

The Avenue School

Policy & Procedure Document

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Drafted by	J. Claringbold	Approved by Board on	25/06/2024
Responsible person	Principal	Scheduled review date	25/06/2027
Policy Area	Student Welfare		

Title: Child Safety Responding and Reporting

This policy establishes the school's procedure under the Child Safe Standards in the school environment, including our controls and actions and to comply with the Ministerial Order 1359 (MO1359).

The purpose of this Procedure is to help staff and volunteers respond to a concern, incident, complaint, disclosure or allegation relating to child safety and/or behaviour of any person within the school community, with reference to all possibly applicable child safety reporting schemes and requirements.

Readers are encouraged to follow the step-by-step process, skipping parts that may not be applicable (e.g., not everyone is a mandatory reporter).

The Principal is responsible for handling complaints and concerns. In the event that the principal is unable to manage and respond to the complaint or concern the Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer, is allocated the responsibilities of the Principal as outlined.

If the complaint concerns the decisions, actions or activities of the Principal, a complaint should be made to the Chair of the School Board. In this situation, the complaint will be handled by a Committee of the School Board with the Board Chair assuming the responsibilities of the Principal as stated within this policy. Contact details for the Board Chair are available via the Office.

Scope

This Child Safety Responding & Reporting Procedure applies to apply to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors, or other persons while connected to a school environment.

The Avenue School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:

- The venue of the school.
- Online or virtual School environments made available or authorised by the Principal for use by a child, young person or student (including email, social media, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); and
 - Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child, young person or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps.
 - Delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or
 - Sporting activities, excursions or other activities or events.

Staff and volunteers of The Avenue School must comply with this Policy, whether they work face-to-face, online or remotely with children. This procedure also applies to contractors, service providers,

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visitors, or other persons while connected to a school environment. It should be read in accordance with the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety & Wellbeing Code of Conduct.

It applies in all School environments of The Avenue School, and to all forms of child abuse, including:

- (a) Any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or grooming.
- (b) The infliction, on a child, of physical violence.
- (c) The infliction, on a child, of serious emotional or psychological harm.
- (c) The serious neglect of a child.

Refer to the Policy for definitions used in this Procedure. Full list of definitions in relation to Child safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359: Child Safe Standards - definitions | vic.gov.au (www.vic.gov.au)

Action 1: Immediate Danger and Immediate Response

Contact 000 or for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns.

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

If a child is at immediate risk of harm staff must ensure their safety by...

- Separating alleged victim(s) and others involved.
- Administering first-aid where necessary.
- Staying with the child until action has been taken to reduce or remove the risk.
- Removing the child or student from any circumstances that could lead to further harm.
- Removing the accused staff member, volunteer or participant from the premises and preventing them from having contact with children.
- Identifying a contact person at The Avenue School for future liaison with police.

Staff and Volunteers should offer support and respond in a calm and compassionate manner. How Staff and Volunteers respond must be sensitive to the child’s specific circumstances and tailor their support and response to specific needs. Staff and Volunteers should consider the child’s age and maturity, any disabilities cultural background, existing physical or emotional needs, if they are vulnerable (such as LGBTIQ+ children).

Following the HEARTS process is recommended.

H – HEAR.	Take time to listen carefully to the person making the disclosure of harm.
E – EMPATHY.	Act with empathy, show the person empathy. This includes responding in a culturally safe manner.
A – ASSURE.	Assure the person making the disclosure it is not their fault and they have done the right thing by telling you.
R – RECORD AND REPORT.	Make accurate, complete and correct records of the disclosure, using the person’s own words where possible. Staff are required to record any specific cultural details, e.g. English speaking, when making a report. Follow any reporting requirements. For example, you may need to report
T – TELL.	Tell whoever needs to be told, but do not tell people unnecessarily. For example, you may need to tell someone at the School.
S – SELF CARE.	Look after yourself through this process as well.

If a parent/guardian reports their child/young person has been abused at The Avenue School or raises a concern, the following procedures apply:

- Advise the parent/guardian that you are required to follow the procedure for Responding and reporting to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of abuse involving staff, volunteers or participants of The Avenue School.
 - Ask about the wellbeing of the child/young person.
 - Allow the parent/guardian to talk through the incident in their own words.
 - Advise the parent/guardian that you will record the information
 - Explain to them the information will need to be reported to authorities and others, such as the Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer or Principal, the police or child protection.
 - Provide them with an incident report form to complete or complete it together.
 - Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.
 - Take into consideration the cultural background of the family involved.
 - Ensure that the procedures for record keeping meet the Public Record Office Victoria Record keeping Standards including the actions to be taken to make, secure, and retain records of the complaint or concern and the response of the school's services.
- * Refer to the Records Management Policy for details.

