



Student Safety – Concerns Management Procedure

Introduction

Ivanhoe Grammar School (the **School**) has Student Wellbeing, Human Resources and Health and Safety policies and procedures for creating and maintaining a student safe environment for the School's students.

This procedure:

- sets out, in an accessible, child focused, culturally safe and easily understood manner, how a student safety concern about a student's wellbeing (including a concern about grooming, all forms of child abuse, reportable conduct and/or sexual harassment) may be raised with the School, and about how such concerns will be managed; and
- applies to student safety concerns made by or in relation to a student, School staff, visitors or other persons while connected to a school environment.

Concerns about behaviour by students or staff towards students including bullying, harassment, discrimination, and victimisation may, and usually will, be managed in accordance with the School's Student Safety – Concerns Management Procedure.

The purpose of this procedure is to give confidence to the School community that:

- the School treats concerns about student safety and wellbeing seriously
- the School has clear procedures for responding to student safety and wellbeing concerns
- the School and School personnel are complying with their statutory reporting obligations with respect to grooming, child abuse and reportable conduct.

A number of key terms in this procedure (including, all forms of child abuse, discrimination, reportable conduct and sexual harassment) are defined in the School's Student Safety Policy, which should be read in conjunction with this procedure.

Responsibility for this procedure

This procedure is overseen by the Principal, Heads of Campus, and Student Safety Officers, who are collectively responsible for:

- promptly managing the School's response to an allegation or disclosure of a student safety or wellbeing issue, and ensuring that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously
- responding appropriately to a student who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse or reportable conduct
- monitoring the School's overall compliance with this procedure
- managing an alternative procedure for responding to a student safety or wellbeing concern if the person allocated responsibility under this procedure cannot perform his or her role.

How the School community may raise concerns with the School

If you are a member of the School community with a concern about student wellbeing (including a concern about actual or suspected grooming, child abuse, reportable conduct, sexual harassment, discrimination and victimisation) (a "**concern**") then you are encouraged to contact the student's class teacher, mentor or homeroom teacher (**Key Wellbeing Contact**).

If it is not appropriate to discuss your concern with one of these individuals, you should contact either the Principal, Head of Campus, Student Safety Officer, or another member of the Wellbeing Team. The Wellbeing Team structure is attached to this procedure.

Your concern will then be handled by the School in accordance with this procedure.

How School personnel will deal with their own concerns

School personnel with, or who are aware of concerns about student wellbeing must also address any concerns they may have in accordance with this procedure.

How the School will deal with concerns

School personnel may become aware of concerns directly, such as through their own observations of student behaviour, specific incidents, or the behaviour of other individuals. School personnel may also become aware of concerns indirectly, through concerns from members of the School community.

The School's procedure for dealing with concerns involves two phases. The first phase involves assessing whether an external report is required, and if so, making that report. The second phase is about how the School will respond to concerns generally. Both phases must be followed.

When dealing with concerns, the School will be guided by the following considerations:

- every concern will be acknowledged, treated seriously and responded to with empathy
- the School will promptly work out whether mandatory reporting is required
- if School personnel are alleged to have engaged in child abuse, they will ordinarily be stood down, and without judgment, pending the School's management of the concern

- all concerns will be investigated fairly and without bias, promptly and without undue delay
- the outcomes following the concerns management process shall be consistent with the evidence
- all reasonable steps will be taken to protect a student the subject of a concern and ensure there are no reprisals for raising a concern.

When complying with this procedure, School personnel must appreciate that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in this procedure will not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a student or some other child is at risk of child abuse.

PHASE 1 – Comply with any external reporting obligations about child abuse

If you believe a student (or any child or young person) is at immediate risk of abuse phone Victoria Police on 000 or the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78.

School personnel have legal obligations to report child abuse and reportable conduct to external agencies:

Reporting sexual offence - *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)

Members of the School Community generally, as well as School personnel, are subject to mandatory reporting obligations under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) specifically in relation to a sexual offence committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16. Failure to do so can constitute an offence under that Act.

If you have formed a reasonable belief in relation to a sexual offence, you must immediately report the belief to Victoria Police by calling 000 in an emergency or otherwise on (03) 9450 8000.

