



The 4Rs of Safeguarding Children and Ensuring their Wellbeing

Presented By
Child Safety and Compliance Officer



Acknowledgement of Country

Community Languages Victoria would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we are meeting on and pay respect to elders past, present and emerging leaders

- **What are Victoria's Child Safe Standards?**
- **Who is mandated to make a notification?**
- **What types of abuse are mandated reporters required to report?**
- **What are your obligations?**
- **What are the 4 critical actions?**
- **What is a child safe organisation?**



One of the greatest risk factors for the harm or abuse of children is the lack of awareness about it among an organisation's staff and volunteers.

Who The Standards Apply To

All personnel in an organisation

Committee Members

Principal

Teachers

Volunteers

Contractors

Students on placement

Why Are the Standards Important?

- Child abuse is unacceptable. Ensuring children's safety is a top priority for the Victorian Government.
- The standards aim to create a culture where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice.
- They will strengthen existing approaches to preventing and responding to child abuse and provide consistency in managing these issues.
- We cannot presume that child abuse does not occur in our school.



New Child Safe Standards now apply in Victoria



The 11 Child Safe Standards

- **Standard 1: Culturally safe environments** – Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
- **Standard 2: Leadership, governance, and culture** – Ensure that child safety and well-being are embedded in school leadership, governance and culture.
- **Standard 3: Child and student empowerment** – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.
- **Standard 4: Family engagement** – Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and well-being.
- **Standard 5: Diversity and equity** – Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.
- **Standard 6: Suitable staff and volunteers** – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and well-being values in practice.
- **Standard 7: Child-focused complaints processes** – Ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.
- **Standard 8: Child safety knowledge, skills, and awareness** – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- **Standard 9: Physical and online environments** – Physical and online environments promote safety and well-being while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- **Standard 10: Review of child safety practices** - Implementing the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
- **Standard 11: Implementation of child safety practices** – Policies and procedures document how schools are safe for children, young people, and students.

Putting Students First: The 4Rs of Safeguarding Children and Ensuring their Wellbeing



What are the 4Rs of Safeguarding children?


The 4 R's of safeguarding children are a set of strategies for promoting the welfare and safety of children. They stand for:

1. **Recognise** – signs of abuse or potential risks to welfare
2. **Respond** – appropriately and promptly to any concerns about child safety
3. **Record** – all relevant information accurately and confidentially
4. **Refer** – on to the appropriate services for further investigation or support.

These strategies are essential in ensuring that you are able to effectively identify risks, respond effectively and refer on where necessary. They help to ensure that vulnerable children and young people receive the protection and support they need.

Whether you're a Teacher, Parent, Guardian or simply someone who interacts with children on a regular basis, having a basic understanding of safeguarding children and child protection is needed.



A wooden gavel with a brass band is positioned on a wooden block. The block has the words "DUTY OF CARE" written on it in a serif font. The background is a blurred bookshelf.

As a community, we have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children and young people. Child safeguarding is an important aspect of this responsibility, especially considering the different ways abuse that can occur, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Do you know how many type of abuses there are?

DUTY OF CARE

Different Types of Abuse

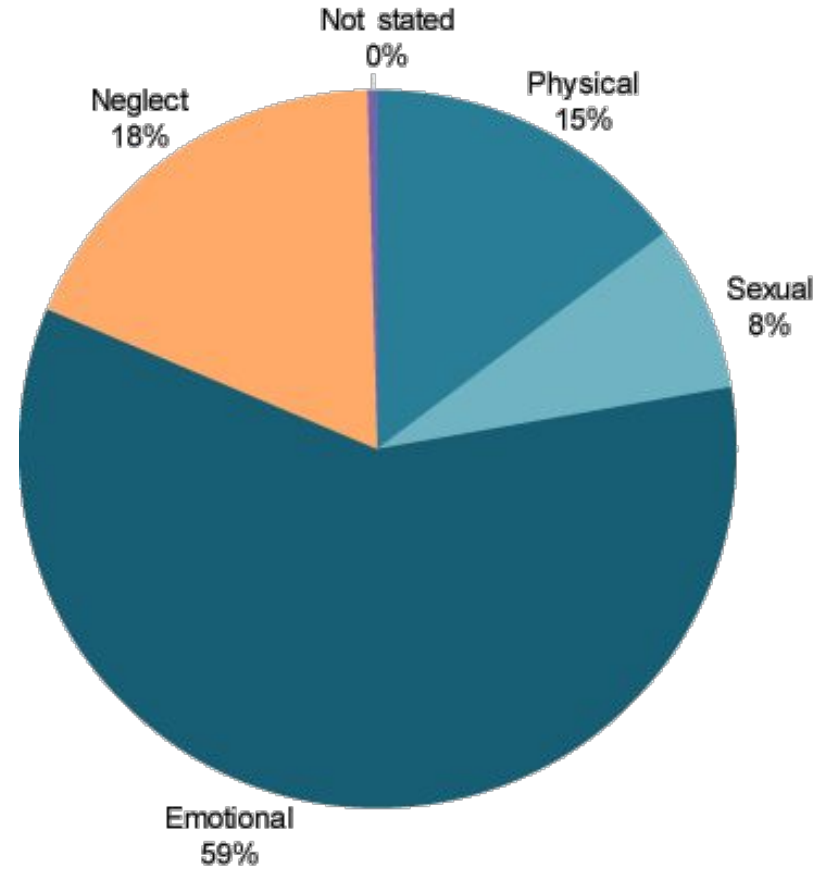
- **Physical Child Abuse**
- **Child Sexual Abuse**
- **Grooming**
- **Emotional Child Abuse**
- **Neglect**
- **Family Violence**