If the person accused is a staff member, volunteer or participant:

- If the accused is on the premises, the Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer or Principal are to:
 - remove the accused from all contact with children in a separate room.
 - advise them that an allegation has been made and they are now subject to an investigation.

The accused is then restricted from entering School buildings and having any contact with the child or their families. If the allegation involves a member of staff, they will be stood down on full pay until the investigation is concluded.

If the accused is not on the premises they are to be contacted and advised that an allegation has been made and that they are subject to an investigation. They are not to be permitted to return to School premises unless circumstances require that, (such as collection of personal property), and then must be strictly supervised.

The accused should be advised that an investigation will include the Police and any other external agencies as required under the Child Safe requirements. The school is required to report allegations of reportable conduct by an employee to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) within 3 days of the initial allegation, in addition to other steps deemed necessary. See Action 6.

If an accusation is received that involves the Principal, is referred to the Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer, they will take on the responsibility of responding to the complaint or concern and immediately report to the Chair of the Board.

Action 2: Reporting to authorities

Staff must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as practicable after forming a belief. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

The Avenue School staff must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a staff member, contractor or volunteer, to Victoria Police (call 000 or Knox Police on (03) 9881 7000) as per the legislated Reportable Conduct Scheme. Staff must also report internally to the Principal and/or Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer (Youth Worker).

The Principal must report any allegations of 'reportable conduct' to the Chair of the Board within the day of the occurrence. Comprehensive information about the Reportable Conduct Scheme is

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available at: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets/#Whats-RCS>

If the source of suspected abuse comes from within the family or community, staff must report to DFFH (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing) Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- In need of protection from child abuse.
- At risk of being harmed (failure to protect and grooming 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 and the parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child.

Staff must also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police (call 000 or Knox Police on (03) 9881 7000) and to the Principal and/or Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer (Youth Worker). The Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer must also report to the Principal who must report to the Chair of the Board.

If a staff member believes that a child is not subject to abuse, but they still hold significant concerns for the child’s wellbeing, the staff member must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child First Child Protection or Victoria Police.

Reporting obligations that may apply	Who can make a report	Who to report to
Internal reporting to the school	Any person	Principal, Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer or trusted employee
Mandatory reporting	Mandatory reporters	DFFH
Discretionary reporting	Any person	DFFH, CCYP, VIT or the Police
Failure to disclose	Any adult	Police
Failure to protect	Any adult	Police
Reportable conduct scheme	The Principal	CCYP

Internally

Internal reporting to The Avenue School does not discharge individuals of other obligations. Staff members and volunteers of The Avenue School are strongly encouraged to report internally to Principal or Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer who will report to the Principal:

- An identified risk of child abuse or harm.
- A concern of child abuse or harm occurring or having occurred.
- A concern for a child’ wellbeing, emotional health.
- A disclosure of child abuse or harm received from a student or other child.

Internal reports are made by completing an Incident Report Form and submitting this to the Principal, or where the Principal is concerned in the incident, to the Board of the school.

The Incident Report Form must include:

- The name, age and address of student.
- The reason for suspecting that the behaviour or injury is a result of abuse.
- The child or student’s own words, where possible
- An assessment of the immediate danger to the child or student.

- A description of the injury or behaviour observed.
- The current whereabouts of the child or student.
- Any other information about the family.
- Any specific cultural details, e.g. non-English speaking, disability, etc. staff or volunteers should seek support from the Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer.

What is a reasonable belief?

A belief on reasonable grounds is when a reasonable person, doing the same work, would have formed the same belief on those grounds. Grounds for forming a belief are matters of which you have become aware, and any opinions in relation to those matters. A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be (but are not limited to):