You must then make a further report on each occasion on which you become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the reasonable belief.

If you:

- have a reasonable fear that reporting your reasonable belief to Victoria Police may pose a risk to your own or another person's health and safety (including the relevant child, but not including the alleged perpetrator of sexual offence); or
- were told about the sexual offence by the alleged victim, who was 16 or older at the time they disclosed the abuse, and they have asked you not to report the abuse,

**You should then seek advice from either a Student Safety Officer or the Principal about whether you are still required to record a report.*

The Reportable Conduct Scheme - *Children Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)

The *Children Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) established the Reportable Conduct Scheme managed by the Commission for Children and Young People.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires the head of an entity to do certain things upon becoming aware of a reportable allegation about School personnel. At the School, the head of the entity is usually the Principal. However, where a reportable allegation is about the Principal, the Board Chair will assume responsibility for complying with the Principal's obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

A reportable allegation means any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that a member of School personnel has committed reportable conduct, or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, whether or not the conduct or misconduct that is alleged to have occurred was within the course of the person's employment or engagement with the School.

As soon as practicable after becoming aware of a reportable allegation, the head of the entity must respond to the allegation. This procedure sets out how the head of the entity will respond to an allegation, by providing a process for the allegation to be investigated and dealt with.

The head of the entity must also make several notifications to the Commission for Children and Young People as follows:

Milestone	Timeframe
Initial notification	Within 3 business days after becoming aware of the reportable allegation
Update	As soon as practicable and within 30 calendar days after becoming aware of the reportable allegation
Advice on investigation	As soon as practicable
Outcomes of investigation	As soon as practicable

Mandatory Reporters - *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)

Principals, teachers (including students training to become teachers), registered nurses, registered psychologists, out of home care workers, early childhood workers and others (refer to section 182 of that Act) are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic), and have mandatory reporting obligations in relation to child abuse. Failure to do so can constitute an offence under that Act.

If you are a mandatory reporter, and you have formed a reasonable belief that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse; and
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;

*You must immediately report the belief to the Victorian Child Protection Services (**VCPS**) by calling 1300 664 977 during business hours, or 13 12 78 after hours.

You must then make a further report on each occasion you become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the reasonable belief.

Do you have a 'Reasonable Belief'?

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position as you, and with the same information as you, would have formed the belief that child abuse (including sexual abuse) or reportable conduct is occurring or may occur.

It is not necessary to have proof to form a reasonable belief, and you do not need to make a judgment about the truth of an allegation, but you must believe that it is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A reasonable belief may be formed based on circumstances where, for example:

- a student states that they have been abused
- a student states that they know someone who has been abused (sometimes the student may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a student states that the student has been abused
- professional observations of a student's behavior or development leads you to form a belief that the student has been abused or is likely to be abused
- signs of abuse lead you to form a belief that a student has been abused.

It is permissible to ask a person raising a concern with your sufficient questions to establish a reasonable belief. However, care should be taken not to ask the person any leading questions.

If you are not sure whether you have a reasonable belief, you must consult with the Principal, a member of the School's Executive Team, a Student Safety Officer or the appropriate body to which a report must be made.

PHASE 2 – How Concerns will be managed internally

Step 1 Reporting the concern

1. A member of School personnel who has a concern, or who receives a concern from a member of the School community (including a current or former student, parent or staff member), must immediately report the concern to the Student Safety Officer, Head of Campus or the Principal.
2. If the concern relates to behaviour between students and does not involve possible child abuse or sexual abuse, the Student Safety Officer may direct a member of School personnel to deal with the concern in accordance with the School's Student Management Procedure. If not, the concern will continue to be managed in accordance with this procedure.
3. When a concern is raised with the Student Safety Officer then for the purpose of this phase:
 - a. the person who originally raised the concern with the School (whether it be a member of School personnel or the School community) shall be the 'Notifier'; and
 - b. the person allegedly responsible for the behaviour the subject of the concern shall be the 'Respondent'.

