



CHILD SAFE REPORTING PROCEDURE

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1. Objectives

As a child safe organisation, ACS aims to create a safe and welcoming environment for all children and young people engaged with our programs and activities and who meet our personnel. ACS takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. We acknowledge that all children and young people have the right to be kept safe from harm and are committed to always upholding this moral and legal obligation.

ACS expects that all staff, contractors, officials, volunteers, coaches, umpires and referees, students on placement, and Board/Committee members (collectively 'personnel') to raise all child safeguarding concerns in a trauma informed and timely manner. ACS personnel must understand and abide by the professional, moral and legal obligations to implement child safeguarding and child safety policies, protocols and procedures and recognise this as a shared responsibility.

This document will assist all personnel to:

- identify and understand the types of harm, abuse or neglect that children and young people may be exposed to
- understand legal reporting requirements
- be aware of their individual role in responding to and reporting child safeguarding concerns
- make child safeguarding reports through internal and external channels
- find support if needed

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all Personnel (as defined above) at ACS. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

3. Legislative Context

Victoria

- Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards (Vic) (Updated 1 July 2022)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)

- Privacy Data and Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- The Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities
- Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017 (Vic)
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)

Commonwealth

- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Australian Privacy Principles
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

4. Related policies and procedures

- Child Safe Incident Report Form
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Complaints Process

5. Child Abuse, Harm and Neglect

ACS personnel must understand the definitions of child abuse and be able to respond and report to the relevant authority where required. If a child has been abused or is at immediate risk of harm, you must take reasonable steps to protect them.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines child abuse and neglect as:

All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Child abuse can occur anywhere including in the home, in sporting, recreational and religious settings and within the ACS context. Abuse and harm can be perpetrated by parents and carers, any person over 18 years of age, and/or other children and young people.

Child abuse is an act (or acts) which endangers a child's health, wellbeing and/or development. Abuse can be a single event or a series of traumatic events. Most instances of child abuse fall under the definition of cumulative harm (repeated acts of harm) and multidimensional harm (multiple types of child abuse). Child abuse includes:

- Emotional and Psychological abuse
- Exposure to family violence

- Grooming
- Neglect
- Physical abuse and harm
- Sexual abuse and harm
- Sexually harmful behaviour

Definitions can be found in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

6. Legislation and Reporting Requirements

This procedure has been developed in line with the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards.

These standards aim to promote the safety of children, prevent child abuse and ensure organisations have effective processes in place to respond to and report all allegations of abuse. They achieve this by driving changes in organisational culture, providing a minimum standard of child safety across all organisations and highlighting that all community members have a role to keep children safe from abuse.

The Child Safe Reporting Procedure aims to proactively mitigate child safety risks by empowering personnel to respond appropriately to disclosures and report allegations, concerns and suspicions of child abuse to the relevant authorities.

A list of criminal offences can be found in Appendix 1.

7. Mandatory and Voluntary Reporting Obligations

Victoria has legislation requiring mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse, child harm and neglect to the relevant authority. These obligations require reports of a reasonable belief of physical or sexual child abuse, child harm, risk of harm or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

ACS has a strong position that all personnel, regardless of their legal mandate, has a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about child abuse, child harm, risk of harm and neglect and this approach is reflected in our reporting procedure.

The tables below set out key features of mandatory and voluntary reporting duties in Victoria. The tables identify all relevant legislation, what needs to be reported, who is mandated to report, and who is a voluntary reporter.