- A child or young person states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child or young person may in fact be referring to themselves).
- Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed.
- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it.
- Observing suspicious behaviour.
- Observing grooming behaviour.
- Knowledge of inappropriate gifts.
- Inappropriate online behaviour and/ or inappropriate boundaries.
- Knowledge of secretive relationships.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- A child tells you they have been sexually abused.
- There are changes to the child's stability and healthy development (possible emotional abuse, neglect and ill treatment).
- A child tells you they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves).
- Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads you to believe the child has been sexually abused or is likely to be abused.
- Signs of sexual abuse led to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.
- They notice non-accidental or unexplained injury to a child (physical abuse).
- A disclosure of sexual abuse is made by a child or witness.
- A child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the parents are unwilling, or unable to protect the child.
- A child appears to have been abandoned, or where the child's parents are dead or incapacitated and no other person is caring properly for the child.
- Significant neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision - where there is a likelihood of Significant harm to the child, or the child's stability and development.
- Significant family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability - where there is a likelihood of significant harm to the child, or the child's stability and development.
- A combination of factors suggests the likelihood of sexual abuse, such as the child exhibiting concerning behaviours after the child's mother takes on a new partner or where a known or suspected perpetrator has unsupervised contact with the child.

A Reasonable Belief Does Not Require Proof

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There may be times when two or more mandated staff members, for example a teacher and the principal, have formed a belief about the same child or young person on the same occasion. In this situation it is sufficient for only one of the mandated staff members to make a report. The other staff member is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all of the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member.

Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporting is the legal requirement under section 184 of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (as amended from time to time) for certain professional groups to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to Child Protection (DFFH).

Staff who are Mandatory Reporters including the Principal, registered teachers, registered nurses, registered psychologists, youth, social or welfare workers, registered early childhood teachers, school counsellors, psychologists, and persons in religious ministry; and in the course of carrying out their duties form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- A child is in need of protection because they have suffered or are likely to suffer from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse.
- The child’s parents have not or are unlikely to protect the child from harm.
- Must report that information to the DFFH (Child Protection).

Mandatory reporters must make reports every time a further ground for their belief a child may have suffered or is likely to suffer harm. An Incident Report Form should also be completed each time (internal report).

Mandated reporters must make a report even if the Principal does not share their belief, failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may constitute to a criminal offence. In this circumstance a report should be made to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer.

<p>Physical injury means injury which results from abuse. The injury may be intentionally inflicted or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment, or the physically aggressive treatment of a child.</p>	<p>Sexual abuse includes but is not limited to sexual offences. Sexual offences include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging a child to engage in, or be involved in, sexual activity. • Compelling sexual touching. • Rape and sexual assault.
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Discretionary reporting

Any person may make a report to the Police or DFFH if they hold a concern for the wellbeing of a child.

- Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection for reasons such as: physical injury; sexual abuse; emotional or psychological harm.
- Any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child over 10 but under 15 has been exhibiting sexually abusive behaviours and may be in need of help should report to DFFH Child protection.
- Any person who has a concern for the wellbeing of a child should report these concerns to DFFH Child protection or refer the child and family to Child FIRST/Orange Door. A concern includes (for example): parenting problems; family conflict; pressure die to family mental illness or substance abuse; isolation; significant economic or social disadvantage.

If you have significant concern for the wellbeing of a child or young person, but do not believe they are at risk of significant harm, and where the immediate safety of the child or young person will not compromise, a referral to Child FIRST or Orange Door may be appropriate.

Legislative responsibilities

The 'failure to disclose' offence - Any person of or over the age of 18 years who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child under 16 by another person over the age of 18 years, has a legal obligation to report that information to police (with some limited exceptions) as soon as practicable to do so.

Concern for the reputation of the School or the perpetrator does not constitute an exception or a defence. (Unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of others).

A reasonable excuse includes:

- A fear for your safety or another person's safety; and
- You believe the information has already been disclosed to police and you have no further information to add.

A sexual offence includes:

- Rape.
- Indecent assault.
- Sexual penetration.
- Grooming a child for sexual conduct.
- Encouraging a child to engage in, or be involved in, sexual activity.
- Compelling sexual touching.
- Assault with intent to commit a sexual offence.
- Threat to commit a sexual offence.
- Causing a child to be present during sexual activity.
- Facilitating a sexual offence against a child.
- Administration of an intoxicating substance for a sexual purpose.
- Procuring a sexual act by fraud or threat.
- An attempted sexual offence or an assault with intent to commit a sexual offence.

The 'failure to protect' offence – If a person by reason of the position they occupy within a relevant organisation, has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a relevant child will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by a person of or over the age of 18 years who is associated with the relevant organisation and know that there is a substantial risk that the person will commit a sexual offence against a relevant child.

The school takes all possible care to ensure all persons of authority associated with the organisation adhere to these laws and have stringent guidelines of employment to implement the safest possible environment for children and young people. This means there is a duty to take immediate action to remove or reduce that risk. Reporting to DFFH or Victoria Police is one way to reduce or remove the risk.

