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St Francis Xavier College Beaconsfield > Child Protection Program > FIVE CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Five Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

1. DETERMINE WHEN TO ACT	2. RESPOND TO AN EMERGENCY	3. INFORM AUTHORITIES	4. CONTACT PARENTS/CARERS	5. PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must act as soon as you witness an incident or become aware that a child has or is at risk of being abused. You must act, 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 or you form a suspicion) <p>You should only ask a child enough questions to determine their immediate needs and ensure they feel safe and supported.</p> <p>It is the role of DHHS and Police to make further inquiries.</p>	<p>If there is no risk of immediate harm, go to Action 3.</p> <p>If the child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> separating alleged victim 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 	<p>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 abuse may amount to a criminal offence.</p> <p>Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?</p> <p>WITHIN THE SCHOOL</p> <p>VICTORIA POLICE You must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a staff member, contractor or volunteer to Victoria Police.</p> <p>DHHS CHILD PROTECTION You must report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>VICTORIA POLICE You must report all instances of suspected child abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police</p> <p>CATHOLIC SCHOOLS You must also report internally to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Principal and/or leadership team Diocesan office <p>If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act.</p> <p>This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.</p>	<p>Your Principal must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents. They may advise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not to contact the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in 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 suspicions). 	<p>Your school must provide support for students impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals.</p> <p>Strategies may include direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and community services.</p> <p>You must make additional reports if you become aware of further instance or risk of abuse.</p>