Table 7.1.1 Mandatory Reporting Obligations¹

When to Report	Mandated Reporters	Legislation	Who is a child?
Victoria			
A mandated reporter must make a report to the Department of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered medical practitioners 	Children, Youth and	A person under 17

¹ [Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect | Australian Institute of Family Studies](#)

<p>Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Child Protection if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They form the belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse; and • The parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type. • The belief is formed in the course of practicing their position of employment. <p>More information is available here Mandatory reporting - DFFH Service Providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nurses • midwives • registered teachers and early childhood teachers • school principals • school counsellors • police officers • out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers) • early childhood workers • youth justice workers • registered psychologists • people in religious ministry. 	Families Act 2005	unless granted a protection order to 18.
<p>A mandated reporter must make a report to the Commission for Children and Young People if they become aware of a reportable allegation against a personnel member, volunteer or contractor of the University.</p>	<p>The head of an entity that is affected by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.</p>	Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005	A person under 18.
<p>A mandatory reporter must make a report to the police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child by a person 18 years or older.</p> <p>More information can be found here Failure to disclose offence fact sheet (word) - DFFH Service Providers</p>	<p>Any person aged 18 or over.</p>	Crimes Act 1958	A person under 16.

Table 7.1.2: Voluntary Reporting Obligations

When to Report	Mandated Reporters	Legislation	Who is a child?
Victoria			
<p>A voluntary reporter may make a report to DFFH if: The person believes on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection.</p>	Any person	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005	A person under 18.
<p>A voluntary reporter may disclose a reportable allegation to the Commission for Children and Young People</p>	Any person	Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005	A person under 18

8. Reportable Conduct Scheme

Under Victorian legislation, the Head of an Organisation must report to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) if they become aware of an allegation of Reportable Conduct being made against ACS personnel. At ACS the Executive Director is responsible for making these reports.

There are five types of 'reportable conduct':

- 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 child²

Reportable Conduct includes allegations against personnel in the ACS context and in their personal life and must be brought to the immediate attention of the Executive Officer or the Child Safety Officer.

While the Executive Officer is legally responsible to report to CCYP, any person within an organisation can notify the CCYP of a reportable allegation.

The Executive Officer may consult with other personnel members to determine if an allegation is reportable. If reportable, the Executive Officer must notify the CCYP within three business days of becoming aware of the allegation by completing CCYP's online form [CCYP | Notify about a reportable allegation](#)

All Reportable Conduct allegations will be investigated by internal or external investigators after clearance from Victoria Police. ACS will use the **Guidance for Organisations Investigating a Reportable Conduct Allegation** [CCYP-Investigation-guide.pdf](#) to direct their investigation. Updates will be provided to the CCYP at 30 days to ensure reporting obligations are met.

Reporting to CCYP does not replace the need to report concerns, allegations, and disclosures to the Police when there are indicators that a crime may have been committed, and/or to child protection authorities where there are protective concerns for children and young people.

Contact information

Reportable Conduct Scheme

T:1300 78 29 78

E: contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au

9. Investigations

The ACS will appropriately investigate all allegations relating to an incident of abuse in accordance with its obligations and to the extent reasonably practicable. All Reportable Conduct allegations require an investigation. In some other circumstances, it may be necessary for the ACS to conduct an investigation in addition to any investigation conducted by authorities (e.g. the police).

² [CCYP | About the Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

The Executive Officer of the ACS (or a delegate of the Committee of Principals if the allegations involve the Executive Officer) or an external investigator will conduct an independent investigation into the allegation to the extent that it will not interfere with investigations by a Government Department or the police, and will co-operate with the authorities as required.

All people covered by the Child Safety and Wellbeing policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct and Child Safe Reporting Procedure must co-operate fully with any investigation by a Government Department, the police or the ACS.

The Executive Officer of the ACS (or a delegate of the Committee of Principals if the allegations involve the Executive Officer) will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other employees, directors, volunteers, contractors, children, young people and parents, carers may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation (e.g. to provide witness statements).

An investigation conducted by the ACS will be conducted in accordance with procedural fairness to protect the integrity of the investigation and the interests of all the participants involved in the investigation. The ACS will also handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for the ACS to engage a person (or persons) from outside the ACS to conduct an independent investigation in relation to allegations.

If a person is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they may speak to the Child Safety Officer for guidance and information. If in doubt, ask for assistance.

