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Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse

Child abuse can take many forms. The abuser may be a parent, carer, staff member, volunteer, another adult or even another child. Unfortunately the nature of child abuse is complex. The abuse may occur over time and potential risk indicators are often difficult to detect. Even our legal obligations for reporting allegations of child abuse can vary depending on the circumstances of the incident.

The College will take appropriate, prompt action in response to **all** allegations or disclosures of abuse, neglect, inappropriate behaviour or concerns about child safety by reporting all matters to the Victorian Child Protection Service or the Police, depending on the allegation or disclosure made.

St Francis Xavier has established simple and accessible procedures for anyone to record a child abuse concern internally to one of the College's **Child Protection Officers**.

St Francis Xavier has developed and implemented procedures for Advisory Board members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers for responding to allegations and disclosures of child abuse, or suspected child abuse, including procedures for support following a disclosure by a student.

Reporting procedures for third party contractors, external education providers, indirect contact volunteers, parents/carers and other community members are also included in our **Child Protection and Safety Policy** which is available on our public website.

Age appropriate reporting procedures for students are developed through our **pastoral care program**.

This section describes our work systems, practices, policies and procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse both internally and externally. These include:

General Legal Obligation to "Act to Protect" and to Report Child Sexual Abuse

Mandatory Reporting

Conduct that is Reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT)

Record Keeping

FIVE CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- **One: Determine When to Act**
- **Two: Respond to an Emergency**
- **Three: Inform Authorities**
- **Four: Contact Parents/Carers**
- **Five: Provide Ongoing Support**

Respond to Concerns about the Wellbeing of a Child

Confidentiality & Privacy

Additional Resources and Contacts

All of the College's procedures for reporting and responding to allegation of child abuse are designed and implemented taking into account the diverse characteristics of the College community.

A summary of these procedures are made publicly available on the College's website through our **Child Protection and Safety Policy** and are accessible to all children, school staff and the wider community.

The College will respond to all allegations of child abuse in an appropriate manner including:

- informing the appropriate authorities and fully cooperating with any resulting investigation;
- protecting any child connected to the allegation until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected;
- taking particular measures in response to an allegation that concerns a culturally diverse child or a child with a disability; and
- securing and retaining records of the allegation and the College's response to it.