



Child Safe Reporting

At TPS, we take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of all children in our education and care, at all times. We acknowledge that it is every adult's responsibility, mandatory reporter or not, to report to Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection, if they believe on reasonable grounds, that a child is at harm or in need of protection. The steps outlined in the two documents below, must be rigorously followed as soon as a disclosure or belief has been made by or in relation to a child, staff member, parent/guardian, visitor or other persons connected to the school environment, that a child has been subjected to physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, grooming, neglect or family violence. All staff and volunteers consider the safety of all children, including the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and vulnerable children.

Reporting and documentation procedure

Step 1) Follow the relevant steps outlined in 'Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse' document available in classrooms, on the school website, in staff policies manual or at: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf

Step 2) Follow the relevant steps in 'Protect Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools' document available in staff policies manual, on Staffshare, on the school website or at: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/PROTECT_Responding_TemplateSchools.pdf

After a report and support systems

The principal, together with the support of authorities, and where needed, the Child Safety Officer, will promptly manage the school's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse. If for whatever reason the Principal is unavailable, the Assistant Principal or Child Safety Officer, will promptly manage the school's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse. The Principal and Child Safety Officer will monitor overall school compliance with this procedure. We acknowledge that 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 abuse. After an allegation of child abuse has been reported, our priority is to protect the child or children connected to the allegations to the best of our abilities, until the allegation has been resolved. This includes students who were subjected to the abuse, students who perpetrated the abuse, and any students who witnessed or were otherwise impacted by the abuse. Student health and wellbeing will be supported by working together with allied professionals, parents/guardians and the child through:

- developing and implementing a Student Support Plan in consultation with allied health professionals, which documents the planned support strategies and includes timeframes for review
- frequent communication regarding child's progress and effectiveness of support strategies
- establishing a student support group consisting of wellbeing staff, teachers, allied health professionals, and where appropriate the student and/or their parent/guardian, in order to plan for, monitor and follow up on child's wellbeing
- engaging the support of health professionals, support services and external support networks, appropriate to the child's developmental and cultural circumstances

We will also prioritise the health and wellbeing of any staff, parent/guardian or community member involved or affected by any incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse. The Principal will facilitate access to the necessary support services, whilst respecting the cultural circumstances of each individual.

Privacy and information sharing

Privacy laws allow school staff to share a child's personal and health information with other school staff, without the consent of a parent/guardian and without breaching privacy laws. This occurs to:

- enable other school staff to support student education
- plan for individual needs and address any barriers to learning
- support the social and emotional wellbeing and health of the student
- fulfil duty of care obligations to the student, other students, staff and visitors

- make reasonable adjustments if the student has a disability, including a medical condition or mental illness
- provide a safe and secure workplace

The following information may be shared between staff members:

- that the child is in a difficult situation
- that the child should be monitored and may need support
- the content of any Student Support Plan, including any signs or symptoms that the child may display when they are in need of support, and any strategies or support services that have been put in place to support the child while they are at school.

Privacy legislation also permits school staff to disclose personal information about a child to DHHS Child Protection if it is authorised or permitted by law, or if it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious and imminent risk to health, safety or welfare of any person. As for family services and agencies, staff can only share information with parent/guardian consent.

No information will be shared by school staff to the community or public, unless approved by the Principal. Our priority is to protect the anonymity of all school staff and students, and any risks to identification of an abuse victim will not be welcomed.

For more information visit:

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf

Review May 2019.