There are several possible outcomes from an investigation:

- The claims are credible, but the evidence is insufficient to form a conclusive view based on the available information
- The concerns are unfounded
- The claims are substantiated and show:
 - No crime has been committed, but a Policy, Practice of Procedure has not been complied with
 - A crime is likely to have been committed
 - A crime has been established

10. Responding to disclosures

ACS expects all personnel to be alert to child abuse, risk of harm and neglect and understand indicators of harm. Detailed information about the indicators of harm can be found here [Practice Guidance - Recognising signs of harm to children and young people](#) and [Recognising Child Abuse, Harm and Exploitation](#). All concerns, allegations or suspicions should be reported in line with this document.

Child safeguarding concerns may happen in a range of ways, for example, through direct disclosure, observation or information received from others. Personnel must remain open and aware to the various ways concerns can occur. The types of complaints or concerning behaviours that require reporting include:

- Disclosures, concerns or beliefs that children have suffered or are at risk of suffering abuse, harm or neglect
- Inappropriate relationships developing between children or young people and those over 18 years of age, or between children of a significant age difference
- Observations of worrying behavioural change
- Observations of indicators of harm
- Unease about a relationship between a child or young person and any personnel
- Any suspected or actual breach of this Child Safe Reporting Procedure, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, or other policy, procedure or practice related to the safety of children must be reported to the Child Safe Officer and your Director/Head of Sport. The Child Safe Officer can provide assistance if needed.
- Inappropriate working conditions for children

The following table provides a guideline for responding to disclosures of abuse³:

Do	Don't
If in a group setting discreetly move the child away from those who can overhear.	Ask leading questions
Listen carefully to what the child is saying, let them use their own words and ask open ended questions	Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone.
Reassure the child they did the right thing by telling you	Push the child into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what the child wants to tell you or make observations – not to conduct an investigation.
Tell the child it is not their fault, and they are not responsible for the abuse	Over share or indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the incident with others not directly involved with the child.
Let the child know what will happen next	
Tell the child you are pleased they told you	
Accurately record the disclosure on the Child Safe Incident Report Form and send to the Child Safety Officer to be stored securely.	
Advise your line management and report to relevant authorities.	

More information can be found here [Disclosures Of Child Abuse | How To Respond | Kids Helpline](#)

³ Adapted from Child Wise

What to do when a parent or carer alleges or discloses that their child has been abused in ACS's environment

The following procedure is to be followed by any person to whom a parent/carer discloses or alleges an incident of child abuse:

1. Explain that the ACS has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
2. Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
3. Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
4. Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
5. Explain to them the information will need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as ACS's Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.
6. Do not make promises, except that you will do your best to keep their child safe and ensure the Child Safety Officer is informed.
7. Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
8. Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
9. Ensure the disclosure, concern or allegation is recorded accurately, and that the record is sent to the ACS Child Safety Officer and stored securely in the locked filing cabinet in the ACS office.

As soon as possible after the disclosure, report the disclosure to the Child Safety Officer.

11. Responding to Sexually Harmful Behaviour in Children and Young People

ACS is committed to ensuring all personnel have access to education and support which assists them to prevent, identify and respond to sexually harmful behaviours in a timely, child-focused and protective manner. A guide to identifying harmful sexual behaviours in children can be found here <https://www.secasa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/age-appropriate-behaviour.pdf>

If a child or young person perpetrates abuse or harm, ACS has a duty of care to both the perpetrator and victim. ACS recognises that a child or young person who demonstrates sexually harmful behaviours requires therapeutic intervention.

12. Reasonable grounds

The duty to report a child safety concern to DFFH applies if there is a reasonable belief child abuse or harm is likely to occur in the future, as well as child abuse or harm that may have already happened. Belief on 'reasonable grounds' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. It does not require proof. When personnel are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- a child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- someone who knows a child or young person states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- a child or young person exhibits sexually-abusive or age-inappropriate behaviours;
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused;
- signs of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision, lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

If reports are made in good faith:

- it is not considered unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics if the concern is subsequently found to lack substance and
- the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

ACS approaches its reporting responsibilities through a child-focused lens, prioritising the rights of children and young people. The following principles govern this approach:

- A child making a disclosure is always to be believed
- The best interests of children and young people are prioritised over all other considerations
- Complaints are dealt with efficiently, fairly and in a timely manner.
- Our complaints handling and reporting processes and systems are easy to use, transparent and recognise the diverse needs of children and young people, along with those of their parents and carers

13. Reporting

Any person can raise a concern including personnel, children and young people parents and carers.

