



# Oakleigh Grammar

<b>Policy Document Name</b>	<b>Mandatory Reporting &amp; Procedure</b> (incorporating Child Abuse Allegation Procedure & Incident Report Form)
<b>Date Ratified by Board Chairman on behalf of Board of Management</b>	7 December 2021
<b>Date for Review</b>	August 2022

## 1. Preamble

Oakleigh Grammar has a **zero-tolerance approach to child abuse**. The School must and will comply with the minimum standard for the care, safety and welfare of students as detailed in the Child Safe Standards specified by *Ministerial Order No. 870*. Underpinning the information and procedures discussed in this policy is the *Children, Youth and families Act 2005*. All employees of the School undertake compulsory annual Mandatory Reporting training.

The Child Safe Officer is responsible for the monitoring and overall School compliance with the Child Safe and Mandatory Reporting policies and procedures.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the Oakleigh Grammar (the School) responsibilities and approach to Child Protection Reporting.

The Policy provides the School, its staff, contractors and volunteers with an outline of what to do in the event of incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse against a student or child in the care of the School.

The Policy must be read in conjunction with the Child Safe Policy.

## 3. Policy Scope

The policies and procedures contained in this document cover both contemporary and historical child abuse matters. The document applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers and all students at Oakleigh Grammar and across all programs and activities both on school grounds and offsite where Oakleigh Grammar students are involved or that are overseen by Oakleigh Grammar e.g. school holiday programs.

All School staff, contractors and volunteers must familiarise themselves with this Policy document and respond appropriately and in accordance with the provisions of the Policy.

All teaching staff are required to complete the Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module on a regular basis, as a part of the School's child safe training.

Where a former student discloses or is the alleged victim of any type of abuse, as outlined in this policy, the School will provide support to the student and contact the Police immediately for further investigation.

#### **4. Policy Statement**

The School recognises that it is essential that the safety, health, welfare and wellbeing of its students are safeguarded at all times. Every person working or visiting the School is responsible for the ongoing care and protection of its students.

The School is committed to ensuring all incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse are reported immediately to the appropriate authorities and the child's wellbeing is at the centre of any actions or decisions that ensue.

The school adheres to the Child Safe Standards and Mandatory Reporting legislation. All School personnel, teachers, either voluntary or paid, who have formed a belief based on *reasonable grounds* of child abuse are to contact the Child Safe Officer and collectively make a Mandatory Report.

In addition to Mandatory reporting the School requires **all** School staff members, contractors and volunteers, whether required by the legislation or not, who have formed a belief on reasonable grounds of any child abuse (sexual, physical, emotional/psychological, neglect, grooming or domestic violence), or who have had a student disclose child abuse directly to them or indirectly through a friend, are to report to the School's Child Safe Officer (Deputy Principal – Operations) or another member of the Senior Leadership Team or Principal immediately.

#### **5. Reporting Procedures**

The Child Safe Standards require schools to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. This procedure is designed to provide guidance on what to do if a child discloses an incident of abuse, or if a parent/carer raises a concern or allegation of abuse.

School staff should discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the Deputy Principal – Operations (Child Safety Officer) or Head of School. The individual staff member should then make their own assessment about whether they must or may make a report about the child or young person.

##### **5.1 If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you**

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words at their own pace to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing. Don't dismiss what they say. It takes courage for a child to tell about abuse.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, such as with their parent/carer and specific people in the School.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Don't ask lots of questions.
- Make sure the child is safe and let them know you will do your best to stop them being harmed.
- Provide them with an Incident Report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.

- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them. Take measures to protect the child until the allegation has been resolved.
- Explain to them what you will need to do next.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's own words if this has not already been done, and report the disclosure to the Child Safe Officer (or member of SLT if the Child Safe Officer is absent) and together inform Child First or Child Protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately on an Incident Report form, and that the record is stored securely in a central file (Principal's office)
- HOS to ensure that the essential details of any disclosure are reported to the Deputy Principal - Operations for inclusion in the Central Annual Reports Register. Deputy Principal - Operations to advise Principal.

