

# FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

## Responding to Student Sexual Offending

PROTECT



### YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member, you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

- You **must act** by following the 4 critical actions as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion that a student is a victim of a student sexual offending and/or a student has engaged in sexual offending
- You **must act** even if you are unsure and have not directly observed student sexual offending (e.g. if a victim, or another person tells you about the offence)
- You **must** use the *Responding to Student Sexual Offending template* to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

### 1 IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

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

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first 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

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report incidents, suspicions and disclosures of student sexual offending as soon as possible:

#### VICTORIA POLICE

All instances on **000**

#### DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

If you believe that:

- the victim's parent/carers are unable or unwilling to protect the child
- the student who is alleged to have engaged in the student sexual offending is:
  - aged over 10 and under 15 years and may be in need of therapeutic treatment to address these behaviours
  - may be displaying physical and behavioural indicators of being the victim of child abuse\*.

#### INTERNALLY

ALSO report internally to:

- School Principal and/or leadership team** (all instances)
- Government Schools:** DET Security Services Unit
- Catholic Schools:** Diocesan education office

### 3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your Principal **must** consult with **Victoria Police** or **DHHS Child Protection** to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers of all impacted students. They may advise:

- not to contact the parents/carers** (e.g. in circumstances where contacting the parents/carers is likely to adversely affect a **Victoria Police** investigation or where the student is a mature minor and has requested that their parent/carer not be notified)
- 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).

### 4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for students who are victim to a student sexual offence AND students who have engaged in a sexual offence. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.

This support should include the development of a **Student Support Plan** in consultation with wellbeing professionals, outlining support strategies.

Strategies may include the development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.

You must identify a contact person at the school for future liaison with Victoria Police and/or Child Protection and seek advice about contacting parents/carers (see **Action 3**).

\*See the *Four Critical Steps for Schools: Responding Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse* for further guidance in these circumstances.

### 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

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

#### VICTORIA POLICE

**000** or contact your local police station

#### DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT

**(03) 9589 6266**

#### STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT

**(03) 9651 3622**

#### EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

**(03) 9637 2595**

#### DIOCESAN OFFICE

Melbourne **(03) 9267 0228**  
 Ballarat **(03) 5337 7135**  
 Sale **(03) 5622 6600**  
 Sandhurst **(03) 5443 2377**

#### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA

**(03) 9825 7200**

