



## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the procedures St Margaret's Berwick Grammar (**SMBG, the School**) has in place to respond to incidents or concerns relating to child abuse and to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand and follow the various legal obligations that apply to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities. It also summarises the key student safety reporting obligations imposed on School and SMBG staff.

The Policy is a procedure for responding to and reporting child abuse allegations made in accordance with *Ministerial Order No. 1359 - Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*.

## SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Staff and to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school (**Staff**).

It further applies to allegations or disclosures of child abuse or reportable conduct relating the School or its staff, regardless of whether the alleged behaviour occurred on or outside school grounds or concerns current or former students.

## RELEVANT PRINCIPLES

Council and staff members have a variety of mandatory reporting obligations in relation to child abuse or suspicion of child abuse. SMBG is guided by this policy to fulfil its (and its staff's) obligations and aims to ensure that:

- Staff, students and members of the School community feel encouraged to raise concerns in accordance with this policy.
- Student Safety Officers are carefully selected based on certain attributes and their role at SMBG.
- Contact details of Student Safety Officers are readily available and widely known to the School community.
- All concerns are treated seriously, with the utmost importance and are responded to in a prompt, appropriate, sensitive and thorough fashion.
- The School and its staff have knowledge and an understanding of their legal obligations with their reporting concerns and comply with them proactively.
- SMBG's processes for responding to student safety and wellbeing concerns (and the complaints process generally) are legally compliant (with regard to privacy laws, reporting obligations and employment law), culturally safe and understood broadly - including by children and young people, their families and staff.
- Investigations are conducted fairly and without bias, promptly and without undue delay.
- Students who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people are planned for and supported in a culturally sensitive manner
- Students with diverse communication needs are supported to access the processes within this policy in line with their diverse needs
- All reasonable steps are taken to protect the identity and wellbeing of a student who is the subject of a concern and ensure that no adverse action is taken against a person who raises or is the subject of a concern. All reasonable steps are taken to co-operate with law enforcement agencies regarding concerns raised under this policy, and that they are reported to relevant authorities regardless of the legal obligation to do so.

Members of the School community understand and have confidence in the processes that will be **followed** by SMBG in response to concerns. This policy is student-focused and can be easily understood by the SMBG community, in particular students. When complying with this policy, it must be appreciated that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained herein will not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a student is at risk of child abuse.

## **KEY DEFINITIONS**

**The Student Safety Definitions document sets out the key definitions used in the School student safety and wellbeing policies.**

**For the avoidance of doubt, the following definitions are detailed below.**

**Child:** Any person who is under the age of 18 years, except in the case of certain mandatory reporting obligations which may define a child to be under a different age.

**Mandatory reporter** has the meaning given to it by section 182 of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) (CYF Act). It includes but is not limited to registered teachers (including early childhood teachers), staff with post-secondary qualifications employed in the care, education or minding of children, school principals, registered nurses, students in training to become teachers (who have been granted permission to teach under relevant legislation), registered psychologists, out of home care workers, early childhood workers and any other person referred to in section 182 of the CYF Act.

**Mandatory reporting** is a term used to describe the legislative requirement imposed on selected classes of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to government authorities. Where a mandated reporter ‘forms a belief on reasonable grounds’ that a student or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, they are to report their concerns to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection.

**Reasonable belief** means a belief that would lead a reasonable person in the same position as you, and with the same information as you to form a belief that child abuse (including sexual abuse) or reportable conduct is occurring or may occur. There must be some objective basis for the belief. However, it is not necessary to have proof to form a reasonable belief, nor do you need to make a judgement about the truth of an allegation. However, a reasonable belief is more than suspicion, mere rumour or speculation. Examples on circumstances where a reasonable belief may be formed are provided in this policy.

**School environment:** Any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by SMBG for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a School campus (Berwick, Officer or Junior School)
- online school environments, including email and intranet systems
- other locations provided by SMBG for a child’s use including school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, or school community and other events.