In consultation with the counsellor, Child Safe Officer, Head of School and external wellbeing professionals, a Student Support Plan will be developed for any student that discloses child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse. This may involve direct support or referral to external professionals.

## **5.2 If a parent/carer says their child has been abused at School or raises a concern**

- Explain that the School has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, including the Child Safe Officer, Child First or Child Protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an Incident Report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- As soon as possible report the disclosure to the Child Safe Officer (DP-Operations) (or member of SLT if the Child Safe Office is unavailable) and together inform Child First or Child Protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately on an Incident Report form, and that the record is stored securely in a central file.
- HOS to ensure that the essential details of the disclosure are reported to the Deputy Principal (Operations) for inclusion in the Central Annual Reports Register. Deputy Principal (Operations) to advise Principal.

## **5.3 Making A Report.** (check one done for staffroom)

**The staff member should immediately contact Victoria Police if a child is at risk or a criminal offence may have been committed.**

If a staff member believes a child is at risk of abuse/neglect they are to contact the Child Safe Officer (DP-Operations) and Head of School and collectively undertake the **Four Critical Actions – Responding to Incidents, Disclosures, and Suspicions of Child Abuse**. Refer to Appendix.

This includes

- Responding to an emergency
- Reporting to authorities/referring to services
- Contacting Parents/Carers
- Providing ongoing support

- 5.3.1 Staff should keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:
- Description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour)
  - Source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person)
  - Actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with Head of School, DP-Operations, report to DHHS Child Protection).

An Incident Report form must be completed (see appendix).

- 5.3.2 Make a report to the relevant agency. Refer to appendix.  
Authorities that may need to be advised include:

- Victoria Police
- Child First
- Orange Door
- Child Protection
- CCYP
- VRQA
- VIT

- 5.3.3 The Principal must be informed immediately of any report to Victoria Police, Child Protection or Child First.

- 5.3.4 Following a report, it is important to protect confidentiality and the interests of the child and family at all times. It is important to note:

- DHHS will only interview the student if he/she is agreeable
- The family will not be contacted until it is believed there is a case and the student is at risk
- If the incident which caused the report to be made has occurred in the past, the student may be seen to be no longer at risk and no further action may be taken
- The identity of the person making a notification will be kept confidential (except when that information is required in a court case) unless that person gives permission for the information to be divulged. Such confidentiality should be requested by the Child Safe Officer and any other person who may become aware that a notification is to be, or has been given.

Throughout the entire process of observation, discussion and reporting, the interests of the student and their family should be protected from unnecessary disclosure of information concerning abuse

Following the making of a report, any investigation that takes place by that external authority (i.e. DHSS, police or the Commission) is the responsibility of that authority.

## **6. Governance Reporting**

The Principal will advise the Board of Management of any Mandatory Reports as part of the regular Board reports process.

The Child Safe Officer is responsible for the monitoring and overall School compliance with the Child Safe and Mandatory Reporting policies and procedures.

## 7. Useful Information

Staff need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically and/or intellectually diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. Staff need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

If an allegation of abuse involves an indigenous child, staff will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response.

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters.

## 8. Legal Responsibilities

**Circumstances under which a mandated reporter must make a report** - While the Child Safe Standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

The **failure to disclose** criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another).

While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities.

**Mandatory reporters** (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), school counsellors, principals and police and religious leaders) must report to Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

The **failure to protect** criminal offence (commenced on 1 July 2015) applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

## 9. Evaluation

This policy is to be reviewed annually and following an incident.

## FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

# Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

### 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 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.

\*A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

## 1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

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 / 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.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

### WITHIN THE SCHOOL

#### VICTORIA POLICE

You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report internally to:

#### GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Employee Conduct Branch
- DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.

#### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office.

#### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or school chairperson
- Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

All allegations of 'reportable conduct' **must** be reported as soon as possible to:

#### GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- Employee Conduct Branch

#### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- Diocesan education office

#### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

### WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

#### DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

#### VICTORIA POLICE

You **must also** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report internally to:

#### GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.

#### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office.

#### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- School principal and/or chairperson.

## 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 parties 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 Plan** in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You **must** follow the **Four Critical Actions** every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

### OTHER CONCERNS

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold **significant concerns** for their wellbeing you **must** still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from:

- Child FIRST/The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support)
- DHHS Child Protection
- Victoria Police.

### 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

**000** or your local police station

DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE  
**1800 126 126**

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT  
**1800 126 126**

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH  
**(03) 9637 2595**

#### DIOCESAN OFFICE

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

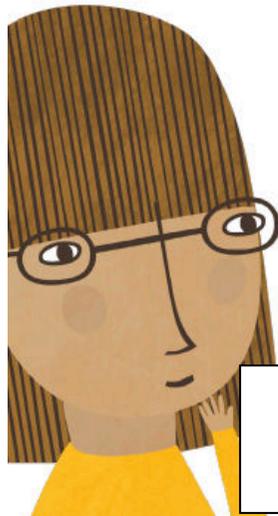
#### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA

**(03) 9825 7200**

#### THE LOOKOUT

The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: <http://www.lookout.org.au>

Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to **1800 Respect** for counselling, information and a referral service: **1800 737 732**.



If a staff member believes a child is at risk of abuse/neglect they are to contact the Child Safe Officer (DP-Operations) and Head of School

PROTECT

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA State Government Education and Training

cecv catholic education commission of victoria ltd

Reported into@vic.gov.au

## Contact Numbers

### Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Eastern	(03) 9265 2400
Northern	(03) 9488 9488
Western	(03) 9291 6500
Southern	(03) 9794 3555
RURAL REGIONS	
Barwon South Western	5225 1000
Gippsland	5127 0400
Grampians	5337 8444
Hume	5761 2100
Loddon Mallee	5440 3111

### Office for Children and Licensed Children's Services:

METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Eastern	(03) 9265 2400
Northern	(03) 9412 5333
Western	(03) 9275 7000
Southern	(03) 9096 9555
RURAL REGIONS	
Barwon South Western	5225 1000
Gippsland	5127 0400
Grampians	5337 8444
Hume	5761 2100
Loddon Mallee	5440 3111

### Important information for government schools

Principals of Victorian Government schools must report all incidents to the Emergency and Security Management Unit on **03 9589 6266**.

Victorian Government schools should contact the Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit (SCIAU), Student Wellbeing Division, for advice and support when responding to allegations of student sexual assault or inappropriate sexual behaviours.

The SCIAU can be contacted on **03 9637 2934** or **03 9637 2487**.

Victorian Government School Principals should refer to the flowchart – *Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault Compulsory Actions for Principals* at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/childprotection/childprotection.htm>

### Department of Human Services Child Protection

METROPOLITAN REGIONS		METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Intake Unit		Regional Office	
Eastern	1300 360 391	Box Hill	(03) 9843 6000
North and West	1300 664 977	Preston	1300 664 977
		Footscray	1300 360 462
Southern	1300 655 795	Dandenong	(03) 9213 2111
RURAL REGIONS			
Intake Unit		Regional Office	
Barwon South Western			
	1800 075 599	Geelong	(03) 5226 4540
Gippsland	1800 020 202	Traralgon	(03) 5177 2500
Grampians	1800 000 551	Ballarat	(03) 5333 6530
Hume	1800 650 227	Wangaratta	(03) 5722 0555
		Wodonga	(02) 6055 7777
Loddon Mallee	1800 675 598	Bendigo	(03) 5434 5555

### After hours Child Protection Emergency Services (AHCPEs)

Statewide number for all emergency child protection matters outside of normal business hours (24 hours, 7 days a week): **131 278**

Victoria Police **000**

### Catholic Education Offices

Catholic Education Office, Melbourne	(03) 9267 0228
Catholic Education Office, Ballarat Diocese	5337 7135
Catholic Education Office, Sale Diocese	5622 6600
Catholic Education Office, Sandhurst Diocese	5443 2377