All disclosures, allegations, suspicions and concerns of child abuse, harm or well-being concerns should be reported. Breaches or misconduct of our Child Safe Code of Conduct must also be reported.

Once you have formed a reasonable belief a child or young person is at risk or in need of protection, you will need to report. The following are the ACS reporting principles as well as a step-by-step reporting procedure:

- If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, personnel should contact emergency services on '000' immediately.
- All reports will be treated seriously.

- Where personnel form a belief that a child has suffered child abuse or is at risk of harm, or if the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safe Reporting Procedure, or Child Safe Code of Conduct have been breached they must notify the Child Safe Officer within 24 hours.
- Personnel are expected to contact the Child Safe Officer and their Director/Head in the first instance unless doing so would pose a potential conflict of interest or place the child at further risk, e.g., if the Director is the subject of the concern.
- Personnel must complete a Child Safe Incident Report Form as soon as possible. This can be found here. Incident reports must be completed by the person who has the concern. If needed, the Child Safe Officer can be contacted for advice and support while completing the form.
- Where child protection concerns relate to family or community risk, they must be reported to DFFH Child Protection and/or the Police. In Victoria it is best practice for the recipient of the disclosure to make the report. Any person can make a report to Child Protection at any time.
- Should the concern relate to risk posed by ACS personnel the Executive Officer will have overall responsibility for dealing with the matter and follow the appropriate procedure including that of the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- ACS will treat all matters confidentially, disclose critical information to relevant authorities including the Police, CCYP and DFFH Child Protection, and work in the best interests of the child.

Note: If the incident/concern occurs in a school setting, personnel must alert the nominated school contact, or Principal of the concerns as soon as possible and before leaving the school for the day. **Note: In the case of child abuse, suspected child abuse or neglect, notifying the school does not fulfil the statutory obligations to report to the relevant authorities.**

ACS Contacts

Name	Details
Child Safe Officer	
Executive Officer	

Table 13.1.1 Reporting Process

Step	Action	Who
	Emergencies: In case of emergency or if a child is in immediate danger contact Triple Zero (000) or the local police station. When the report has been made move to the next step. All other concerns or reports start at the next step.	All personnel who have a potential child safe concern

1	<p>Complete and submit the Child Safe Incident Report Form*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Full name, date of birth, and residential address of the child or young person (if known). ○ The details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns. Including information that has led to concerns about the child (e.g., physical injuries, behaviour changes, grooming concerns, policy breach). ○ The individual personnel's involvement with the child or young person. ○ The source of the report (e.g., observation of behaviour, disclosure from child or another person). ○ Actions taken because of the concerns (e.g., consultation with the Child Safe officer, Police, manager, DFFH Child Protection, Orange Door etc.). ○ Any additional notes. <p>*Contact the Child Safe officer for assistance if needed.</p>	All personnel who have a potential child safe concern
2	Discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and/or policy and procedure breaches with the Child Safe Officer and your Director/Head.	All personnel who have a potential child safe concern, and the Child Safe Officer
3	Gather the relevant information necessary to make an external report using the Child Safe Incident Report Form.	All personnel who have a potential child safe concern
4	<p>Where a conclusive view could not be formed but the concerns are serious, the CCYP, DFFH and/or the police will be notified as soon as practicable, typically within 24 hours.</p> <p>Make a report to the relevant agency (Table 13.1.2) as soon as practicable and typically within 24 hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report concerns that are an immediate risk by calling 000 or the local police station. • Report concerns about the safety of a child within their family to DFFH. • In Victoria, Sexual offences need to be reported to the Victoria Police - Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT) and DFFH Child Protection. • Allegations concerning personnel must be reported to the police in Victoria. • Notify the CCYP for Reportable Conduct allegations within the required timeframe if the allegations are made in relation to personnel. 	For most cases the personnel member who identified the child safe concern In the case of Reportable Conduct allegations, reports are made by the Executive Officer