Step 2 Responding to the concern

1. The School will take such steps as it considers appropriate to protect any student (or child or young person) connected with a concern until it is resolved.
2. The Student Safety Officer will:
 - a. acknowledge the concern and outline to the Notifier the process that will now be followed by the School to manage the concern
 - b. collect as much further information about the concern as may be required
 - c. offer support to the student(s) involved in the concern, and their families. This may include encouragement to access confidential wellbeing and support services, either internal or external to the School

- d. promptly and thoroughly manage the response of the School (including by monitoring the School's overall compliance with this policy and accounting for alternatives if the staff member allocated to resolve the concern is unable to perform their role)
 - e. fill out the Incident Report attached to this procedure (which will help School personnel report any reasonable belief required to be further reported to external agencies)
 - f. promptly report the concern to the Principal and, if required, the Victorian Institute of Teaching; and
 - g. ensure any mandatory reporting occurs in accordance with phase 1 of this procedure.
3. The Principal will notify the Student Safety Officer whether they will continue to manage the concern, or whether other senior School personnel will take over this concern management process.
 4. The Student Safety Officer (or any other School personnel appointed by the Principal) will notify the Respondent of the concern (to the extent that it is appropriate to do so, which may initially involve only notification that there has been a concern), outline the process to be followed, and advise the Respondent about whether they will be stood down pending the resolution of the concern.
 5. The School will then take such steps as it considers appropriate to protect any student connected with a concern until it is resolved, including by ensuring that any mandatory reporting obligations are met, and also, that any required or otherwise appropriate disclosures to relevant authorities (including but not limited to Child Protection and CCYP) have been met, regardless of whether there is a legal obligation to report.

Step 3 Resolving the concern

6. The School will investigate the concern where appropriate, which will ordinarily require the School determining whether, on the balance of probabilities, the concern is substantiated. When doing so, the School will take into account the diversity and characteristics of the School community to ensure equity is upheld and act to reduce barriers to inclusion.
7. The School or third party investigating the concern will to the extent it is appropriate or practicable to do so:
 - a. interview the Notifier and the Respondent
 - b. interview any other relevant witnesses, and review any relevant documents
 - c. keep a written record of any interviews and documents during the investigation; and
 - d. determine whether, on the balance of probabilities, the concern is substantiated.
8. If the concern is substantiated, the School will take appropriate action (which may, in the case of a Respondent who is a current member of School personnel, include summary dismissal of the Respondent for serious misconduct). Even if a concern is not substantiated, the findings made by the School during the course of investigating the concern may, in certain cases, still result in disciplinary action and dismissal.
9. The School will notify the following organisations of the outcome of the concern (as is appropriate):
 - a. Victoria Police, Commission for Children and Young People and/or Child Protection if the concern was the subject of a report to them under phase 1 (or if that phase otherwise now requires a report be made)

- b. the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- c. Working With Children Check unit.

General considerations

The School may need to adjust this procedure to reflect the circumstances.

This procedure applies regardless of whether the alleged behaviour which the subject of concern has occurred on or outside School grounds or concerns current or former students.

However, where a concern is raised with the School and:

- an investigation by Victoria Police, Child Protection, Commission for Children and Young People or the Victorian Institute of Teaching or other external body relevant to the concern is ongoing
- civil or criminal proceedings relevant to the concern are ongoing
- the concern relates to former students or former School personnel;

it may not be appropriate or possible for the School to investigate that concern in strict accordance with this procedure. In such circumstances, the School will seek and act on legal advice to comply with this procedure to the extent it is appropriate to do so (and in particular to protect the health and safety of all current students of the School).

Historical Abuse

Where a former student has experienced child sexual abuse for which the School is responsible, the School is committed to providing that individual with appropriate redress.

While the appropriate redress will be dictated by the particular circumstances, it will ordinarily include one or more of the following:

- a. A direct personal response to the student who experienced the abuse. This may take the form of an apology or statement of regret and may include an acknowledgement of the impact of the abuse. It will include an assurance as to the steps the School has taken, or will take, to prevent abuse occurring again. It will also include an opportunity for the student, and a support person, to meet with the Principal or another senior representative of the School to discuss their experiences and the School's commitment to student wellbeing.
- b. Access to professional counselling and psychological care.
- c. Financial compensation. Any payment of compensation will take into account the type of abuse that occurred, the circumstances in which it occurred, the impact the abuse has had on the student or former student, and any compensation the student or former student has previously received from the School or other sources.