If physical and/or behavioural indicators lead you to suspect that a child has been or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, you must respond as soon as practicable per the Four Critical Actions to take when Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Child Abuse Statistics

1 in 4 girls experience sexual abuse

1 in 7 boys experience sexual abuse



1 in 10



CHILDREN

will be sexually
abused before the
age of 18

70%

of child sexual
abuse victims
will not tell



90%

of child sexual
abuse victims
know their abuser



1 in 7



CHILDREN

will be physically abused
or neglected before the
age of 18

1 in 32 children aged 0–17 received child protection services in 2019–20

174,700 children received child protection services in 2019–20. More than half (57%) of these children were the subject of an investigation only and were not subsequently placed on a care and protection order or in out-of-home care. A small proportion (7%) of children were involved in all 3 components of the system.

67% of children receiving child protection services were repeat clients—that is, the children had previously been involved with the child protection system.

Emotional abuse was the most common type of abuse or neglect

- Emotional abuse (59%) was the most common type of abuse or neglect substantiated through investigations in 2019–20.
- This was followed by neglect (18%), physical abuse (15%), and sexual abuse (8%).
- A higher proportion of girls (13%) were subject to sexual abuse than boys (6%), while boys had slightly higher percentages of substantiations for neglect and physical abuse.

Child abuse and neglect put children at risk for injury and even death. As a teacher, it is your responsibility to:

- (a) know the signs of abuse and neglect,
- (b) prevent child abuse through parent education, and
- (c) report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

What is Child Abuse and Neglect?

At its most basic form, child abuse and neglect is defined under federal law as:

- Any recent act or failure to act which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation of a child
- An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a child

Physical Abuse

- Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury.
- The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child.
- This may take the form of punching, beating, shaking or otherwise harming a child.



Indicators of Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Bruises, welts, often of different ages
- Burns, scalds, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts
- Fractures (particularly in infants)
- Lacerations or abrasions
- Poisoning
- Shaking Injuries, e.g. retinal haemorrhage
- Internal Injuries

Behavioural Indicators

- Wariness or distrust of adults
- Excessively friendly to strangers
- Inappropriate explanations
- Hiding injury or bruising (wearing long sleeves on hot days)
- Adverse reaction when other children shout or cry
- Behavioural extremes e.g. aggressive – withdrawn/passive
- Fear of parents/carer or to go home

Emotional Abuse

- Emotional abuse can result in damage to the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.
- This may involve:
 - Being repeatedly rejected, name called or being put down.
 - Being frightened by threats.
 - Continual coldness so that their self-esteem, physical and emotional growth are affected.
- A child can also experience emotional abuse by being in a home or place where there is violence.



Indicators of Emotional Abuse

Behavioural Indicators

- Very low self-esteem
- Compliant, passive, withdrawn, tearful and or apathetic behaviour
- Aggressive or demanding behaviour
- Anxiety
- Serious difficulties with peers and or adult relations
- Delayed or distorted speech



Neglect

- Neglect is the failure to provide for the child's basic needs for life:
 - Food
 - Clothing
 - Shelter
 - Medical attention
 - Supervision or care
- To the extent that the child's health and development are, or are likely to be, placed at risk.



Indicators of Neglect

Physical Indicators

- Failure to thrive/malnutrition.
- Poor hygiene.
- Inappropriate clothing e.g. summer clothing in winter.
- Consistent lack of supervision, for long periods and/or in dangerous situations.
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs.
- Health or dietary practices which endanger a child's health or development.

Behavioural Indicators

- Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep in class.
- Stealing food.
- Child states there is no caregiver or alcohol or drug abuse is apparent.
- Extended stays at school.
- Aggressive or inappropriate behaviour.
- Isolation from the peer group.

Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power, force or authority to involve a child in any form of sexual activity.
- Behaviors sex offenders engage in may include:
 - touching or fondling.
 - obscene or suggestive phone calls/texts.
 - exhibitionism and or voyeurism.
 - pornographic images.
 - penetration with penis, finger or other object into the mouth, anus or vagina.



Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Vaginal or anal bleeding, discharge or discomfort.
- Presence of STI's.
- Pregnancy or missed periods.
- Constant complaints of headaches and/or abdominal pain.



Behavioural Indicators

- Discloses sexual abuse (intentional or unintentional).
- Sophisticated or unusual sexual behaviour or knowledge.
- Soiling and/or wetting.
- Persistent habit disorders (eg. sucking, biting, rocking, etc).
- Sleep disorders.
- Inhibition to play.
- Difficulties relating to peers/adults.
- Self-destructive behaviour.

Grooming

- An individual persuading a child they have a special relationship with them, and inappropriately:
- Spending special time with a child.
- Giving gifts to a child.
- Showing special favours to one child but not others.
- Allowing the child to step out of boundaries or rules.
- Testing and breaking of professional boundaries.



- New laws started on 1 January 2023, including more substantial penalties for organisations that do not comply with the Child Safe Standards.
- The *Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021* will give the Commission and other regulators more powers to assess and enforce compliance with the Child Safe Standards.
- Some of the fundamental changes are:
 1. New powers for officers, including the ability to inspect organisations' premises without notice, to assess compliance with the new Standards
 2. New enforcement actions, including official warnings, court injunctions, enforceable undertakings, and the ability for a regulator to publish details about an organisation's non-compliance
 3. the introduction of a range of criminal offenses and increased maximum penalties for non-compliance with notices and directions issued by the Commission.

What is safeguarding and protection of children?

Safeguarding is the protection of children from harm and abuse. It involves promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as protecting them from any kind of risk or danger.

The aim of safeguarding is to ensure that all children have a positive experience within their family, education, social and community environments by providing support and protection when needed.

Is safeguarding children the same as child protection?

No, safeguarding children is not the same as child protection.

Safeguarding and child protection are very closely linked, but they're not the same thing. Safeguarding is a broader term that involves identifying risks, as well as implementing strategies to reduce potential harm or abuse.

Child protection measures involve specific interventions to protect children from any form of significant harm. It should be noted that child protection measures may be necessary in cases where there is a risk of abuse or neglect, but not necessarily in all cases of safeguarding.

Child Protection

Child Protection is how we respond to harm identified.
Safeguarding children is to prevent that harm from happening.



What are the 6 principles of child safeguarding?

1. Promote the welfare and safety of children and young people
2. Be alert to any signs of harm or abuse
3. Strengthen resilience within families by building relationships with adults
4. Develop effective multi-agency partnerships to safeguard children
5. Empower children and young people to keep themselves safe
6. Take action to address any identified risks or concerns about the welfare of children and young people.

What are the 5 Ps of safeguarding children?

1. **Prevention** – identifying potential risks and intervening early to reduce the likelihood of harm occurring
2. **Protection** – taking action to protect children from any form of significant harm
3. **Partnership** – working effectively in partnership with other agencies and professionals to ensure the best outcomes for children
4. **Participation** – involving children in decision-making processes, so they can take an active role in protecting themselves
5. **Perseverance** – continuing to work together to support children and young people, even when there are no easy solutions.

Why is it important to have strategies for child safeguarding?

These strategies are essential in ensuring that you are able to effectively identify risks, respond effectively and refer on where necessary. They help to ensure that vulnerable children and young people receive the protection and support they need.



What are the main laws for child protection?

School staff have a range of reporting and legal obligations to protect children and young people from abuse.

- School staff must be aware of and comply with their legal obligations to report suspected child abuse and provide ongoing appropriate support.
- School staff must follow the [Four Critical Actions](#) where there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. The Four Critical Actions outline who an incident, disclosure or suspicion should be reported to.
- When dealing with an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse, staff should ensure that the principal and school leadership team is made aware of the concern and are involved in providing ongoing appropriate support.
- If an incident or allegation involves an employee, volunteer or contractor at the school, staff must also follow the department policy on [Reportable Conduct](#).
- Where a school staff member has reported a concern to [Child Protection](#) but they continue to have concerns for the child after Child Protection has closed the case, they may escalate the matter through Child Protection complaints management processes or reporting concerns from the principal to their regional area executive director.

Criminal Offences

Failure to disclose

All adults must report to Victoria Police when they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16.

Failure to protect

Principals or school leadership staff who become aware that an adult associated with the school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care of the school (including grooming) must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

Duty of care

All school staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect children in their care from harm that is reasonably foreseeable. In relation to suspected child abuse.