	<p>Any personnel can make a report directly to the authorities. The Child Safe officer can provide assistance if needed. *Please read step 7 before making your report</p>	
5	<p>Update the Child Safe Incident Reporting template with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported/discussed. • Log and store the Child Safe Incident Report Form xxx 	<p>Personnel who identified the child safe concern. The Executive Officer for Reportable Conduct allegations</p>
6	<p>Notify relevant personnel of any report to the Police, and/or DFFH Child Protection Unit.</p> <p>Allegations and all instances must be reported to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safe Officer • Manager/Director/Head • The relevant authorities (as outlined above) 	<p>Personnel who identified the child safe concern. The Executive Officer for Reportable Conduct allegations</p>
7	<p>During the reporting process consult with Police and/or DFFH to determine if the information may be shared with parents/carers, and who will lead this (i.e. Police, DFFH or ACS representative). This could include advice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to contact the parents/carers in circumstances where they are alleged to have engaged in the abuse. • To contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information as soon as possible. 	<p>Personnel who made the report with assistance of the Child Safe Officer if needed</p>
8	<p>Support should be provided to all parties including children, young people, students and their parents and carers, alleged perpetrator (personnel), witnesses and those involved in the reporting process.</p> <p>It is important that the person providing support to the Child does not attempt to provide support which is outside of the scope of their role.</p> <p>Actions that ACS will take, where deemed appropriate, to support children and young people who are impacted by child abuse, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together and planning support • Engaging Allied Health and wellbeing professionals • Referring to external supports • Providing developmentally and culturally appropriate support 	<p>Personnel who made the report with assistance of the Child Safe Officer and others as decided on a case-by-case basis</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting children, young people and students in interviews conducted at our premises Responding to complaints or concerns 	
9	Ensure reporting data is deidentified, captured and reported on as part of the Board and Leadership's regular update on child safety, with any actions in response appropriately minuted and implemented.	The Child Safe Officer and the Executive Officer for Reportable Conduct allegations
10	Undertake a learning review of policies, procedures, and practice to assess if changes are needed to minimise the chances of incidents occurring.	The Child Safe Officer to direct the Team where the incident occurred. In instances of Reportable Conduct allegations, the Executive Officer will coordinate the review after police clearance.
<p>*The above is not a substitute for any personnel's mandatory reporting obligations.</p> <p>*If unclear or uncertain about any aspect of reporting requirements, ACS expects all personnel to contact the Child Safe Officer, or their Director/Head, and/or external authorities to report any concerns and seek guidance on reporting obligations and processes.</p> <p>*The Child Safe officer/EO/HR will determine the course of action where the Child Safe Code of Conduct has been breached, but no alleged crime has been made. In such circumstances, ACS will investigate the matter and any consequences for the alleged perpetrator will typically be proportionate to the breach, with the child's safety being of paramount significance.</p> <p>* To report forms of online abuse including cyberbullying, image based abuse and illegal and harmful content complete an online report form at https://www.esafety.gov.au/report.</p>		

Protecting a child connected to alleged abuse

Where an allegation of suspected child abuse is made against ACS personnel all reasonable and appropriate action will be taken to protect any child connected to the alleged child abuse until the allegation is resolved.

