

# What to do when you suspect child abuse

## If you suspect an incident of abuse

- Contact a trusted staff member at TC.
- All staff have been trained in responding to incidents of Child abuse. Key staff responsible for leading our Child Safe school includes
  - Principal Team (Peter Ellis, Sally Holloway, Natasha Mackinnon, Aaron Mackinnon, Adam Cribbes)
  - Community Directors (Steven Knight, John Sanderson, Michael Mance, Ceri Davis/Anthony Owen)
  - Student Supports (Kat Hendry, Jason Hendry, Amanda Toyer, Amy Jess, Yiorgs Sgourakis)
  - Child Safe leader Assistant Principal Aaron Mackinnon
  - Child Safe officer Amanda Toyer
- If you are with the student do not leave them in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- The trusted staff member will guide you through making a report and keep you informed of the process.

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

If you are unsure whether an incident concerns child abuse or not, please contact a trusted staff member. They will be able to talk you through your thoughts guide you through the options and seek advice from the TC Child Safe leaders.

## Legal responsibilities

While the child safe standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a student has been abused, whether in their 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](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) 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](http://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](http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/intake/mandatory-reporting) is available in the *Child protection manual* <[www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/intake/mandatory-reporting](http://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](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

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](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) 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>.