The 'grooming' offence - Grooming is predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. The offence applies where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.

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Grooming consists of an adult attempting to communicate or form a relationship, personal or emotional connection with the child or their parent/guardian with the aim of engaging in sexual activity with a child or young person.

Online grooming is a criminal offence where the adult eventually aiming to personally meet a young person or child for the purposes of sexual activity, adults may communicate electronic via online platforms such as gaming and social media in a predatory manner to gain trust and curiosity of a young person or child regarding sex.

*Any incidents of suspected online child exploitation must be reported.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Principal (as Head of Entity) at The Avenue School MUST notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) of allegations of reportable conduct involving employees or volunteers within 3 days of forming a reasonable belief. The following information must be provided at that time:

- Name of the worker or volunteer.
- Date of birth.
- Police report.
- Organisation contact details.
- Head of organisation's name.
- Initial advice on the nature of the allegation.

Staff members and volunteers must advise the Principal or Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer immediately if they become aware of conduct that may constitute a reportable allegation, which includes conduct which occurs outside someone's employment.

A reportable allegation is made where a person makes an allegation based on a reasonable belief that a staff member has committed reportable conduct or committed misconduct which may constitute reportable conduct.

Reportable conduct includes:

- Sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child (grooming, abuse, sexual activity in presence of child).
- Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child (hitting, punching, kicking, threats)
- Significant neglect (supervisory, educational, emotional, physical).
- Sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child (crossing professional boundaries, explicit comments).
- Significant psychological/emotional harm to a child (persistent hostility, exposure to family violence, scapegoating, belittling, humiliation).

Making a Report

Contact **000** or for **urgent** medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns.

Contact Numbers:

- Victoria Police - call 000 or Knox Police on (03) 9881 7000
- Child Protection East Division - 1300 360 452
(8.45am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday)
- After hours Child Protection Emergency Service 13 12 78
(5.00pm to 9.00am Monday to Friday - 24 hours)
- Orange Door – 1800 312 820

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- CCYP – 8601 5281

Sharing Information

The Principal or Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer (Youth Worker) must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police (call 000 or Knox Police on (03) 9881 7000) to determine what information can be shared with parents/guardians.

They may advise:

- Not to contact the parents/guardians (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/guardian to be contacted).
- To contact the parents/guardians 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.

It may also be appropriate for the Principal to contact other organisations, including:

- for child safety concerns involving international students, contact the Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).
- for child safety concerns about registered teachers, contact the Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT).

What Information to Report

When making a report, Staff and Volunteers should provide the following information:

- Name, age and address of the student.
- The reason for suspecting the indicator of harm is a result of child abuse.
- An assessment of the immediate danger to the child or student.
- A description of the indicator of harm, injury or behaviour observed.
- The current whereabouts of the child or student.
- Other relevant information about the child or student's family.
- Any specific vulnerability or cultural details, e.g. English speaking, disability, etc.

The Avenue School asks staff or volunteers to request that, if an interview is to take place at the school, the visiting police officer or DFFH representative is in plain clothes and the school is told the time of the interview so a meeting room can be organised. If the student agrees to be interviewed by DFFH and/or Victoria Police, the Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer or other nominated support person should offer to be present at the interview to support the student.

Making a referral to Orange Door

The Principal or Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer may make referrals to Orange Door. Staff or volunteers who are concerned for the safety or wellbeing of a child or student may work with the Principal or a Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer to support this referral.

Child FIRST provide supports to vulnerable children, young people and their families. This may be the best way to connect children, young people and families to services they need, where families exhibit any of the following factors that may impact on a child or young person's safety, wellbeing, stability or development:

- Significant parenting problems.
- Family conflict – including family breakdown.

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- Young, isolated and / or unsupported families.
- Significant social or economic disadvantage that may be impacting on a child or young person's care or development.

Employment matters

Where the School becomes aware of concerns or complaints that a Staff member or Volunteer may have engaged in conduct which could give rise to a risk of harm to a child, the school may, at its discretion:

- stand the staff member or volunteer down;
- remove or limit their contact with children or students; and/or
- direct the Staff member or Volunteer to return any keys, passes or equipment and to provide access codes and passwords.

Staff involved in the incident will receive internal debriefing and ongoing support as required.