The individual circumstances of each case will determine the appropriate course of action, but in all cases, we will seek to prevent as far as reasonably practicable any contact between the child connected to the alleged abuse and the alleged offender by:

- Suspension (with or without pay) until the matter has been investigated
- Termination of employment

- Reporting to authorities including the Police and/or Reportable Conduct Schemes
- If possible and allowable by law, moving the alleged offender to a non-child related position

Table 13.1.2 Reporting Bodies

State/Territory	Relevant Body	Contact
Victoria	Child Protection - Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) 8:45am – 5:00pm: contact the appropriate local government area:	General information - Child protection contacts - DFFH Services
	North Division North Division covers the following areas and LGAs: Banyule, Buloke, Darebin, Campaspe, Central Goldfield, Gannawarra, Greater Bendigo, Hume, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mildura, Moreland, Mount Alexander, Nillumbik, Swan Hill, Whittlesea, Yarra.	1300 598 521
	South Division South Division covers the following areas and LGAs: Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Bayside, Cardinia, Casey, East Gippsland, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Latrobe, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip, South Gippsland, Stonnington, Wellington	1300 555 526
	East Division East Division covers the following areas and LGAs: Alpine, Benalla, Boroondara, Greater Shepparton, Indigo, Knox, Manningham, Mansfield, Maroondah, Mitchell, Moira, Monash, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, Whitehorse, Wodonga, Yarra Ranges	1300 360 452
	West Division West Division covers the following areas and LGAs: Ararat, Ballarat, Brimbank, Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Hepburn, Hobsons Bay, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Maribyrnong, Moorabool, Moyne, Melbourne, Melton, Moonee Valley, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Queenscliffe, Southern Grampians, Wyndham, Surf Coast, Warrnambool, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack	1300 360 462
	After hours and to report concerns about the immediate safety of a child: Child Protection Crisis Line (24 hours)	13 12 78
	Victoria Police - Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT) and Multi-Disciplinary Centres (MDC). Sexual offences and	

child abuse support teams and centres Victoria Police		
<p>Child sexual abuse can be reported to your local SOCIT or MDC. Contact the appropriate local office:</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">North-West Metropolitan</p>		
Brimbank SOCIT		03 9313 3460
Fawkner SOCIT:		03 9355 6100
Melbourne SOCIT		03 9624 3781
Mernda SOCIT		03 9216 1310
Wyndham (MDC)		03 9216 0566
<p style="text-align: center;">Southern Metropolitan</p>		
Bayside SOCIT		03 8530 5203
Dandenong (MDC)		03 8769 2200
Frankston (MDC)		03 8770 1000
<p style="text-align: center;">Western Victoria</p>		
Ararat SOCIT		03 5355 1500
Ballarat SOCIT		03 4372 9095
Bendigo (MDC)		03 5444 6752
Colac SOCIT		03 5232 8255
Geelong (MDC)		03 5246 8101
Horsham SOCIT		03 5382 9200
Mildura (MDC)		03 5023 5980
Swan Hill SOCIT		03 5036 1600
Warrnambool SOCIT		03 5560 1333
<p style="text-align: center;">Eastern Victoria</p>		
Bairnsdale SOCIT		03 5150 2677
Benalla SOCIT:		03 5760 0230
Box Hill SOCIT		03 8892 3292
Knox SOCIT		03 8335 6701
Morwell (Central Gippsland) MDC		03 5120 0351
Sale SOCIT		03 5142 2200
Seymour SOCIT		03 5735 0208
Shepparton SOCIT		03 5820 5878
Wangaratta SOCIT		03 5723 0893
Wodonga SOCIT		02 6049 2600
Wonthaggi SOCIT		03 5671 4100
<p>Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)</p> <p>Contact the Commission by filling out the notification form at: CCYP Notifying a reportable allegation</p> <p>Further resources: CCYP Resources and support for the Reportable Conduct Scheme</p>		1300 78 29 78

14. Privacy and Confidentiality

All personnel will ensure confidentiality is maintained as far as possible when disclosures and reports occur. Internal and external reporting must take place as per legislation and this reporting procedure.

Internal communication about concerns occurs on a 'need to know' basis only. Therefore, only personnel directly involved in the report and the management of the child's situation should be involved in discussions.

Where parents and carers are the alleged perpetrators of abuse, ACS will seek advice from DFFH about how information is communicated and how to protect the safety of the child or young person.

Everyone, including children and young people are entitled to know how their personal information is recorded, stored, used and accessed.

