



# RESPONDING & REPORTING POLICY

(Child Safe Standard 5)

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand the various legal and other reporting obligations related to child safety that apply at Point Cook College. The specific procedures that are applicable at school are contained at Appendix A.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers and school community members. It also applies to all staff and students engaged in any school and school council events, activities and services [such as Outside School Hours Care].

## POLICY

All children and young people have the right to protection in their best interests. Point Cook College understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse including:

- x Physical abuse
- x Sexual abuse (including sexual exploitation)
- x Family violence
- x Emotional abuse
- x Neglect (including medical neglect)
- x Grooming

The staff at Point Cook College are required by law to comply with various child safety reporting obligations. For detailed information about each obligation, please refer to [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)

At Point Cook College we also recognise the diversity of the children and young people at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering child safety.

## MANDATORY REPORTING

Principals, registered teachers, registered medical practitioners, nurses and all members of the police force are mandatory reporters under the Children, Youth and Families Act (2005)

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- x a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse, and

- x the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at Point Cook College to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations Learning Module annually. We also require/encourage all other staff to undertake this module, even where they are not mandatory reporters.

For more information about Mandatory Reporting see the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide

[Child Protection-Reporting Obligations](#)

[Child in need of protection](#)

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection (131-278-hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires all staff to form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to report their concerns to DHHS or Victoria Police, and discuss their concerns with the principal. The policy also requires staff to report their concerns to the principal if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. The policy also requires staff to report their concerns to the principal if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. The policy also requires staff to report their concerns to the principal if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000 or local police station) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse'.

APPENDIX A

CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCEDURES AT POINT COLLEGE

For students

- x All students should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.
- x If a student does not know who to approach at Point College they should start with the Principal Mary O'Mara.

Managing disclosures made by students

When managing a disclosure you should:

- x listen to the student and allow them to speak
- x stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
- x be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout
- x highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened
- x assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred
- x do not ask leading questions

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- x Make detailed notes of the incident or disclosure, including actions taken using the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template](#) and ensure that those notes are kept and stored securely in the locked office filing room. They are also responsible for ensuring that any staff member who reported the incident, disclosure or suspicion to them also makes and keeps notes of the incident.
- x At PointCookCollege the school Principal and Assistant Principal who has been allocated position of responsibility for disclosures, will be responsible for ensuring that there is a prompt response to the disclosure and that the child is appropriately supported.

If the principal and other nominated staff member responsible is unavailable, the alternative procedures and/or contact person who will take on the responsibility will take on the role and responsibilities described in this section. tn0 (e)-1 ( s)6 (po)2 (nd)10 (i)4ry the(g)12 (e)]TJ 0.003 T