



## Child Safe Program

### Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally Policy and Procedures

#### Introduction

Kildare Education Ministries includes seven schools and in partnership with their respective governance bodies, fosters safe, nurturing, inclusive environments that reflect our Gospel values and Catholic identity.

We adopt and implement the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) and comply with relevant State and Federal legislation to maintain our responsibilities as a child safe and safeguarding organisation.

The College acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which it stands and pays respect to Elders past and present. We recognise their enduring connection to land, waters and community, and commit to respectful engagement with local Aboriginal communities.

#### Purpose

The [Reporting and Responding Obligations \(Child Safeguarding\) Policy and Procedures](#), [Complaints Management \(Child Safeguarding\) Policy and Procedures](#) and [Record Keeping \(Child Safeguarding\) Policy and Procedures](#) summarise the College's procedures for responding to child safety incidents and concerns, including internal reporting obligations.

This Policy and its Procedures provide additional guidance on implementing them and outline when and how you must report child safety incidents or concerns internally to the College.

It is important to remember at all times that the safety and welfare of the student are paramount.

## Scope

If you are a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor, and you:

- witness a child safety incident at the College or a College event, or in any other College environment; or
- have a child safety concern about a student, staff member, Volunteer, Contractor, Visitor or any other person associated with the College

this Policy and its Procedures apply to you.

This Policy and its Procedures apply in all College environments, including physical, virtual and online environments, and on-site and off-site College grounds (e.g. camps and excursions, and interstate and overseas travel).

## Policy Statement

1. You **must** report, internally to the College, any and all child safety incidents or concerns that:

- occur at the College, at College events, or in College environments; or
- involve students (including students aged 18 or over), Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, Visitors or any other person associated with the College.

2. You **must** document your internal report, following [Record Keeping \(Child Safeguarding\) Policy and Procedures](#).

3. Following this Policy and its Procedures does not replace other legal and policy obligations that you may have. In addition to reporting internally, you **must also** follow all responding and reporting obligations that apply to you. Depending on the circumstances, these obligations may include:

- reporting to DFFH Child Protection
- reporting to the Police
- reporting Reportable Conduct to the Commission for Children and Young People
- taking steps to protect students from future risks of abuse or other harm, where those steps are within your power or responsibilities to take (to meet your duty to protect obligations)
- reporting teacher misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- providing information to other external agencies.

#### 4. The College **must** report:

- all child safety incidents or concerns that:
  - occur at the College, at a College event or in any other College environment
  - involve harm, or risk of harm, to a student by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor
  - involve harm, or risk of harm, to any other child or young person by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor
- other matters relevant to child safety as directed by Kildare Education Ministries

internally to Kildare Education Ministries as soon as practicable after the College becomes aware of the incident or concern.

## Procedures

### What to Report Internally

You must report child safety incidents or concerns that occur at the College or College events, or that involve students or Staff, Volunteers or Contractors. These include (but are not limited to):

- “child abuse” as defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (CWS Act) and MO 1359
- children and young people (who are aged under 17, or aged 17 and under a child protection order) being “in need of protection”
- criminal offence against any child or young person, or against a student aged 18 or over
- practices to change or suppress any child or young person’s, or a student aged 18 or over’s, sexual orientation or gender identity
- Reportable Conduct
- breaches of the Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct
- any and all other child safety incidents or concerns that occur at the College or a College event or that involve students, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors or Visitors.

For more information about each of these concepts, refer to the full definition of “child safety incident or concern” on the [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Policies and Procedures](#) landing page.

### How to Report Internally

In most cases, you can report internally to either the Principal or a Child Safety Officer.

However, if the child safety incident or concern involves:

- conduct by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor that has caused or has the potential to cause harm to students, this is likely to be “Reportable Conduct” and you **must** report it directly to the Principal, or if the matter involves the Principal, to the Executive Officer by Peter Houlahan. Executive Officer, Kildare Education Ministries. [phoulahan@kemboard.org.au](mailto:phoulahan@kemboard.org.au)
- very concerning sexual behaviour by a student that does not involve another person, you **must** report it directly to the Principal.

For more information, refer to the internal reporting procedures set out in the [Reportable Conduct Policies and Procedures](#) and [Recognising and Responding to Sexual Behaviour in Children and Young People Policies and Procedures](#).

## Obtain Advice

If you suspect that a student may be experiencing abuse or other harm or that their safety may be at risk, but you are unsure whether your concern rises to the levels required for external reporting to the relevant authority, you should immediately raise your concerns with a Child Safety Officer. They can assist you in clarifying your concerns and managing the next steps.

However, if you sought advice from, or reported internally to, a Child Safety Officer, the Principal or another person, and they tell you not to report externally, you **must still** comply with any legal external reporting obligations that apply to you if – in your own mind – your concerns reach the required threshold for reporting.

## Internal Reporting to Kildare Education Ministries

Staff members **must** follow **PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse (Four Critical Actions)**.

As required by the Four Critical Actions, staff members must report any and all child safety incidents or concerns involving our students to Marian College. They can do this by contacting a Child Safety Officer, or – if the matter involves the conduct of a staff member – the Principal. The report will be made to **Child Protection (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – DFFH) and Victoria Police**.

The Principal will then contact Kildare Education Ministries Executive Officer, Peter Houlahan.

## Implementation

The College implements this Policy and its Procedures through:

- making them available to all Staff, via the College's Intranet
- including information about them in induction training and in ongoing refresher training for Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors
- making them available to parents/carers, students and the wider College community in summary in the Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Reporting Obligations: Summary of the College's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, which are available on our public website as well as our annual report and welcome packs for Board members, staff members and Direct Contact Volunteers
- providing a hard copy by request.

## Breach

If you breach this Policy and its Procedures, the College can investigate your conduct. You could face disciplinary action, such as (depending on the severity of the breach):

- attending remedial education
- attending counselling
- increased supervision
- restriction of duties
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

## Definitions

Definitions of particular terms used in this Policy and its Procedures can be found in **Child Safeguarding Program Definitions** and **Definitions and Key Indicators of Abuse and Other Harm**.

## Source of Obligation

This Policy and its Procedures help the College and its Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to meet obligations in:

- Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standard 7
- Ministerial Order 1359, Clause 11

- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, Standard 6

## Related Policies

- [Reporting and Responding Obligations \(Child Safeguarding\) Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Complaints Management \(Child Safeguarding\) Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Record Keeping \(Child Safeguarding\) Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Managing Your Initial Response to a Child Safety Incident or Concern Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Duty to Protect/Failure to Protect Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Non-Mandatory Reporting to DFFH Child Protection Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Reporting to Police Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Recognising and Responding to Sexual Behaviour in Children and Young People Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Program Definitions List](#)
- [Definitions and Key Indicators of Abuse and Other Harm](#)

## Related Documents

- [Template - for identifying and responding to child abuse by an adult engaged by a Catholic school, including grooming](#)
- [Template - for identifying and responding to student-to-student abuse](#)
- [Template - for identifying and responding to child abuse in the family](#)
- [Template - for identifying and responding to child abuse in the community](#)

## References

- Victorian Government, [PROTECT for schools](#)

## Policy Administration

Status	Document Owner	Approver(s)	Approval Date	Version Number	Last Reviewed	Review Frequency	Next Review
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						<b>y</b>	<b>Date</b>
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