

135-2 Child Safe Reporting and Complaints Procedures

Purpose

1. This procedure provides the guidance for all staff and volunteers of Community College Gippsland (CCG) and ECG College (referred to as CCG for this procedure) on how to report or respond to concerns or allegations of suspected child abuse and how CCG will deal with any complaints raised.
2. For the purpose of this procedure the term “Staff” refers to all employees of CCG including the Board of Management, volunteers and teaching/training contractors.

Scope

3. All staff and students/parents/carers/guardians within CCG.

Delegated responsibility

4. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring all employees are aware of the requirements for reporting allegations of suspected child abuse.
5. The Child Safe Champions provide support and guidance to the CCG community and champion Child Safety within the organisation.
6. The CEO will contact the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) under the Reportable Conduct Scheme with any allegation where a CCG employee may have committed misconduct either while at CCG or outside CCG employment arrangements.
7. The CEO or Principal may implement the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) where appropriate.
8. All staff both mandated and non-mandated are responsible for reporting allegations of suspected of child abuse as per the following three criminal offences:
 - **Failure to disclose offence** — Applies to all adults who fail to disclose child sexual abuse to police. Any adult who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child in Victoria must report that belief to police, unless they have a reasonable excuse for not reporting.
 - **Failure to protect offence** - Applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.
 - **Grooming offence** — applies to individuals who communicate with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.

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Procedures

9. CCG prioritises the safety of children and will respond to any allegations/concerns or complaints of child abuse (or any misconduct) in order to protect the safety of children in the organisations care.
10. CCG actively encourages children and students to raise concerns with a trusted adult if anything makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Any adult or child who raises a concern or allegation will be supported by CCG throughout the process. The support provided will be aligned to the individual case.
11. CCG will respond to any complaints or reports in a manner that is appropriate to the complainant and in a culturally safe way.
12. The CEO must be notified of every report, allegation or concern raised.
13. CCG's Senior Management team, Child Safe Champions and Wellbeing team are always available to discuss in confidence any concerns or issues regarding child abuse and provide support to staff and students who may have made a report or raised a concern/complaint.
14. CCG's supporting Reporting and Complaint handling guide provides guidance and information for staff on how to support and respond to young people who may wish to raise a concern, make a report or complaint.

What is child abuse

15. Child abuse consists of any act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development. Child abuse includes any damage done to a child which cannot be reasonably explained, and which is often represented by an injury or series of injuries appearing to be non-accidental in nature. This includes:
 - a sexual offence committed against a child
 - an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
 - physical violence against a child
 - causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
 - serious neglect of a child

Reporting child abuse

Who can report child abuse

16. Anyone who forms a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from significant harm due to abuse or neglect can make a report. This includes:
 - Parents/carers/guardians
 - Child/student
 - Staff member or volunteer
 - Others in the community

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17. Everyone must call 000 if a child is in immediate danger of harm.
18. Mandated Reporters — are legally required to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities.

What to report

19. A report can be made if there are any concerns or complaints including (but not limited to):
 - An internal allegation regarding suspected abuse perpetrated by a CCG staff member
 - A parent/carer/guardian/child/student disclosing an incident of abuse of a student attending CCG.
 - An external allegation regarding suspected child abuse outside of CCG
 - An allegation of suspected student to student abuse
 - Any concern for the wellbeing of a child, but do not believe they are at risk of significant harm
20. When a concern or report is initiated or received by CCG, the response and action will be dependent on the circumstance of the child/person making the report, and the level of risk or danger that is suspected. How to make a report
21. An initial report/complaint can be made by:
 - face to face verbal report
 - written report by email, report/complaint form, letter
 - telephone call
22. The reporter should keep notes of the initial account/discussion or incident to ensure consistency of the information. A detailed account of the report/concern/allegation is required as the report progresses. Who to report to
23. A report/concern/allegation or complaint can be made to:
 - CEO, a member of the Senior Leadership Team, Principal, Wellbeing staff or Lead Teacher
 - Child Safe Champion
 - a senior/alternative person in the organisation if the complaint is to be made about a manager, supervisor, or Leader within CCG.
 - students may make a complaint/report to any trusted adult
24. Once a concern/complaint/report is received, CCG's response will be dependent on the circumstance of the child/person making the report, the nature of the report and the level of risk or danger that is suspected. Refer to the Child Safe Reporting and Complaints Procedures Flowchart.

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Recording a report/concern/complaint

25. A detailed account of the report/concern/allegation/complaint must be captured and recorded using the Child Safe Incident Reporting Form for all staff or entered directly into the SMS Compass by ECG College Staff for school students. All records will be strictly confidential and stored in a secure area in line with privacy and employment laws. Refer to Appendix 1 for the Child Safe Incident Reporting Form. The Child Safe Incident Reporting form/Compass entry provides guidance on what information must be recorded and assistance will be provided by CCG when required.
26. CCG will keep accurate records of any allegation / incident, how the incident is investigated, responded to and managed, inclusive of final outcomes or continuing under investigation until closure.
27. When the Child Safe Incident Report Form is utilised for documenting the incident, the completed report form is given to the CEO/Senior Management Team and uploaded into the secure site. The CEO is automatically informed when a child safe concern/report is entered into Compass.