Investigations

Before commencing an investigation, the Principal will consult with relevant authorities to determine whether the School can commence an investigation. If the allegation is considered a reportable allegation, the Principal will notify the CCYP of who is going to conduct the investigation and comply with timeframes required by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Recordkeeping

Staff and Volunteers must create and maintain records of the report (Action 2) and actions taken in relation to reducing or removing the risks (Actions 1 and 4). Records must be retained according to the School's Records Management Policy, which ensure the School complies with Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards, including minimum retention periods.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Following a report, it is important to protect privacy and confidentiality, and the interests and safety of the child at all times. The school will not share information about a child safety concern with a child or student's family if the school considers this will create or increase a risk of harm to the child or student.

Information about child safety complaints and concerns is confidential and will be handled according to the School's Privacy Policy, except when this information must be disclosed by law (for example, the Reportable Conduct Scheme).

The school identify the roles and responsibilities of school staff and leadership to act and report on complaints and concerns relating to child abuse including, promptly and thoroughly managing the response of the school's services according to the Complaints and Appeals Policy.

Child Information Sharing Scheme

Where the school is concerned for the safety or wellbeing of a student, the school may use the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) to request other organisations share information about that student with the school to support the school's response. Refer to the Victorian Government CISS Ministerial Guidelines.

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The principal will consider whether the school should disclose confidential information to another Information Sharing Entity (**ISE**) about any person for the purpose of promoting the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children.

If the sharing of information would:

- promote the wellbeing and safety of a child; and
- help the receiving ISE make a decision, assessment or plan, start or conduct an
- investigation, provide a service and or manage any risk to child safety and wellbeing.
- information is not excluded information (that cannot be shared under the CISS);
- the principal will share that information.

The CISS includes an obligation to talk to the child (when age-appropriate) and family (when appropriate, considering the risk of harm to the child) prior to sharing information.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

Within 3 days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation the principal must make a notification to the CCYP. Within 30 calendar days after becoming aware of any reportable allegation/s, the Principal must provide the CCYP with:

- Detailed information about the reportable allegation.
- information about proposed disciplinary or other action to be taken in response to the allegation; and
- any written submissions made by the Staff member or Volunteer, or about that disciplinary or other action.

As soon as reasonably practicable after the independent investigation has concluded, the Principal must provide the CCYP with:

- a copy of the investigation findings and reasons.
- a copy of the investigation report produced by the investigator.
- any documentation and evidence annexed to the investigation report; and
- additional information about proposed disciplinary or other action to be taken in response to the allegation.

Protection Of Reporters

Any Staff member or Volunteer who makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations will be supported by the School, will not be penalised by the School for making the report and will be protected from prosecution and liability.

Confidentiality is provided for mandatory reporters under the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA). The CYFA prevents disclosure of the name or any information likely to lead to the identification of a person who has made a report in accordance with legislation, except in specific circumstances or where the reporter consents to their identity being disclosed or is required for legal proceedings.

Evaluation

The Principal must ensure the School Council and Board are notified following any significant incident in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

When the School Council and Board are notified following any incident in relation to child safety and wellbeing, the Council and Board must review and evaluate the School's *Child Safety and*

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Wellbeing Policy, this Procedure and child safety and wellbeing practices, including the effectiveness of risk controls and risk treatments.

Action 3: Contacting Parents/Guardians

Contacting parents and families

The Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer must consult with DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/guardians. They may advise:

- not to contact the parents/guardians (e.g., in circumstances where the parents are alleged to
- have engaged in the abuse, or the child or young person is a mature minor and does not wish for their parents/guardians to be contacted); or
- to contact the parents/guardians and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

When appropriate, information about the complaints process must be shared in a way that is easy to understand. Refer also to the family engagement standard in Ministerial Order 1359 to guide engagement with families and the school community.

Action 4: Ongoing Support

The Avenue School will provide protection for the student connected to a complaint or concern relating to child abuse until the complaint or concern is resolved.

The Avenue School will provide support for the victim and any other students impacted by the abuse. This can include the development of student support plan(s) in consultation with the Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer and the student's professional support team (as applicable) or referral to services. This is an essential part of duty of care requirements.

The Avenue School must ensure the person who may be responsible for an offence is removed from all contact with children.

Refer to: The Four Critical Actions for Schools reference sheet

Associated Documents:

- Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- CSIS 1. Signs of Sexual Abuse in Teenagers
- CSIS 2. Recognising Child Abuse
- Failure to protect fact sheet: [failure to protect betrayal of trust factsheet 2017.pdf](#)
- Failure to disclose fact sheet: [Failure to disclose offence fact sheet \(word\) - DFFH Service Providers](#)
- Grooming offence fact sheet: [Grooming offence | Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria](#)

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