## Reporting a Student Safety Concern

**Note: whenever there are concerns that a student is in immediate danger, Victoria Police should be contacted on 000. How a member of the School community may raise concerns**

- If you are a member of the School community (other than a member of staff), with a concern about child abuse or reportable conduct involving a student, then you are encouraged to raise that concern with the Principal, or a Student Safety Officer the Heads of Students, the Director of Inclusion, the Director of Positive Humanity, School Counsellors and the Director of the ELC).
- As the welfare and the best interests of SMBG students are paramount, you are encouraged to make a report, whether or not you have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that the abuse or conduct has occurred.
- Any concern that a student who has studied at the School has been subjected (or may be subjected) to child abuse or reportable conduct, or that a staff member has engaged in child abuse or reportable conduct, should be immediately raised with the Student Safety Officers.

**Relevant contact details for the School Student Safety Officers are set out in the table below.**

### SENIOR STUDENT SAFETY OFFICER

St Margaret's Berwick Grammar has appointed the Director of Positive Humanity as its Senior Student Safety Officer. The Principal and the Director of Positive Humanity have important roles in the promotion and maintenance of a student and culturally safe culture at the School.

Where a concern relates to a Student Safety Officer, it should be reported to the Principal.

### STUDENT SAFETY OFFICERS

There are a number of staff at each campus (2) who directly support students at risk of child abuse. These are reviewed annually.

Name	Contact details
Ms Kate Flood	<a href="mailto:floodk@smbg.vic.edu.au">floodk@smbg.vic.edu.au</a>
Mr Peter Robertson	<a href="mailto:robertsonp@smbg.vic.edu.au">robertsonp@smbg.vic.edu.au</a>
Mrs Bronwyn Huisintveld	<a href="mailto:huisintveldb@smbg.vic.edu.au">huisintveldb@smbg.vic.edu.au</a>
Mrs Janine Fatouros	<a href="mailto:fatourosj@smbg.vic.edu.au">fatourosj@smbg.vic.edu.au</a>
Ms Ramona Lazar	<a href="mailto:lazarr@smbg.vic.edu.au">lazarr@smbg.vic.edu.au</a>
Ms Mui Ridoutt	<a href="mailto:ridouttm@smbg.vic.edu.au">ridouttm@smbg.vic.edu.au</a>

These staff members are supported by school leaders including

- The Principal
- The Vice Principal
- The Heads of Senior School
- The Heads of Students

- The Director of the ELC
- The Head of the Junior School
- The Inclusive Education Leader
- The Director of Positive Humanity
- The School Counsellors

A reportable allegation must be reported to CCYP/SSR by the Principal, where the Principal has become aware that a person has formed a reasonable belief that a worker, contractor or volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct. The Principal does not need to agree with or share the belief that the alleged conduct has occurred for the reporting obligation to be triggered.

Where a concern relates to the Principal or a Council Member, the concern should be raised with the Council Chairperson. The Council Chairperson will oversee the investigation under the Scheme, make decisions on the findings and manage conflicts of interest in accordance with the School's Conflict of Interest policy.

Alternatively, concern can be raised directly with Social Services Regulator<sup>1</sup> (SSR) [contact@ssr.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@ssr.vic.gov.au) or call [1300 310 778](tel:1300310778).

Any person can also contact the Senior Child Safety Officer or the Principal if they have concerns regarding the Schools leadership in relation to child safety.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a “*need to know basis.*”

### **Key indicators of a child safety concern**

There are several forms of abuse. They are:

- Sexual abuse
- Grooming, including online grooming
- Physical abuse
- Significant or serious emotional or psychological harm
- Significant or serious neglect

Suspicion of abuse can be identified through physical and/or behavioural traits of the child or young person. Some include:

- Unexplained bruises
- Unexplained absences
- Withdrawing from social settings
- Developing unusual relationships with adults
- Drug and alcohol use
- High anxiety
- Depression

This is not an exhaustive list, in fact, the list of key indicators is much more extensive. For more information, please don't hesitate to speak to one of our Child Safety Officers who have access to the full list, or you can visit <https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/identify-child-abuse>

SMBG recognises that some individuals, particularly children, face additional vulnerabilities to child abuse and other harm, as well as additional barriers to disclosing child safety incidents or

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission for Children and Young People's responsibilities for overseeing regulation of the Child Safe Standards were transferred to the SSR in February 2026

concerns. Our Child Safe Program provides guidance on identifying additional vulnerability and barriers and contains strategies for supporting these individuals to participate in the School community and enabling them to disclose child safety incidents or concerns to the School.

### **Documenting a student safety concern**

When making a report, please provide any relevant written and dated notes of observations and any documents or communications. This will help the School to respond.