Consistent with the National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional sexual abuse, offers of redress will usually be made on a 'without prejudice' basis.

The School will keep records

At all stages of this process, School personnel involved in a concern management process will keep secure records in a Record of Contact (**ROC**) on the relevant student's electronic file. Other records that will be kept and attached to the student's file include:

- Relevant emails
- Case Management Meeting Action plans
- Incident Reports

The School will also create, maintain and dispose of any records about student safety and wellbeing in line with the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards, including minimum retention periods regarding these obligations. In addition, the School will ensure all staff understand relevant obligations in relation to information sharing and record-keeping.

The School will be sensitive

The School will follow this procedure in a way that is culturally appropriate.

If a concern involves a student from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, steps will be taken to ensure that the student and the student's family is supported to understand the situation, including the use of an interpreter if required.

If a concern involves a student with a disability, steps will be taken to ensure the student and the student's family understand the situation and are supported.

The School will offer support

The School will afford support where appropriate to School personnel who make external reports under this procedure, the student who is the cause for concern, and anyone else affected.

The School will cooperate with the authorities

The School will cooperate with any investigation by Victoria Police, Child Protection, Commission for Children and Young People or the Victorian Institute of Teaching in relation to a report or reportable incident.

Confidentiality

The need for confidentiality should be always remembered in the interests of the relevant student and the student's family when complying with this procedure. Only where the welfare of the student will be affected should the matter be discussed with anyone, other than the reporting bodies named above, or senior members of the Wellbeing Team.

Victimisation is not tolerated

The School will not tolerate victimisation towards someone because they have participated in a process contemplated by this procedure, including by raising a concern or making a mandatory report.

Principal to be kept informed

The Wellbeing Team will keep the Principal promptly informed of all concerns received or made under this procedure, and the steps taken by any School personnel and the School to comply with this procedure.

Concerns relating to the Principal

Where a concern relates to the Principal, or the Principal otherwise has a conflict of interest, the Board Chair should be involved in this procedure and advice obtained from the School's legal advisors to ensure that this procedure is varied as is appropriate.

Media enquiries

The Principal or the Principal's delegate will handle any media inquiries that occur in relation to any reported concerns.

Related Documents

Relevant Legislation or Authority:

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic)
- *Ministerial Order No. 1359*

Internal Policies and Procedures:

- Student Safety Policy
- Student Safety Code of Conduct
- Student Safety Responsibilities
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Reportable Conduct Policy

Communications

This procedure is available to parents, students and the School community via the School's website.

This procedure is available to staff as part of the School's internal policies and procedures, and forms part of the School's induction program for incoming staff. Aspects of (and updates to) the School's student safety, wellbeing and protection framework will be addressed in the School's professional development updates, training programs, bulletins and newsletters.

The Board will review this policy and the School's student safe practices at least every two years (or more frequently after a significant student safety incident) and implement improvements where applicable.

Approval and Review Date

Last Review Date: May 2022	Approved By: Board of Governors
Next Review Date: June 2025	Approval Date: June 2023
Policy Owner: Deputy Principal, Head of Campus The Ridgeway Campus	Implementation Date: June 2023



Ivanhoe Grammar School Child Safe Standards

Responding to an incident, disclosure, or suspicion of child abuse

Please note: if you are making a report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police, you must seek advice before contacting parents/carers so as not to compromise any investigation or place a student (or child or young person) at further risk.

STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE RESPONSE

Name:

Occupation:

Location (School Address):

Relationship to Student:

CRITICAL ACTION 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

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

Seek Action 1 of Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosure and Suspicions of Child Abuse

RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

Did the student require first aid? Provide details if 'Yes'

Who administered this? (Name and Title)

Did the student require further immediate medical assistance?

