

WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Child abuse - reporting procedures

WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL has adapted the following procedure from the Victorian Department of Education.

This procedure must be followed in all instances of allegations or disclosures of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, school staff, volunteers, visitors or other persons while connected to WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL.

If a child is deemed to be at immediate risk, the volunteer or employee of WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL should contact emergency services on '000'.

Indicators of Child Abuse

Abuse Type	Indicators
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disclosure of abuse• Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts.• Pressure marks from fingers• Bite marks• Location and extent of injury do not fit the explanation given• Fractured bones, especially in an infant where a fracture is unlikely to occur accidentally• Poisoning• Internal injuries• Showing wariness or distrust of adults.• Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)• Demonstrating fear of parents and of going home; running away• Becoming fearful when other children cry or shout• Being excessively friendly to strangers• Being very passive and compliant
Sexual Abuse and Exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disclosure of abuse• Complaining of headaches or stomach pains• Experiencing problems with schoolwork• Sexually transmitted infections• Genital injuries• Bleeding• Bite marks• Pregnancy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge which is unusual for the child's age • Excessive masturbation which doesn't respond to boundaries • Showing behaviour such as frequent rocking, sucking and biting • Experiencing difficulties in sleeping • Persistent soiling or bed wetting • Having difficulties in relating to adults and peers • Unexplained absences, unexplained gifts or money are often signs of sexual exploitation
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure of abuse • Developmental delays • Displaying low self esteem • Tending to be withdrawn, passive, tearful • Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour • Being highly anxious • Showing delayed speech • Fear of the dark, sleep disturbances • Acting like a much younger child, e.g. soiling, wetting pants • Displaying difficulties in relating to adults and peers • Avoiding home • Running away
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure of neglect • Frequent hunger • Malnutrition • Poor hygiene • Inappropriate clothing, e.g. Summer clothes in winter • Left unsupervised for long periods • Medical needs not attended to; ill more than average • Abandoned by parents • Stealing food • Staying at school outside school hours • Often being tired, falling asleep in class • Abusing alcohol or drugs • Displaying aggressive behaviour • Not getting on well with peers
Family Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure of family violence • Physical injuries • Concentration difficulties • Adjustment difficulties • Anxious or nervous

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Fear of a parent or partner of parent • Isolation from friends and family • Unusual absences • Fear of conflict • Violent outbursts • Aggressive language • Headaches, abdominal pain, stuttering.
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Immediate risk of harm

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

- separating alleged victims and others involved where possible
- 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 service for future liaison with Police.

1) Responding Internally

- Where WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL volunteers or employees form a belief that a child has suffered abuse or is at risk of abuse, they must **report this to the child safety officer** as soon as practicable and within 24 hours. Where a concern exists in relation to the child safety officer, the employee or volunteer should report to the principal of the school or CLV Child Safe officer. A belief may be formed because a child, young person, the parents/carers or another person raises a concern with a WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL employee or volunteer.
- The WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL child safety officer must ensure that **the principal is advised** of the child safety concern within 24 hours. Once the principal is notified, the child safety officer must ensure all other levels of management have been made aware of the incident, up to and including the CLV Child Safe Officer.
- Internal reporting procedures must never delay the reporting of child protection concerns to the DHHS and/or Police.** Should the child safety officer, principal or other nominated delegate be unavailable, the volunteer or employee who has formed the belief that a child is at risk, **must** make the report directly to DHHS, DET and/or Police without delay, i.e. within 24 hours.
- Employees, volunteers and the child safety officer of WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL must ensure that **concerns and actions taken are recorded** using the incident reporting form. This incident reporting form will help us make our report to external authorities. The completed incident reporting form should be kept securely at our school and a copy sent to the CLV Child Safe Officer.

2) Reporting to authorities

- a. The volunteer or employee with the concern, and the child safety officer will agree the process for **reporting the matter to relevant authorities**, i.e. DHHS and/or Police, DET, CCYP etc. This must occur as soon as practicable.
- b. If the Child Safety Office/School Leadership is unsure who to call CLV Victorian schools can access information from the website below.

Information about Child Protection Services can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/crisis-and-emergency/reporting-child-abuse

2.1) Reporting to authorities

It is best practice for the person who first received the disclosure/identified the concern, to make the report.

Where child safety concerns involve employees or volunteers from within the service or other alleged perpetrators a report must be made to:

VICTORIA POLICE

All instances of suspected child abuse by a staff member, contractor or volunteer must be reported to Victoria Police

Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) - Reportable Conduct

All instances of suspected child abuse which concern a staff member, contractor or volunteer, must also be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The child safety officer and principal will lead the reportable conduct process
Reports to the CCYP must be made within 3 days of learning of a reportable allegation or offence.

Where child safety concerns relate to a concern about the child in their home:

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

A report to DHHS Child Protection must be made 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.

Victorian DHHS Child Protection Areas

North Division 1300 664 9777

South Division 1300 655 795

East Division 1300 360 391

West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599

West Division (Metro) 1300 664 9777

After hours, weekends, public holidays for all - 13 12 78

VICTORIA POLICE

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

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/Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DHHS Child PROTECTION or Victoria Police. Child First contact details can be found here <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams>

3) Informing parents and carers

- a. WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL will seek advice with **Victoria Police** or **DHHS Child Protection** 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 has requested that their parent/carer not be contacted).
 - **to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information as soon as possible (for licensed and approved services it is a requirement that parents/carers are notified within 24 hours if the suspected abuse occurred at the service).

4) Providing support

- a. WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL will ensure that appropriate support

is provided to the child of concern, as well as relevant volunteers and employees.

- b. Support and counselling must be offered to all parties involved. Support may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals etc.
- c. Schools **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 duty of care requirements.

5) **Whistleblowing (Protected Disclosures)**

Should a WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL employee or volunteer wish to make a protected disclosure, they may do so directly to the CLV Child Safe Officer 9349 2683.

WESTERN CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL will maintain a policy for 'Whistleblowing' to support school stakeholders to raise concerns about employees, volunteers and any other relevant persons