



MARLBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

No 5045

“Strive for Excellence”

Child Safety Processes and Procedures

Marlborough PS has comprehensive child safe processes and procedures which include:-

- zero tolerance to child abuse and a commitment to child safety
- a commitment to cultural safety for Aboriginal students, cultural safety for students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for students with a disability
- expectations and requirements of staff and volunteers to ensure the protection of students as outlined in the *MPS Child Safe Code of Conduct*
- Mandatory Training for all staff
- support for staff, students and parents by School Leadership, SSO and or outside agencies
- the provision of contact details to staff and parent/carers to access information in relation to student wellbeing and child safety
- reporting procedures and leadership responsibilities in relation to student wellbeing and child safety
- recruitment practices which are screened and include employment of VIT registered teachers with successfully completed Police Checks
- recruitment practices which are screened for school personnel which include Police Checks and/or Working with Children Checks
- screening practices for community volunteers, visitors and contractors who are supervised and have current Working With Children Checks
- risk management strategy and procedures

If a student discloses an incident of abuse, Staff will respond to the allegation/s using the following process and procedure:-

1. Separating them from the other students discreetly and listen to them carefully
2. Letting the student use their own words to explain what has occurred
3. Reassuring the student that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and they are doing the right thing
4. Advising the student you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details
5. Explaining to them this information may need to be shared with others, such as with their parent/carer, specific staff in the school, or the police
6. Not making promises to the student such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except you will do your best to keep them safe
7. Not leaving the student in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them
8. As quickly as possible after the disclosure, report the disclosure to the Principal/School Leadership, Police or Child Protection
9. As quickly as possible, ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately. Record the information using the student's words. Ensure the record is stored securely

10. Together with school Leadership complete an incident report form using the student's words/ language
11. The School Principal/ Leadership may need to investigate allegations further, interview staff, students, personnel.
12. School Leadership will respond to a report of abuse as soon as possible
13. School Leadership will notify parent of student/s of concern as soon as possible
14. School Leadership action may include contacting outside agencies, Police, Child Protection
15. School Leadership action may include contacting Emergency and Security Management, IRIS Alert, Student Online Case System, SSSO, Legal Branch, NEVR.

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused within the school environment / organisation or raises a concern.

1. Explain MPS has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously
2. Ask about the wellbeing of the child
3. Allow the parent / carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
4. Advise the parent / carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details
5. Explain to the parent / carer the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the Principal, Student Wellbeing Coordinator / School Leadership, the Police or Child Protection
6. Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe
7. Explain the Principal / School Leadership will be notified as soon as possible
8. Teacher should complete an incident report form using the parent / carer words as soon as possible after the concern has been raised
9. Reassure the parent they will have contact / support / advice as soon as possible from School Leadership and or specialist / outside agency if applicable
10. School Principal / Leadership will provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together
 - o Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be
 - o Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely
11. You need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).
12. If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, you will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.
13. Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need

support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters. Advice on [communicating with people with a disability](#) can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/communityinvolvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/communicate-andconsult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-withdisabilities>.

14. If you believe a student is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Legal responsibilities

While the child safe standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their school / organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

The **failure to disclose** criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another).

More information about [failure to disclose](#) is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website

<www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>

While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities.

More information about [mandatory reporting](#) is available in the *Child protection manual* <www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/intake/mandatory-reporting>.

Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](#) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-childfirst>.

The **failure to protect** criminal offence (commenced on 1 July 2015) applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

Further information about [failure to protect](#) can be found on the Department of Justice and Regulation website

<www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence, and the Department of Health and Human Services website>.