### **Responding to a student safety concern**

This section sets out how SMBG and its staff will respond when receiving a report of a student safety concern.

#### **Stage 1 – Receiving a report of a concern**

- A staff member, upon becoming aware of a concern, must:
- Listen to the concern in a considerate, patient and supportive manner (and appropriately where the concern is coming from a student).
- Identify the party or parties involved.
- Confirm the basic details, without seeking extensive information, casting judgment or asking suggestive or leading questions.
- If speaking with a student, use language and vocabulary that the student can understand
- Take a detailed file note. Where the student has a known communication or processing disability, allow time to clarify, paraphrase and review information without judgement
- Remain balanced and not assess the validity of the concern(s) being raised.
- Explain that other people may need to be informed about the concern, in order to stop any inappropriate or unlawful behaviour and to comply with SMBG's legal obligations and procedures.
- Confirm that the School takes the concern seriously.
- Offer support to the student(s) involved in the concern, and their families. This may include encouragement to access confidential wellbeing and support services, either internal or external to SMBG. Students and families who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander should be supported through culturally specific external supports
- Outline the process that will be followed by the School in dealing with the concern, in accordance with this Policy.

The staff member must then:

1. Ensure that the student is safe, if the staff member has not already done so
2. If not a Student Safety Officer or the Principal, Promptly and thoroughly manage the response of SMBG (including by monitoring SMBG's overall compliance with this policy and accounting for alternatives if the staff member allocated to resolve the concern is unable to perform their role).
3. Comply with their personal reporting obligations as set out in this policy.
4. Notify the Principal, or the Senior Student Safety Officer, about the concern.
5. If the Senior Student Safety Officer is the subject of the concern, notify the Principal about the concern.
6. If the Principal is the subject of the concern, notify the Council Chair about the concern.

SMBG will then take such steps as it considers appropriate to protect any student connected with a concern until it is resolved, including by ensuring that any mandatory reporting obligations

are met, and also, that allegations, suspicions or disclosures are made to relevant authorities (including but not limited to Child Protection and CCYP/SSR) have been met, regardless of whether there is a legal obligation to report.

## **Stage 2 -RESOLVING THE CONCERN**

SMBG will investigate the concern where appropriate, which will ordinarily require a determination, on the balance of probabilities, whether the concern is substantiated or not.

When doing so, SMBG will take into account the diversity and characteristics of the School community to ensure equity is upheld and act to reduce barriers to inclusion.

The decision-maker will usually be the Principal (or their nominee), although where the concern relates to the alleged conduct or misconduct of the Principal then the decision-maker will be the Council. The School may rely on legal or third-party assistance to investigate or determine the concern.

Where a concern involves allegations against a staff member, the School will need to notify the staff member about those allegations (to the extent that it is appropriate to do so, which may initially involve only notification that there has been a concern), outline the process to be followed, and advise the staff member about the process pending the resolution of the concern (which may, in appropriate cases include the staff member being stood down, without judgment, while the concern is being dealt with).

### **INVESTIGATION PROCESS**

To the extent that SMBG decides it is appropriate or practicable to do so, any investigation will usually involve:

1. Interviewing the subject of the concern and key witnesses or individuals (noting that more than one interview may be required).
2. Reviewing relevant documents, correspondence and materials of substance.
3. Taking notes of any interviews (or where appropriate, transcripts of audio recordings of any interviews) during the investigation.
4. The relevant decision-maker determining whether, on the balance of probabilities, the concern is substantiated.

Witnesses being interviewed will not be unreasonably refused a support person.

If the concern is substantiated, SMBG will take appropriate action (which may, in the case of a current staff member, potentially include summary dismissal for serious misconduct). Even if a concern is not substantiated, the findings made by the School during the course of investigating the concern may, in certain cases, still result in disciplinary action (including dismissal).

Following the conclusion of its investigation, SMBG will indicate the outcomes of the investigation to:

1. The person, or student who raised the concern.
2. The person subject of that concern (where appropriate).
3. Any external authorities (including CCYP/SSR, Victoria Police, VIT and any other child protection bodies) to whom a report is required to be made.

### **POLICY REVIEW**

#### **SMBG may need to adjust this policy to reflect the circumstances**

This policy applies regardless of whether the alleged behaviour, which is the subject of a concern, occurred on or outside the School grounds, or concerns current or former students.