Current Location and Safety Status:

E.g., Are all impacted students safe and not in any immediate danger? If a student is in immediate danger School staff should report immediately to Victoria Police on 000

STUDENT'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 Student:	
Disabilities, mental or physical health issues:	

STUDENT'S BACKGROUND
<p>Cultural status and religious background: If the student is of aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, government schools must contact their Koorie Engagement Support Officer, and Catholic Schools must contact the Diocesan Education Office to arrange cultural appropriate support. If the student is an international student, you must notify the International Education Division on 03 9637 2990.</p>
<p>Any known previous history of suspected abuse (prior to this incident, disclosure or suspicion or involvement with agencies):</p>

FAMILY BACKGROUND

FAMILY COMPOSITION (IF KNOWN):

List parenting or care arrangements and sibling names and ages

Any other people living with the student (if known):

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

Likely reaction to a report being made (if known):

DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION

GROUNDINGS FOR YOUR BELIEF THAT A STUDENT HAS BEEN, OR IS AT RISK OF ABUSE

Indicators or instances which led you to believe a student(s) are subject to child abuse, or at risk of abuse:

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

Any physical indicators of abuse:

Any behavioral indicators of abuse:

Any patterns of behavior or prior concerns leading up to an incident, disclosure, or suspicion:

DETAILS OF PERSONS ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTED THE ABUSE (IF KNOWN)

Name

Gender:

Date of Birth

Relationship to Student:

Noting if they are within the school or within the family and community (this will impact who you report to)

Address:

Contact Details:

CRITICAL ACTION 2: REPORTING

See Action 2 of Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosure and Suspicions of Child Abuse

REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

Tick the authorities you have reported to:

- ☐ Victoria Police
- ☐ DFFH Child Protection
- ☐ Child First
- ☐ Decision not to Report

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

Provide Details of Your Report:

Date:

Time:

Authority:

Outcomes from the Report:

REPORTING INTERNALLY

Provide details of your discussion with the School's Executive Team:

Date:

Time:

Names:

Discussion Outcomes:

Provide details of your internal discussions to either of the following:

Government School Staff must report to security services unit and to the employee conduct branch if the incident, disclosure, or suspicion involves a staff member, contractor, or volunteer.

Catholic school staff must report to their Catholic Diocesan Education Office.

Date:

Time:

Names:

Discussion Outcomes:

CRITICAL ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

See Action 3 of Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

ACTIONS TAKEN
Provide details of your discussion with Parents/Carers (If appropriate): School staff must consult with Victoria Police and/or DFFH Child Protection to determine if it is appropriate to contact parents. If it is parents must be contacted as soon as possible (preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure, or suspicion).
Have you sought advice from DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Is it appropriate to contact parent/carer? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
List reasons if it is not appropriate to contact parent/carer:
If contacting Parent/Carer, provide the following details:
Name of staff member making the call:
Name of Parent/Carer receiving the call:
Discussion Outcomes:

CRITICAL ACTION 4: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

See Action 4 of Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

PLANNED ACTIONS

Include detail on what follow-up actions have occurred to support the student (for example referral to wellbeing professionals and other specialised services, the convening of a student support group and development of support plans).

Follow up actions:

Support:

Referral(s):

Process of Review

Complete this section between 4 – 6 weeks after an incident, suspicion, or disclosure of abuse in conjunction with the School's Executive Team.

This will support you and your School to continue to protect students in your care and to reflect on your processes and the need for any follow-up actions.

Safety and Wellbeing

CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE STUDENT

Is the student safe from abuse and harm?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

If not consider the need to make a further report

Does the student have any wellbeing issues that are not currently being addressed?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

If so, consider how these can be addressed and captured within a student support plan.

CURRENT WELLBEING OF OTHER STUDENTS, CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE

Are there any other students, children or young people who may be impacted by the abuse?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

If so, have their wellbeing needs been met?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

CURRENT WELLBEING OF IMPACTED STAFF MEMBERS

Does the staff member who made the report/witnessed an incident, formed a suspicion, or received a disclosure require any support?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

If so, has this been received?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN

Have School staff followed the four critical actions for Schools: Responding to incidents, disclosures, or suspicions of child abuse?

