CHILD PROTECTION NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Our Service is committed to providing a child safe environment where children's safety and wellbeing is supported and children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We will ensure all employees and volunteers understand the meaning, importance and benefits of providing a child safe environment and critically, understand their obligations and requirements as mandatory reporters.

The approved provider, staff, educators, volunteers and students will be required to complete mandatory National Child Safety Training for the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector **(effective February 2026).** All educators will attend approved child protection training certified by a registered training organisation (in force in 2026). Educators, staff and volunteers will continue to maintain current knowledge of child protection and mandatory reporter requirements by completing refresher training annually (best practice).

Working in conjunction with the *Child Protection Policy*, this procedure has been developed to ensure all employees and volunteers understand their obligations and requirements as mandatory reporters and what to do when making a notification. All child protection concerns, including suspected abuse, neglect or inappropriate conduct will be identified, documented and notified promptly to protect children from harm.

Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations *(S.2A, 162A, 165, 166, 166A, 167, 174, 174B [VIC], 175. R. 84, 86, 87, 145, 149, 155, 168, 170, 175, 176) NQS QA 2: Element 2.2.1 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 Child Safety/Child Protection*
Related Policy: *Child Protection Policy*

In an emergency or life-threatening situation, educators should contact 000 regarding urgent concerns relating to immediate danger to a child's health or safety.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE		
1	The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's *Child Protection Policy* annually to ensure awareness of child protection practices	
2	The approved provider, nominated supervisor, staff and educators will ensure children's safety, rights and best interests are the paramount consideration for all Service operations, decisions and functions, including all decisions relating to child protection and mandatory reporting obligations	

3	The approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators, staff, volunteers and students are to make a report to the relevant child protection agency or department when they have current concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child who has experienced harm or is at risk of harm or at risk of significant harm, or when they have a concern about inappropriate conduct by any person at the service (see state/territory information below)	
4	It is important for the person making the report to remain sensitive to the practices of culturally diverse (including indigenous) families; however, the *Child Protection Policy* must be adhered to. The processes and procedures within the policy attempt to allow for the individual differences of families.	
5	Educators are to keep up-to-date developmental records on all children. Records are a significant part of a child or young person's time in care and contribute to their life story	
6	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure all staff, educators, volunteers and students complete mandatory child protection training within the prescribed timeframe (effective February 2026)	
7	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure staff, educators, students and volunteers are able to demonstrate an understanding of the role of mandatory reporter, including when a report must be made and how to make a report	
8	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure child protection concerns, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse or neglect are recorded on a *Child Protection Concerns Register* (recommended best practice)	
9	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure a *Child Protection Risk Assessment* is conducted annually and reviewed following an incident involving child safety and wellbeing, including an assessment for areas of improvement	
10	Records of abuse or suspected abuse are kept in line with our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.* Records relating to child sexual abuse that has or is alleged to have occurred are kept for at least 45 years. (recommendation not mandatory)	
11	Educators will understand that allegations of abuse or suspected abuse against them are treated in the same way as allegations of abuse against other people	
12	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure a safe and confidential process for reporting wrongdoing, misconduct, or any matter that may risk the safety, welfare, or wellbeing of children within the Service through the *Protected Disclosure (Whistleblower) Policy*. This process supports a culture of integrity and accountability (recommended best practice)	

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE		
1	Educators are to comprehend their obligations as mandatory reporters and their requirement to report any situation where they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child is at risk of significant harm to the relevant Child Protection Helpline per state requirements. VIC: Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) During business hours contact Child Protection. To find LGAs covered by each intake click: Child protection contacts or for After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service on 13 12 78	
2	The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's *Child Protection Policy* annually to ensure awareness of Child Protection practices	
3	The approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators, staff, volunteers and students are to make a report to the relevant child protection agency or department when they have current concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child who has experienced harm or is at risk of harm or at risk of significant harm	
4	When a decision has been made to make a report to the *Child Protection Helpline* the following information must be prepared in advance: • details which identify the child such as the child's name, date of birth, address, phone number, cultural identity or Aboriginality, language barriers, disabilities • details of the parents, carers or other household members such as name, date of birth or age, address, phone numbers, cultural identity or Aboriginality, language barriers, disabilities • details of the educator and service such as name, address, phone and email details • information regarding the significant risk of harm	
5	Educators will respect what a child discloses, taking it seriously and follow up on their concerns through the appropriate channels	
6	Educators do not have to prove that reportable conduct is happening or have evidence of who may be abusing the child to contemplate making a notification	
7	Educators will prepare accurate records recording exactly what happened, conversations that took place and what was observed to pass on to the relevant authorities to assist with any investigation	
8	Educators will understand that allegations of abuse or suspected abuse against them are treated in the same way as allegations of abuse against other people	
9	It is important for educators to remain sensitive to the practices of families of culturally diverse or indigenous backgrounds; however, the child protection policy must be adhered to. The processes and procedures within the policy attempt to allow for the individual differences of families	