It may not be appropriate or possible for SMBG to investigate that concern in strict accordance with this policy where a concern is raised with SMBG and:

- A. An investigation by Victoria Police, CCYP/SSR or VIT relevant to the concern is ongoing.
- B. Civil or criminal proceedings relevant to the concern are ongoing.
- C. The concern relates to the conduct of current or former students.
- D. The concern relates to the conduct of former staff.

In such circumstances, SMBG will seek and act on legal advice to comply with this policy to the extent it is appropriate to do so (and in particular to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all current students).

### **KEEPING SMBG INFORMED**

It is the School's preference that members of the School community (including students, staff, volunteers, parents, etc) promptly inform the Principal, or a Student Safety Officer of any matters on the subject of a potential reporting obligation under this policy which relate to the School community, so that the School can coordinate the information and support the Police and affected students and their families as required.

In some cases it will be necessary for an external report to be made before SMBG is notified (and nothing in this policy is intended to limit a person's right, or obligation, to make external reports). At the very least, the Principal, or a Student Safety Officer should be notified after an external report is made.

### **REFLECTION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

It is important that our student safe practices are subject to continuous improvement.

The School will analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents to identify causes and (if applicable) systemic changes to inform continuous improvement.

The School will report on the findings of relevant reviews of student safety and wellbeing practices to staff, students and the community, particularly where usual practices are improved as a result.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Concerns relating to other students

This policy also applies to concerns involving the behaviour of other students.

For example, mandatory reporting obligations are not limited to the actions of staff, and the failure to disclose offence can also apply to alleged sexual activity by adult students.

Where a concern involves child abuse or other inappropriate behaviour allegedly perpetrated by a student, the School will comply with its mandatory reporting obligations and may otherwise exercise its discretion to inform SOCIT.

Subject to any Police clearance which may be required, SMBG will otherwise deal with student-on-student behavioural issues in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and any other relevant student discipline policies and procedures.

### **Information provided to students**

Students are provided with age-appropriate information during class time and through school assemblies about what to do in response to an allegation of suspected child abuse and the need

to promptly alert a member of staff if they believe that they, or a peer, is suffering from child abuse or reportable conduct.

Visual supports will be displayed in accessible spaces to support students with communication and/or processing disorders

Information provided to students includes, but is not limited to:

- Remain calm.
- Promptly seek help and speak to a trusted staff member (or a Student Safety Officer) about the concerns.
- Remember this is not your fault, you are not to blame and are not in trouble.
- Tell the story in your own words, with as much detail as you can.
- Do not be afraid of saying the “wrong” thing.
- Listen carefully to any instructions you receive from staff (or if applicable, the Police or other authorities).
- Listen carefully to information you receive from staff about what will happen next (for example, and subject to the circumstances, authorities notified, parents informed, internal and/or external investigation).
- Be reassured that that you have done the right thing.

## **Records**

SMBG is committed to best practice record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns. SMBG will make, keep and secure clear and contemporaneous records of any concerns raised in accordance with this policy, and the steps taken by the School to respond to those concerns.

SMBG will also create, maintain and dispose of any records about student safety and wellbeing in line with the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards, including minimum retention periods regarding these obligations.

Staff must ensure that all verbal and written communications and observations regarding student safety matters are properly documented. Staff should keep records of dates, times and names of persons involved in meetings or communications.

Records should contain enough detail for others to understand what occurred and what was communicated, especially in relation to any disclosure made by the student involved.

## **Support**

SMBG will afford appropriate support to students the subject of, or otherwise connected to, concerns raised under this policy, particularly until the concern is resolved, ensuring that any student who is being interviewed by Child Protection or Victoria Police has a support person present during the interview, being either the student’s parents, the Principal, Student Safety Officer or, in the case of Police interviews, an independent support person over the age of 18 unconnected with the School ( e.g. social worker)

If a concern involves a student who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or is from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, steps will be taken to ensure that the student, and their family, is supported to understand the situation and are supported, including via the use of an interpreter where required.

If a concern involves a student or parent with a disability, steps will be taken to ensure the student, and their family, understand the situation and are supported.