ACS are committed to protecting the privacy of the information that we collect. We are bound by the Australian Privacy Principles in the Privacy Act 1998 (Cth), and the Privacy Data and Protection Act 2014 (Vic), which regulate how organisations may collect, use, disclose and store personal information, and how individuals may access, and correct personal information held about them.

15. Review

This procedure is reviewed at minimum every two years. The review process will seek contribution and feedback from all levels of personnel. ACS is committed to reviewing the Child Safe Reporting Procedure following a reportable incident. Changes may also be made to the procedure following key legislative change or emerging best practice standards.

16. Related Policies and Documents

This Child Safe Reporting Procedure is to be read in conjunction with other related policies and procedures. These include our:

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safe Incident Report Form
- Privacy Policy
- Records Management

Appendix 1: Criminal Offences

Any complaint which involves an allegation of criminal conduct or creates a suspicion of criminal conduct, should be reported to the Police. These concerns could involve physical abuse/harm, serious forms of neglect, sexual abuse of a child, family violence and/or grooming. A matter under police investigation should not proceed with an internal investigation until after police clearance.

Child related criminal offences are summarised below.

Legislation	Overview	Penalty
<p>Failure to Disclose Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 legislation.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>The failure to disclose offence applies to you if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you are an adult, and • you have information that leads you to form a 'reasonable belief' that another adult has sexually offended against a child under 16 in Victoria. <p>If this applies to you, you must report the information to police as soon as possible, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you have a 'reasonable excuse' for not reporting the information, or • you are exempt from the offence. <p>If you fail to report the information, you may be charged with a criminal offence. The maximum penalty is three years imprisonment.</p> <p>The failure to disclose offence helps to ensure that protecting children from sexual abuse is the responsibility of the whole community.⁴</p>	<p>Maximum penalty is 3 years imprisonment</p>
<p>Failure to Protect Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 legislation.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>It is a criminal offence to fail to protect a child under the age of 16 from a risk of sexual abuse.</p> <p>The offence 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 fail to do so.⁵</p>	<p>Maximum penalty is 5 years imprisonment</p>
<p>Grooming Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014 legislation.vic.gov.au</p>	<p>The <i>Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014</i>, which commenced in Victoria on 9 April 2014, introduced the offence of Grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years. This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child.</p> <p>The Betrayal of Trust report recommended the grooming offence, given the way in which many sex offenders target their victims. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.</p> <p>What is grooming?</p>	<p>Maximum penalty is 10 years imprisonment.</p>

⁴ Failure to disclose offence | Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria

⁵ Failure to protect: a new criminal offence to protect children from sexual abuse | Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The offence of grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. • The offence applies where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult. • Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity – for example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time. • The sexual conduct must constitute an indictable sexual offence. This includes offences such as sexual penetration of a child, indecent assault and indecent act in the presence of a child. It does not include summary offences, such as upskirting and indecent behaviour in public.⁶ 	
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Appendix 2: Definitions

Term	Definition
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Includes all First Nations communities. ACS believes it is important to be respectful of how individual children, their families, carers and community refer to themselves, and use appropriate language when referring to individuals or communities.
ACS Committee of Principals	Means the Committee having management of the business of the Association.
ACS Environments	Means any physical or virtual environments made available or authorised by the ACS' governing authority for use by a child, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Online ACS Environments (including email, portals and intranet systems); and (b) Other locations provided by ACS for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for sports competitions).
Child	Means a person under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child. Collective term for "child" is "children".
Child Abuse	An act or omission that endangers a Child's physical or

⁶ [Grooming offence | Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria](#)

