate with all relevant paties with consideration for their safety.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Planin consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.

Strategies mayinclude development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

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

https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/ referral-and-support-teams

ORANGE DOOR

https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html

VICTORIA POLICE

600t /Tce stat44 -14.P0s1c Tw2 1 0 0 1 822.4003 Q q 1fH9J Etat44 -14.P0s1c119.492050-,[m 12E

PROTECT