10	Educators are to keep up-to-date developmental records on all children. Records are a significant part of a child or young person's time in care and contribute to their life story	
11	Educators will share and exchange information in accordance with legislation to relevant agencies. Information to be shared and exchanged should relate directly to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children	

GATHER APPROPRIATE INFORMATION		
1	Whenever a case of child abuse, neglect or inappropriate conduct is suspected (due to either an act, or an omission), it is imperative to document any observations and communication undertaken with the child and/or parent/carer. When a mandatory reporter has concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person, they are to refer to our Service's *Child Protection Policy* and relevant state/territory guides and information	
2	The person making the report is to use the *Child Protection Observation Record* to record all signs, suspicions, or concerns. When completing the observation record, ensure all essential details are gathered including- • child or young person's details (name, address, DOB, details of siblings etc.) • incident details (date, type of risk, person's causing or contributing to harm) • impact of the incident on the child or young person • network of support around the child or young person • cultural background (Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander) *[Child Protection Observation Record and Child Protection Report Form is designed to help you provide evidence when making a Child Protection Report.]*	
3	Mandatory reporters are required by law to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to Child Protection Services. To make a report to relevant child protection agency or department, a person needs to have current concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child for any of the following reasons • basic physical or psychological needs of the child or young person are not being met (neglect) • the parents or caregivers have not arranged necessary medical care for the child or young person • the parents or caregivers have not arranged for the child or young person to receive an education • the risk of physical or sexual abuse or ill-treatment • parent or caregiver's behaviour towards the child causes or risks serious psychological harm (emotional abuse) • child was subject in a prenatal report, and the birth mother did not engage successfully with support services. To report concerns that are **life threatening**, contact police immediately on 000.	

4	If the mandatory reporter has concerns about the safety of a child, they will record their concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible	
5	The mandatory reporter will record their own observations as well as precise details of any discussion with a parent (who may, for example, explain a noticeable mark on a child)	
6	The mandatory reporter will prepare accurate records recording exactly what happened, conversations that took place and what was observed to pass on to the relevant authorities to assist with any investigation	
7	The mandatory reporter will not endeavour to conduct their own investigation	
8	Mandatory reporters do not have to prove that reportable conduct is happening or have evidence of who may be abusing the child to contemplate making a notification	
9	As soon as there is information that abuse of any kind has occurred or may have occurred, questioning of the child must STOP immediately. It is then up to the authorities to carry out interviews with the child and relevant parties	

RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE		
When receiving a disclosure of harm, the person receiving the disclosure will:		
1	give the child or young person their full attention	
2	remain calm and find a quiet place to talk	
3	not make promises that can't be kept. For example, never promise that you will not tell anyone else	
4	reassure the child or young person they have done the right thing in revealing the information but that they'll need to tell someone who can help keep the child safe	
5	only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter, because probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries	
6	not attempt to conduct their own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved	
7	document as soon as possible so the details are accurately captured including: • time, date and place of the disclosure • *'word for word'* what happened and what was said, including anything they (the staff member/educator) said and any actions that have been taken • date of report and signature	
8	in addition, the person receiving the disclosure from a child will: • accept that the child or young person will disclose only what they're comfortable with and recognise the bravery/strength of the child for talking about something that is difficult	

	• let the child or young person take his or her time • let the child or young person use his or her own words • don't make promises that can't be kept. For example, never promise that you will not tell anyone else • honestly tell the child or young person what you plan to do next • not confront the perpetrator	