If a concern involves a student with needs, special circumstances or otherwise (for example, students who identify as LGBTQIA+, or are unable to live at home) steps will be taken to ensure the student, and their family, understand the situation and are supported.

SMBG will also provide appropriate support to staff who make mandatory reports under this policy, or who are assisting SMBG or families with the process outlined in this policy.

SMBG offers former students who may disclose historical child safety incidents or concerns from their time at the School similar support.

### **Cooperation with authorities**

SMBG will cooperate with any investigation by Victoria Police, CCYP/SSR or any other relevant authority in relation to a concern or report (whether made under this policy or otherwise).

### **Confidentiality**

Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained at all times when dealing with concerns under this policy, with information only being provided to those who have a right or otherwise, on a “needs to know” basis. Sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies will be as permitted or required under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and/or the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme.

### **Communication**

Where appropriate, the School will provide parents, carers and guardians with guidance and support where a student is the subject of a concern.

Staff do not require consent from a student’s parents before making a mandatory report in accordance with this policy. Similarly, staff are not required to disclose that a mandatory report has been made.

However, SMBG will keep families updated as it considers appropriate about the way in which it is dealing with concerns affecting that family's child.

### **Victimisation is not tolerated**

The School will not tolerate victimisation towards someone because they have raised or participated in a process contemplated by this policy, including by raising a concern or making a mandatory report.

## **REPORTING OBLIGATIONS**

This section sets out the out the main mandatory reporting obligations that apply to School staff.

The School treats seriously its reporting obligations and recognises that student protection is everyone’s responsibility. Whilst the Principal, and the Student Safety Officers are primarily entrusted with day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that these reporting obligations are met, all staff and appropriate personnel are required to uphold the ethos of this policy by ensuring that student safety matters are reported internally, and externally where required.

Staff will receive training on their personal reporting obligations to achieve this, which are summarised below:

### **The Reportable Conduct Scheme**

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act establishes the Reportable Conduct Scheme, managed by the CCYP/SSR, which requires the School to report and investigate reportable allegations and must report as soon as practicable after becoming aware of a reportable allegation, the head of the entity must respond to the allegation.

The SMBG Principal must also make several notifications to the CCYP/SSR as follows:

- Initial notification – within three business days after becoming aware of the reportable allegation
- Update – As soon as practicable and within 30 calendar days after becoming aware of the reportable allegation
- Advice about investigation – As soon as practicable
- Outcomes of investigation – As soon as practicable

### **Failure to disclose a and failure to protect offences under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)**

The *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) makes it a crime to fail to disclose a sexual offence against a child.

1. As a result, anyone (and not just a not just professionals who work with students, or with children and young people generally) aged 18 or over must make a report to Victoria Police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 years, by a person aged 18 years or over.
2. A ‘*reasonable belief*’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A ‘*reasonable belief*’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a ‘reasonable belief’ might be formed if:
  1. A student states that they have been sexually abused.
  2. A student states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the student may be talking about themselves).
  3. Someone who knows a student states that the student has been sexually abused.
  4. Professional observations of the student’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the student has been sexually abused or is likely to be abused.
  5. Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the student has been sexually abused.

If you are not sure whether you have a reasonable belief, you must consult with the Principal, or a Student Safety Officer or the appropriate body to which a report must be made.

If you have formed a reasonable belief in relation to a sexual offence, you must immediately report the belief to Victoria Police by calling **000** in an emergency or otherwise, to the local police station.

You must then make a further report on each occasion on which you become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the reasonable belief.

Failure to make a report without reasonable excuse is an offence under section 327 of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) and carries a potential term of imprisonment.

Failure by a person in authority to protect a student from a sexual offence is also an offence under section 490 of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)

However, it may not be an offence not to disclose a sexual offence against a child to Victoria Police if you:

- a) Have a reasonable fear that reporting your reasonable belief to Victoria Police may pose a risk to your own or another person’s health and safety (including the relevant child or young person but not including the alleged perpetrator of sexual offence).
- b) Were told about the sexual offence by the alleged victim, who was 16 or older at the time they disclosed the abuse, and they have asked you not to report the abuse.
- c) Believe on reasonable grounds that the information has already been disclosed to

Victoria Police by another person (such as a Child Protection authority) and you have no further information.

- d) If there is uncertainty about the need for a report to Police (or another body) you should seek advice from the Principal, or a Student Safety Officer about whether you are still required to make a report.