	<p>emotional health, well-being or development and can occur as a single incident or multiple incidents over time. Child abuse is defined in section 3 of the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic) as including:</p> <p>(a) Any act committed against a child involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sexual offence; or • An offence under section 49M(1) of the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic) (Grooming); <p>(b) The infliction, on a child, of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical violence; or • Serious emotional or psychological harm; <p>(c) Serious neglect of a child.</p>
Child Protection	The body legislated to receive and investigate instances of Child Abuse. In Victoria this is the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH).
Child Safe	Refers to an organisational environment that has an open and aware culture, understands child harm, is supported by robust child safe policies, promotes the empowerment and participation of children, identifies and manages child safety risks, and expects all stakeholders to report any allegations, disclosures or concerns for the safety and wellbeing of children. A child safe environment ensures that children and young people are culturally safe.
Child Safe Code of Conduct	<p>The document that sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate and inappropriate behaviours between adults and children and young people in our physical and online environments.</p> <p>ACS take steps so that children and young people also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from our personnel and how to raise concerns if they have them.</p>
CSO	<p>Child Safety Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Officer of the ACS • Current ACS President
Child Safe Standards	<p>Means the standards made under section 17(1) of the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic), to ensure that in the operation of relevant entities:</p> <p>(a) The safety of children is promoted;</p> <p>(b) Child abuse is prevented; and</p> <p>(c) Allegations of child abuse are properly responded to.</p>
Contractor	A person or organisation that undertakes a contract to provide materials, tasks or labour to do a service or job.
Cultural Safety	Promotes the positive recognition and celebration of cultures.

	It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. A culturally safe environment is socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children. It is underpinned by shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, and living and working together with dignity and truly listening. ⁷
Disclosure	Refers to a child telling someone (through words, drawings or actions) that they feel unsafe or have been harmed. Several types of disclosure have been identified, including purposeful telling (i.e., direct verbal means), accidental telling (i.e., third-party detection), elicited/ prompted telling (i.e., response to inquiry by a helping person), behavioural telling (i.e., behavioural, nonverbal communication; indirect verbal hints), telling purposely withheld (i.e., choice not to tell, denials) and triggered telling (i.e., in response to delayed memories). ⁸
Duty of Care	Organisations that facilitate work with children and young people have an obligation to ensure processes are in place to avoid acts or omissions that place children in circumstances that may lead to harm. If a child is abused/caused harm by an individual associated with our organisation, our organisation is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove that it took 'reasonable precautions' to prevent the abuse in question.
Directors/Heads of Sport	For the purposes of this document, Directors/Heads of Sport will refer to any employee whose role means they hold leadership responsibility for key organisational functions including recruitment, selection, supervision, program planning, risk management and program delivery.
Mandatory Reporter	Any adult who is legally required to ensure a report has been made when a concern, allegation and /or disclosure of child harm arises. A mandatory reporter may be a person who holds a particular occupation or falls under specific legislation. ACS requires all personnel to report all child safety concerns, allegations and disclosures.
Reasonable Belief	A 'reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. A 'reasonable belief' might be formed when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a child states that they have been harmed • a child states that they know someone who has been harmed (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves) • someone who knows a child states that the child has been

⁷ Revised from An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards (November 2015) – State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services and A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation (Version 2.0 December 2015) - Commission for Children and Young People.

⁸ [1.-NC-Language-Guide FINAL.pdf](#)

	<p>harmed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a person to form a belief that the child has been harmed • signs of harm lead to a belief that the child has been harmed.
Reportable Conduct Scheme	<p>The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires reports made to the scheme if ACS becomes aware of an allegation of child abuse, child harm, risk of harm, serious neglect, or child related misconduct being made against a member of personnel.</p> <p>After police clearance, Reportable Conduct cases will be investigated by ACS. ACS may also seek advice from the Police, Scheme and Child Protection regarding appointing an external investigator.</p> <p>Reportable Conduct Schemes and their prescribed processes do not replace the need to report concerns, allegations, and disclosures to the Police when there are indicators that a crime may have been committed, and/or to child protection authorities where there are protective concerns for children and young people.</p>
Personnel	All personnel, committee members, volunteers, officials, coaches, umpires and referees, students on placement and contractors.
Young Person	For this policy a young person is aged between 12 and 18.
Zero tolerance	ACS does not accept or condone under any circumstances any form of Child Abuse or harm.