Reporting to external authorities

28. The list below provides a summary of reportable offences/scenarios and the appropriate external authority to contact dependent on the individual situation:
 - Alleged or suspected criminal conduct: Physical or sexual abuse, including grooming and family violence of children is a crime and reported to the police.
 - Failure to disclose offence: Applies to all adults who fail to disclose child sexual abuse to police. Any adult who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child in Victoria. This is a crime and must report that belief to police unless they have a reasonable excuse for not reporting.
 - Failure to protect offence: Applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so. This is a crime and reported to the police.
 - Grooming offence: Applies to individuals who communicate with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. This is a crime and reported to the police.
 - Child Protection: You should make a report if you have formed a reasonable belief that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect, and that their parent has not protected or is unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type.
 - Child in need of therapeutic treatment: Any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child aged over ten but under 18 has been exhibiting sexually abusive behaviours and may need therapeutic treatment may make a report to Child Protection.
 - Child FIRST or The Orange Door: Where they may be significant concern for the wellbeing of a child, but do not believe they are at risk of significant harm, and where

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- the immediate safety of the child will not be compromised, a referral to Child FIRST or The Orange Door may be appropriate.
- Reportable Conduct Scheme: The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires the CEO (or delegated person) to notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) about any reportable allegations that any member of CCG staff have committed child abuse or child-related misconduct within three days of becoming aware of the allegation. CCG will investigate these allegations (after receiving clearance by Victoria Police) and report its findings together with any actions taken to the Commission.

Complaints

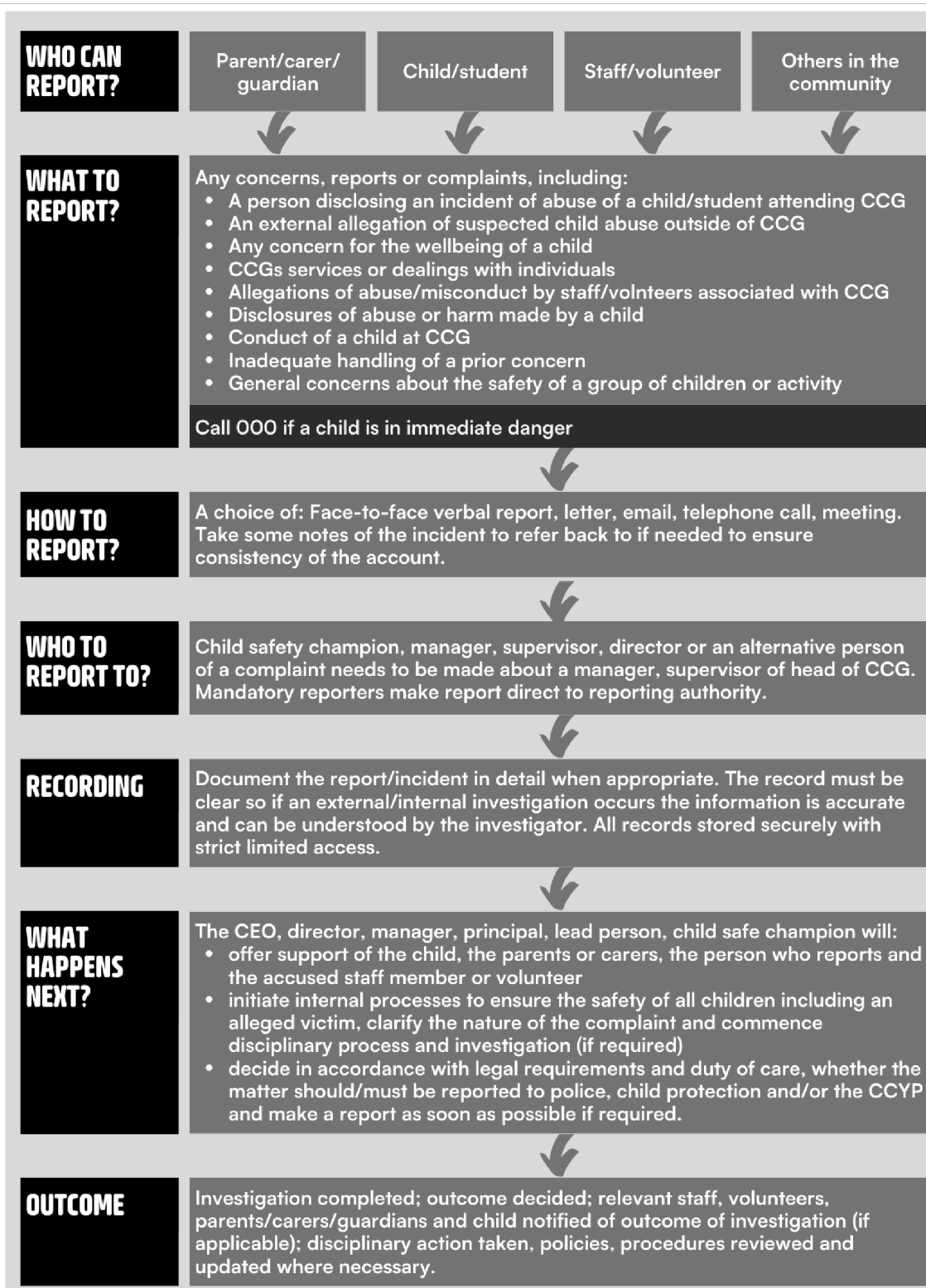
29. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with CCG and related to one or more of the following:
 - CCG's services or dealings with individuals
 - allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, a volunteer or another individual associated with CCG
 - disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child
 - the conduct of a child at CCG
 - the inadequate handling of a prior concern
 - general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity
30. CCG's takes all complaints seriously and encourages all staff to talk to peers or support staff to assist with the process.
31. CCG supports any child who wishes to raise a complaint or disclose abuse through a sensitive and culturally safe approach.
32. CCG will implement the Child Safe Reporting and Complaints Procedures Flowchart when notified or on receipt of any report, concern, allegation, or complaint.