Was an appropriate decision made?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Could the suspected abuse have been detected earlier?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Action 1

Did the School take appropriate action in an emergency?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Action 2

Was a report made to the appropriate authorities and internally?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Were subsequent reports made if necessary?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Action 3

Did the School contact the parents/carers ASAP?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Have the parents continued to be engaged if appropriate?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Action 4

Has the School provided adequate support for the student?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Has a student support plan been established, implemented, and reviewed?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Has a student support group been established?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Was the student appropriately supported in any interviews?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

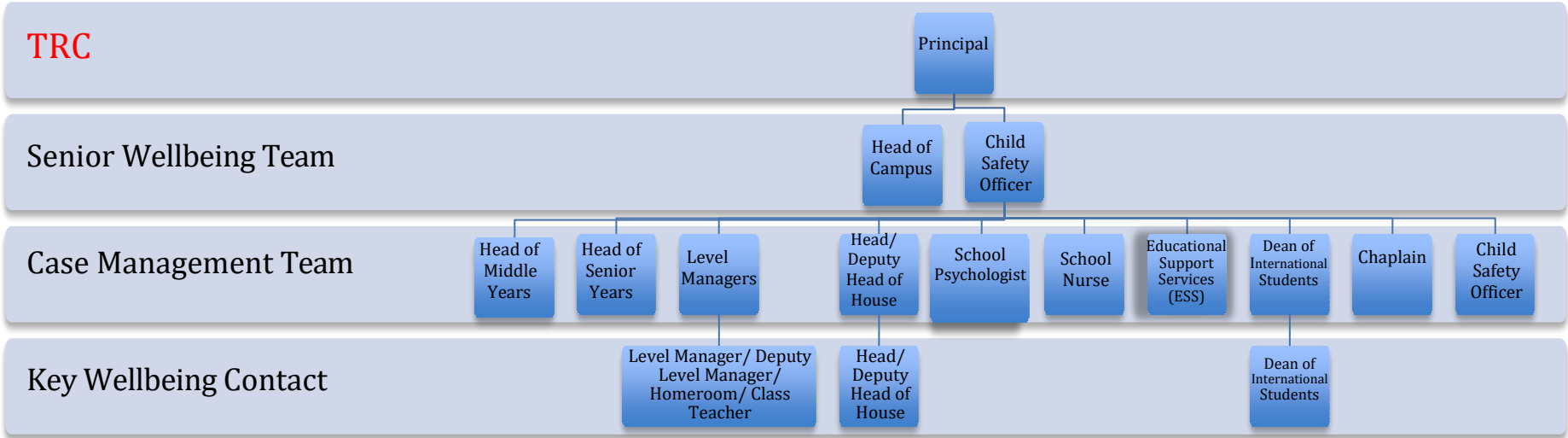
Have any complaints been received?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

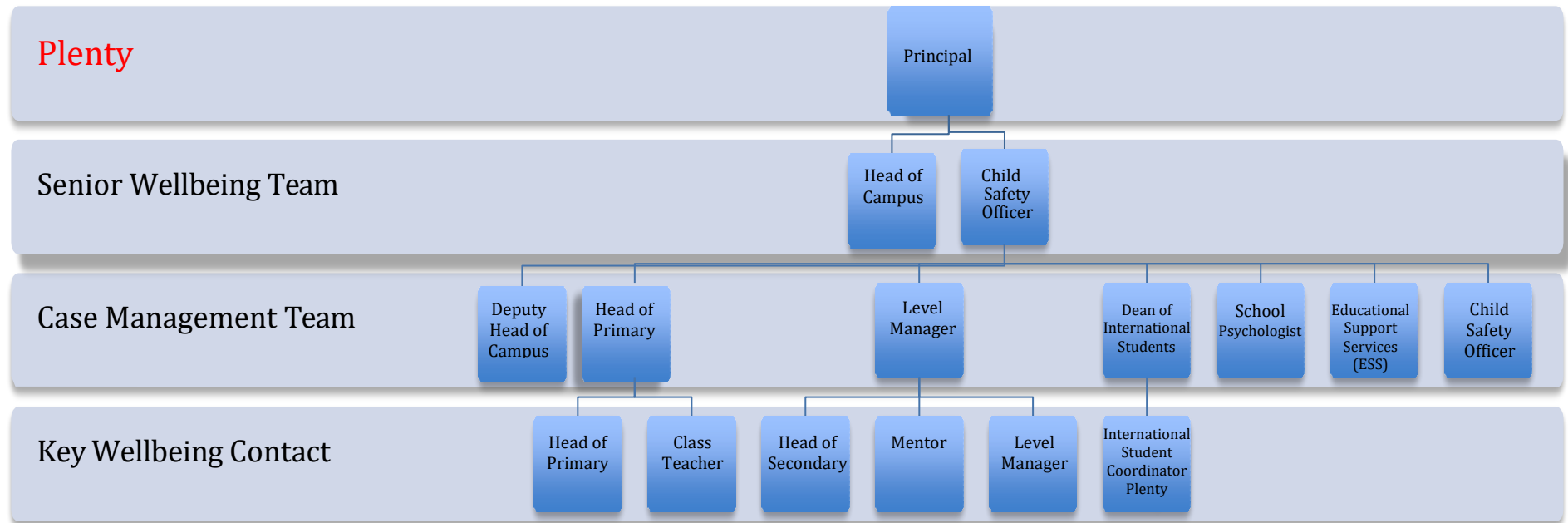
Have the complaints been resolved?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

