



Mount Erin College

Responding to a Child Safe Emergency Policy

RATIONALE

As professionals who work with children, staff at Mount Erin College play a vital role in protecting children from abuse by responding and reporting any incidents, disclosures or suspicions. Staff are often best placed to identify signs and behaviours that may indicate that a child has been subject to abuse, or that a school community member or a school staff member may be a perpetrator of abuse.

CHILD SAFE

Mount Erin College is a Child Safe School. Our College is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We value all students as individuals and their diversity. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making.

Mount Erin College is committed to providing a Child Safe environment where children and young people are valued and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Our College takes a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to Child Safety to ensure that the safety of children is promoted, child abuse is prevented and allegations of child abuse are properly responded to. Mount Erin College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

IMPLEMENTATION

- All staff at Mount Erin College will be reminded of their obligation to report any suspicion of child abuse to the Principal or member of the College Leadership Team.
- All staff at Mount Erin College will be reminded of their obligation to report any suspicion that a school community member or a school staff member may be a perpetrator of abuse to the Principal or member of the College Leadership Team.
- All staff at the Mount Erin College will be required to complete Mandatory Reporting training annually using the DET online module <http://www.elearn.com.au/det/protectingchildren/schools/>
- All staff at Mount Erin College should use the “Four Critical Actions for Schools” poster as a reference for reporting incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.
- All staff at Mount Erin College will be required to complete an incident report in the case of a suspected child abuse incident or a suspicion that a school community member or a school staff member may be a perpetrator of abuse.
- All new staff at Mount Erin College will be made aware of their mandatory reporting obligations and Child Safety Standards during their Induction at the beginning of the school year or their contract start date.
- All staff and volunteers must have a current police criminal records check and/or a Working With Children Check.

APPENDICES

Four Critical Actions for Schools reference
Incident Report – Staff

REFERENCE

Mount Erin College Child Safe – Tip Sheet: Child Safe Organisation
Child Safe Reporting Process
Four Critical Actions for Schools poster

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This Policy was last updated in February 2019 and is scheduled for review in February 2021.

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a Mount Erin College staff member, you play a critical role in protecting children in your care.

- You **must** act, by following the 4 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).
- You **must** follow the College's Child Safe Reporting Process and keep clear and comprehensive notes.

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

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.

ACTION 2: REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

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.

IF THE SOURCE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE IS FROM WITHIN THE SCHOOL:

VICTORIA POLICE

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

You **must also** report **internally** to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- School Principal and/or an Assistant Principal or member of the Leadership Team
- Employee Conduct Branch
- DET Security Services Unit

IF THE SOURCE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE IS FROM 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.

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

You **must also** report **internally** to:

- School Principal and/or an Assistant Principal or member of the Leadership Team
- DET Security Services Unit

ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

The Principal, or their delegate, **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/carers (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 parents/carers 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).

ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Mount Erin College will provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with members of the Wellbeing Team or other wellbeing professionals as appropriate. 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 etc.

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

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold **significant concerns** for their wellbeing you must still act.

This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

CONTACTS

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION DANDENONG

1300 650 172

CRISIS LINE / AFTER HOURS

13 12 78

CHILD FIRST

9705 3999

9794 5973 (ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA POLICE

000 or contact your local police station

DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT

(03) 9589 6266

STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT

(03) 9637 2934

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

(03) 9637 2595