PROTECT

Protecting children & young people
from abuse is our responsibility

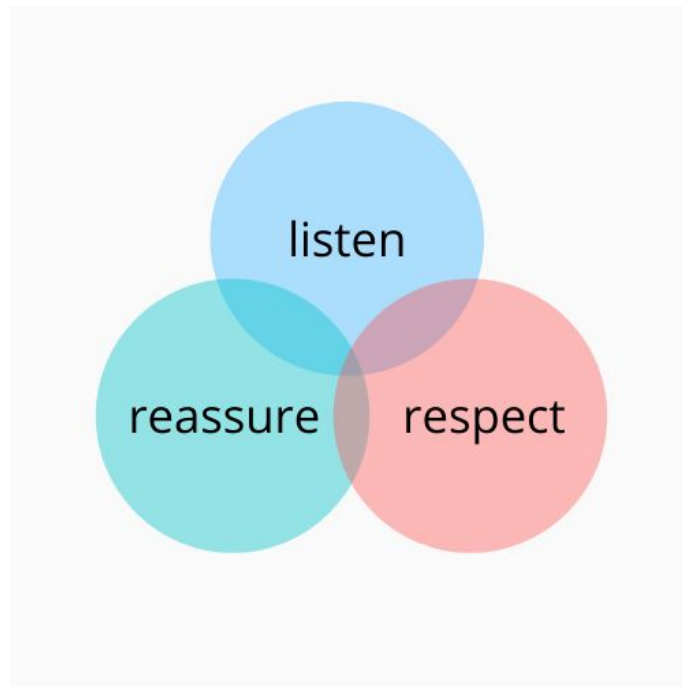




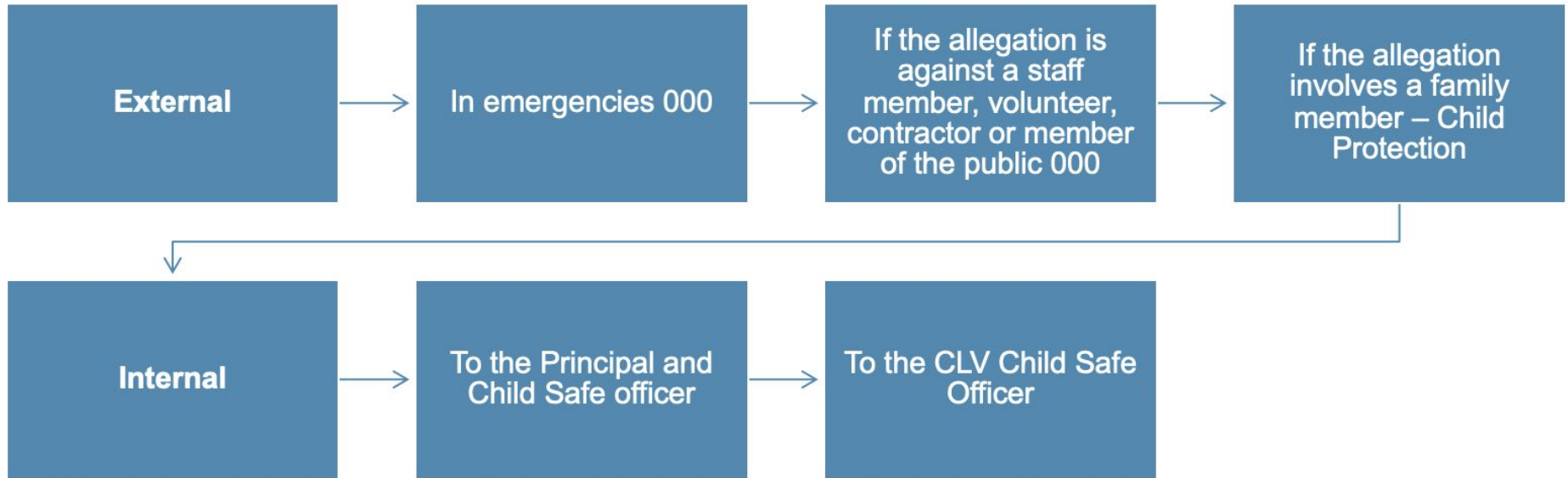
Empowerment is about building up children and young people and changing the way organisations operate. It helps children and young people to have greater confidence and to seek out support when they need it.

Responding to Disclosures

- Listen to the child
- Remain calm
- Believe the child
- Tell them they did the right thing
- Ask only enough questions to know that you must report (you are not the investigator)
- Report



Who Do We Report To?



Reportable Conduct Scheme

- **Sexual offences** committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- **Sexual misconduct** committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- **Physical violence** against, with or in the presence of a child
- Any behaviour that causes **significant emotional or psychological harm** to a child
- **Significant neglect** of a child.



Questions?

Does anyone have any further questions on the Child Safe Standards?

Does anyone have any questions about implementing the Child Safe Standards?

How did you find today's presentation?

Where To Go For Support



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