Independent Schools Victoria (03) 9825 7200

### Other

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association, Inc.	(03) 9481 0800
Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit	(03) 9247 6666
Centre Against Sexual Assault	1800 806 292
Gatehouse Centre, Royal Children's Hospital (for specialist counselling and medical assistance)	(03) 9345 6391
Child Safety Commissioner	(03) 8601 5884
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency	(03) 8388 1855

### CHILD FIRST

Local Catchment Area	Contact
Barwon South Western	Greater Geelong, Queenscliff, Surf Coast 1300 551 948
	Colac – Otway, Corangamite 5232 5500
	Warrnambool, Moyne, Glenelg, Southern Grampians 1300 889 713
Gippsland	East Gippsland 5152 0052
	Wellington 5144 7777
	La Trobe, Baw Baw 1800 339 100
	South Gippsland, Bass Coast 5662 5150
Grampians	Northern Grampians, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Yarrambat, Horsham 1800 195 114
	Ararat, Pyrenees, Hepburn, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Moorabool 1300 783 341
Hume	Wodonga, Towong, Indigo 1800 705 211
	Alpine, Benalla, Mansfield, Wangaratta 1800 705 211
	Greater Shepparton, Strathbogie, Moira 1300 854 944
	Mitchell, Murrindindi 1800 663 107
Loddon Mallee	Greater Bendigo, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander 1800 260 338
	Buloke, Goonawarra, Swan Hill, Mildura 1800 625 533 1800 MALLEE
Eastern Metropolitan	Yarra Ranges, Knox, Maroondah 1300 369 146
	Monash, Whitehorse, Manningham, Booroondarra 1300 762 125
North and West Metropolitan	Nilumbik, Whittlesea, Banyule, Yarra and Darebin (03) 9450 0955
	Brimbank, Melton 1300 138 180
	Hume, Moreland 1300 786 433
	Hobson's Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley and Wyndham 1300 775 160
Southern Metropolitan	Casey, Cardinia, Greater Dandenong (03) 9705 3939
	Aboriginal children and families (Casey, Cardinia and Great Dandenong) (03) 9794 5973
	Frankston, Mornington Peninsula 1300 721 383
	Kingston, Bayside, Glen Eira, Stonington, Port Phillip 1300 367 441



# Oakleigh Grammar

## Incident Report Form

This incident report form can be provided to a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern. Oakleigh Grammar staff can also use this form to record disclosures.

All incident reports must be stored securely in a central file.

<b>Date of incident:</b>	
<b>Time of incident:</b>	
<b>Location of incident:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of child/children involved:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:</b>	

**The staff member should immediately contact Victoria Police if a child is at risk or a criminal offence may have been committed.**

If a staff member believes a child is at risk of abuse/neglect they are to contact the Child Safe Officer (DP-Operations) and Head of School and collectively undertake the **Four Critical Actions – Responding to Incidents, Disclosures, and Suspicions of Child Abuse**. Refer to Appendix.

This includes

- Responding to an emergency
- Reporting to authorities/referring to services
- Contacting Parents/Carers
- Providing ongoing support

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?  
(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

No  Yes, Aboriginal  Yes, Torres Strait Islander

Please categorise the incident

**Physical violence**

**Sexual offence**

**Grooming**

**Serious emotional or psychological abuse**

**Serious neglect**


Please describe the incident

<b>When did it take place?</b>	
<b>Who was involved?</b>	
<b>What did you see?</b>	
<b>Other information</b>	

Parent/carer/child use (if required)

<b>Date of incident:</b>	
<b>Time of incident:</b>	

<b>Location of incident:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of child/children involved:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:</b>	

Office use:

<b>Date incident report received:</b>	
<b>Staff member managing incident:</b>	
<b>Follow-up date:</b>	
<b>Incident reference number:</b>	

<b>Name of child</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Date of birth</b>	

Has the incident been reported?

<b>Child First</b>	
<b>Child Protection</b>	
<b>Police</b>	
<b>Another third party (please specify):</b>	

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?  
(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

Yes  No