## **MANDATORY REPORTING**

Mandatory reporters (as defined in the Student Safety Definitions document) have mandatory reporting obligations under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic). Failure to make a mandatory report can constitute an offence under that Act.

If you are a mandatory reporter, and you have formed a reasonable belief that:

- a) a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse; and
- b) the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child or young person from harm of that type

You must **immediately** report the belief to Child Protection by calling 1300 655 795 during business hours, or 13 12 78 after hours. Additional reports must be made on each occasion where a mandatory reporter becomes aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

Staff must check whether they are mandatory reporters.

A mandatory reporter must make a report even if a Student Safety Officer does not share their belief that the report must be made. SMBG will afford support where appropriate to mandatory reporters who make a report under this policy.

### **Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)**

**In accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), SMBG must notify the VIT if it has taken any action against a registered teacher in response to allegations:**

1. of serious incompetence.
2. of serious misconduct.
3. that the teacher is unfit to be a teacher.
4. that the teacher's ability to practice as a teacher is seriously detrimentally affected, or likely to be seriously affected, because of an impairment.
5. any other actions against a registered teacher that may be relevant to their fitness to teach.

**SMBG must also notify VIT if it becomes aware that a registered teacher has been:**

1. Charged with, convicted or found guilty of certain criminal offences that affect the right to hold a Working with Children Check (**WWCC**).
2. Given a negative notice in relation to a WWCC.

### **Referral to Child FIRST/Orange Door**

A referral to Child FIRST/Orange Door should be considered if, after taking into account the available information, a staff member forms a view that the concerns have a low-to-moderate impact on the wellbeing of a student under the age of 17 years, but the student is not at risk of significant harm (meaning a mandatory report is not required).

Anyone with a concern for a student's wellbeing can make a referral to Child FIRST/The Orange Door. If the Principal does not wish to make a mandatory report, this does not discharge the mandatory reporter's legal obligation to do so *if the mandatory reporter continues to hold a*

*reasonable belief that abuse or a sexual offence may have occurred* (including in circumstances where the student's parents have not or are unlikely to protect their child from that harm). In that circumstance, the mandatory reporter must still make a report to Child Protection or a referral to Child FIRST/Orange Door and in the case of a sexual offence, Victoria Police.

Examples of situations where a referral to Child FIRST/The Orange Door may be appropriate include:

1. Significant parenting problems that may be affecting the student's development.
2. Family conflict, including family breakdown.
3. A family under pressure due to a family member's physical or mental illness, substance abuse, disability or bereavement.
4. Young, isolated and/or unsupported families.
5. Significant social or economic disadvantage that may adversely impact on a student's care or development.

Many cases will not fit neatly into these categories. For guidance about whether a referral to Child FIRST/The Orange Door should be considered, staff can refer to our Student Safety Officers and information available on the DFFH's website.

Please note that whilst Child FIRST acts as the access point for family services, it is progressively transitioning to the Orange Door. Child First/Orange Door can be contacted at 1800 319 353.

#### **COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY**

This Policy is made publicly available on the School's website. This policy is available to staff as part of our internal policies and procedures. Aspects of (and updates to) the student safety and wellbeing framework, including this policy will be addressed in School professional development updates, training programs, bulletins and newsletters.

To properly implement this policy:

1. The Council will review this policy and student safe practices at least every two years (or more frequently after a significant student safety incident) and implement improvements where applicable.
2. Families and the School community will be afforded the opportunity to contribute to the review and development of student safe policies and practices (including this policy).
3. Periodic training and refresher sessions on this policy are provided to all staff.
4. All staff must ensure that they abide by this policy and assist SMBG in implementing this policy.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be referred in regular staff and Council briefing sessions on Child Safety and it can be located on Nexus.

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

**Child Safety Volunteer Training**

**Child Safety Code of Conduct**

**Child Safety Staff Training Presentation**

**Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**

**Reportable Conduct Policy**

Staff Code of Conduct

Student Safety Definitions

Recordkeeping, Retention & Destruction Policy

## REVIEW

This policy was reviewed by the Executive Team and is reviewed every two years and/or earlier if required due to operational or regulatory changes.

Effective Date	March 2026
Review Date	<b>March 2028</b>
Published	<b>Website, Nexus</b>