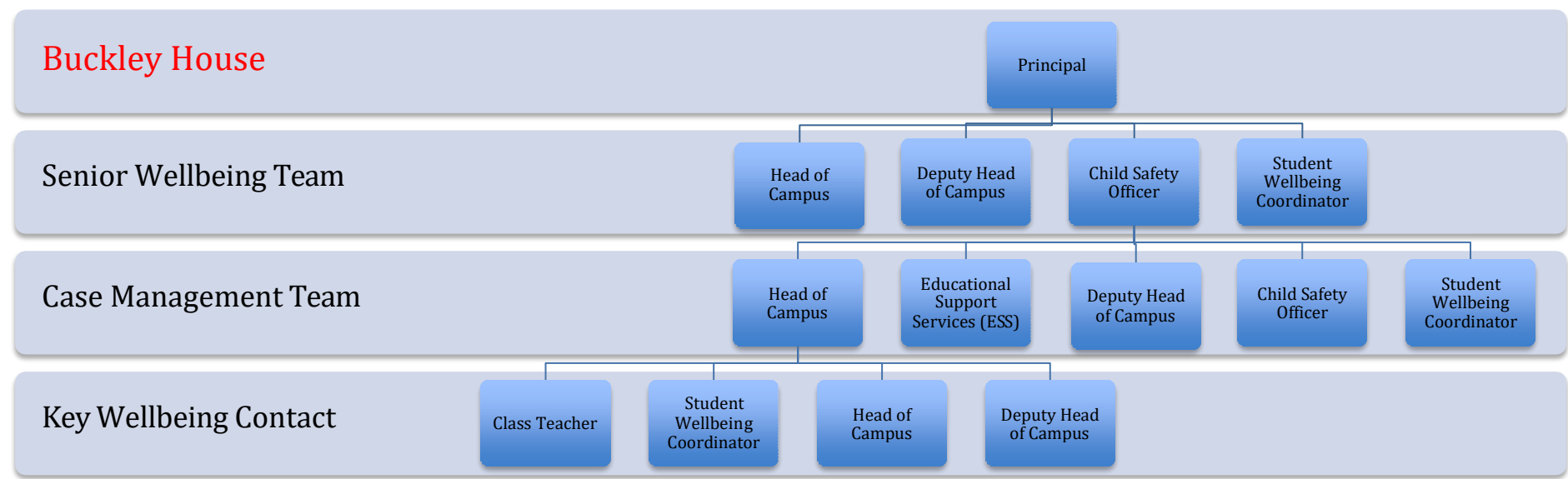
Attachment 1 - Wellbeing Team Structures - TRC