Records management

33. CCG will keep all records strictly confidentially and manage all records for Child Safe incidents as per the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards and Retention & Disposal Authority directions for Organisational Response to Child Sexual Abuse Incidents and Allegations and CCG's Records Management Policy and Procedures.
34. All records are stored confidentially so that privacy is protected, and only authorised people are aware of them and can access and use them for legitimate purposes.
35. The Senior Leadership Team will review the records created, ensuring that any future allegations can be properly investigated or re-investigated if an allegation is made or reoccurs in the future.

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Child Safe Reporting and Complaints Procedures Flowchart



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Appendix 1 When to use this template?

All staff use this template to document any incident, disclosure, or suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. This template should be used in conjunction with the following: Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Completing this template should not impact on reporting times. If a child is in immediate danger, staff should report immediately to Victoria Police.

Whilst you may need to gather the information to make a report, remember it is not the role of school staff to investigate abuse, leave this to Victoria Police and/or DHHS.

Why record this information?

When completing this template your aim should be to provide as much information as possible. This information will be critical to any reports and may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of Court proceedings. These notes may also later assist you if you are required to provide evidence to support any decisions.

It is a requirement under Ministerial Order 1359 - Child Safe Standards to keep clear and comprehensive notes on all observations, disclosures and other details that led them to suspect the abuse.

Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse

Please note: if you are making a report to DHHS or Victoria Police you must seek advice before contacting parents/carers so as not to compromise any investigation or place a child at further risk

Staff Member Leading the Response

Name: _____

Occupation: _____

Location (campus address): _____

Relationship to child: _____

Critical Action 1: immediate response to an incident

If anyone is in immediate danger staff should report immediately to Victoria Police on 000.

Responding to an Emergency

Did the child require first aid? Provide details if 'yes'. _____

Who administered this? (name and title) _____

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Child's Information

Personal Details

Name: _____

Gender: _____

Year Level/Class: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Residential Address: _____

Parent/Carer Name/s: _____

Parent/Carer Contact: _____

Language(s) spoken by child: _____

Disabilities, Mental or Physical Health Issues: _____

Child's Background

Cultural Status and Religious Background _____

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Any known previous history of suspected abuse (prior to this incident, disclosure or suspicion or involvement with agencies): _____

Family Background

Family composition (if known): _____

List parenting or care arrangements and sibling names and ages _____

Any other people living with the child (if known): _____

Disability, mental or physical health issues in family (if known):

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Details of the Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion

Grounds for your belief that a child has been, or is at risk of abuse

Indicators or instances which led you to believe that a child/children are subject to child abuse, or at risk of abuse:

Detail any disclosures or incidents or suspicions (including names, times and dates documenting a child's exact words as far as possible). include specific detail here on what led you to form a reasonable belief that a child has been or is at risk of being abused. _____

Any physical indicators of abuse: _____

Any behavioural indicators of abuse:

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Name: _____

Gender _____

Date of birth: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Nothing if they are within the school or within the family and community (this will impact on who you report to)

Address: _____

Contact details: _____

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Critical Action 2: Reporting

Reporting to Authorities

Tick the authorities you have reported to:

- VICTORIA POLICE
- DHHS
- CHILD FIRST
- COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
- DECISION NOT TO REPORT
- Other - Please specify:

If you've decided not to report, list your reasons here. Also include any follow-up actions undertaken by you below: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Authority: _____

Outcomes from the report: _____

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