REPORTING CONCERNS		
1	The mandatory reporter will complete the relevant online reporter system or contact the relevant child protection reporting hotline on each occasion they have risk concerns, regardless of their level of experience or expertise. Each circumstance is different, and every child and young person is unique.	
2	The mandatory reporter will use the *Online Reporter System* or contact the child protection reporting hotline relevant to their state if they have concerns that a child or young person is at risk of being neglected or physically, sexually or emotionally abused	
3	The mandatory reporter will use the relevant online reporting system or guide to determine whether a report to the relevant Child Protection department or agency is required, and if a child protection online report (e-Report) should be submitted	
4	The mandatory reporter will print out the final decision from the online reporter system and place in a confidential file	
5	The mandatory reporter will follow the recommendations of the relevant Online Reporter System. This may include alternative supports for vulnerable children and their families.	
6	When a decision has been made to make a report to the relevant agency or department, the following information can be prepared in advance: • details which identify the child such as the child's name, date of birth, address, phone number, cultural identity or Aboriginality, language barriers, disabilities • details of the parents, carers or other household members such as name, date of birth or age, address, phone numbers, cultural identity or Aboriginality, language barriers, disabilities • details of the educator and service such as name, address, phone and email details information regarding the significant risk of harm • reason for your concerns and any relevant circumstances	
7	The mandatory reporter will share and exchange information in accordance with legislation to relevant agencies. Information to be shared and exchanged should relate directly to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children.	
8	Management, educators and staff will refer families to appropriate agencies where concerns of harm do not meet the threshold of significant harm.	

	Orange Door - 15-17 Watton St Werribee VIC 3030 1800 271 045 wma@orangedoor.vic.gov.au	

NOTIFICATION TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY		
1	The mandatory reporter will prepare accurate records recording exactly what happened, conversations that took place and what was observed to pass on to the relevant authorities to assist with any investigation	
2	The nominated supervisor, educators, staff, students and volunteers will report all incidents, allegations and complaints relating to child safety to the approved provider	
3	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure mandatory reports and notifications are made to the appropriate authorities within the prescribed timeframe	
4	For all notifications required to be reported within 24 hours, the approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure procedures are in place to meet required timeframes, including outside operational hours (e.g. weekends and public holidays) (see *Regulatory Authority Notification Procedure* for 24-hour reporting)	
5	The approved provider will notify the regulatory authority (VECRA) through the NQA ITS (within 24 hours) of • becoming aware of a circumstance arising at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child • any complaints alleging that a serious incident, including a sexual offence or sexual misconduct, has occurred or is occurring at the Service • a serious incident, which may include a sexual offence, sexual misconduct and/or physical or sexual abuse where emergency services attended the Service • any incident where it is reasonably believed that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the Service • any allegation (observed or suspected or disclosures) that a staff member or volunteer is engaging or has engaged in appropriate conduct to a child within 24 hours • any change to a person's WWCC or any relevant risk information related to child safety	
6	The approved provider will notify the regulatory authority of any allegation (observed or suspected or disclosures) that a staff member, educator or volunteer is engaging or has engaged in inappropriate conduct to a child within 24 hours	
7	The approved provider will notify the Social Services Regulator (SSR) within 3 business days becoming aware of any reportable allegations or reportable convictions made against their employees, volunteers or certain contractors who provide services to children	

VIC MANDATORY REPORTING		
1	To report concerns that are **life threatening**, ring **Victoria Police: 000**	
2	To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child after hours, call the After-Hours Child Protection Emergency Service: 13 12 78.	
3	Mandatory reporters are required by law to report where they form a reasonable belief, that a child has been or is at risk of significant harm, as a result of physical or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from that abuse	
4	The approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators and staff working at our Service in a professional capacity are all mandatory reporters	
5	Reports are to be made to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection via the child protection intake service covering the local government area (LGA) where the child normally resides, Child protection contacts and/or Victoria Police	
6	Management, educators and staff are to follow the Four Critical Actions to take to respond to an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse- • responding to an emergency • reporting to authorities • contact parents or carers • provide ongoing support	
7	The approved provider will notify the Social Services Regulator (SSR) within 3 business days of becoming aware of reportable conduct made against an employee or volunteer and ensure they are investigated, and appropriate action taken	
8	The approved provider must notify the Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority (VECRA), via NQA ITS, of any reportable sexual conduct by a nominated supervisor, educator, volunteer or anyone else employed or engaged by the Service within 24 hours	
9	Management, educators and staff will refer families to appropriate agencies where concerns of harm do not meet the threshold of significant harm. These services may be located through Orange Door. Educators will obtain family consent before making referrals.	
10	Additional information: Child protection Reporting child abuse	

REVIEW OF PROCEDURE			
Date procedure created	06/06/2023	To be reviewed	March 2026
Approved by	Krystle Hills	Signature	
Procedure Reviewed Date	Modifications/Changes		
January 2026	Updated to include amendments to Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations Included additional points to strengthen child safe practices Removed CCYP and replaces with SSR		
September 2025	Procedure reviewed: New sections added to clearly specify state requirements. New section Notification to appropriate authority. Replace 'educator' to 'mandatory reporter where applicable		
September 2024	Procedure reviewed: edits and hyperlinks fixed. Additional Child Protection resources section added to procedure		