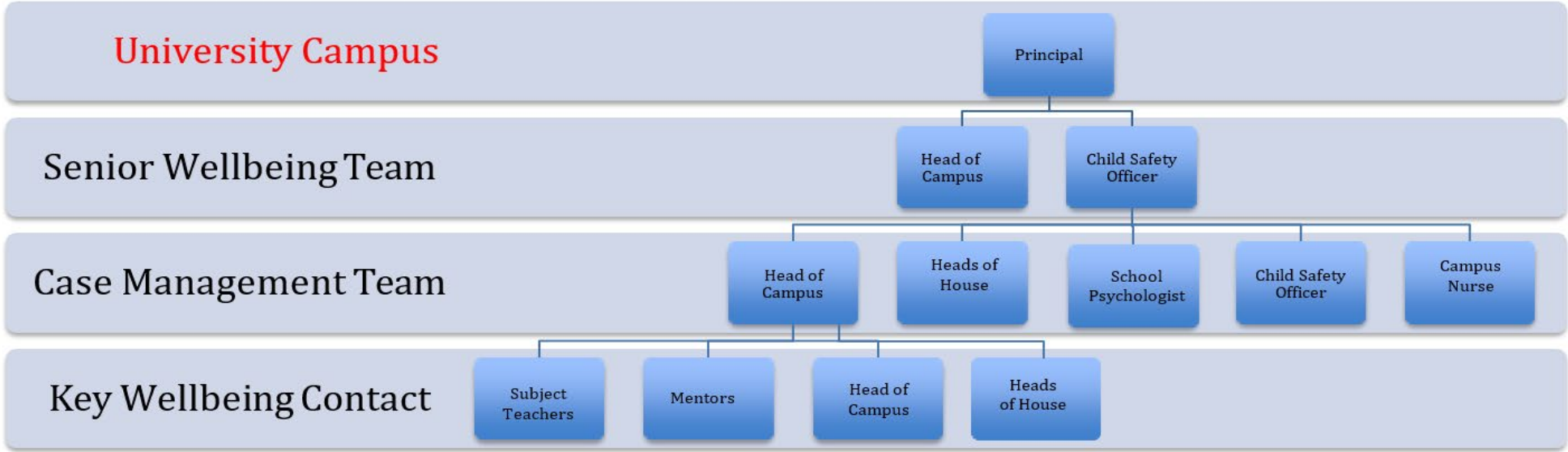
Attachment 2 - Wellbeing Team Structures - Plenty



Attachment 3 - Wellbeing Team Structures – Buckley House



Attachment 4 - Wellbeing Team Structures – University Campus



Attachment 5 – Reporting a Student Safety Concern Flow Chart

REPORTING A **STUDENT SAFETY CONCERN**



Attachment 6 – Critical Actions for Schools

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member, you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

- You **must** act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief* that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
- You **must** act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- It is strongly recommended that you use the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template** to keep clear and comprehensive notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

*A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you **must** ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling **000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **Internally** to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Employee Conduct Branch
 - DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or school chairperson
 - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

All allegations of 'reportable conduct' **must** be reported as soon as possible to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - Employee Conduct Branch
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE

You **must also** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **Internally** to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or chairperson.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your principal **must** consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- not to contact** the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- how to communicate** with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a **Student Support Plan** in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You **must** follow the **Four Critical Actions** every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

AREA
North Division **1300 664 977**
South Division **1300 655 795**
East Division **1300 360 391**
West Division (Rural) **1800 075 599**
West Division (Metro) **1300 664 977**

AFTER HOURS

After hours, weekends, public holidays **13 12 78**.

CHILD FIRST

<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams>

ORANGE DOOR

<https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html>

VICTORIA POLICE

000 or your local police station

DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE
1800 126 126

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT
1800 126 126

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH
(03) 9637 2595

DIOCESAN OFFICE
Melbourne **(03) 9267 0228**
Ballarat **(03) 5337 7135**
Sale **(03) 5622 8600**
Sandhurst **(03) 5443 2377**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA

(03) 9825 7200

THE LOOKOUT

The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: <http://www.lookout.org.au>. Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to **1800 Respect** for counselling, information and a referral service: **1800 737 732**.



PROTECT

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA
Education and Training

CECV
catholic education extension of victoria

Respect
Relationships Australia Victoria