

Yalingbu Yirramboi – The Royal Children’s Hospital School

Child Abuse (Including Grooming) - Identification and Response Policy and Procedure



If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact (03) 9968 2500.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Describe how staff at Yalingbu Yirramboi-The RCH School (YYRCHS) identify and respond to child safety concerns and child abuse following the 4 Critical Actions
- Ensure our staff and school community raise concerns about child abuse.

SCOPE

This policy applies to any concern of child abuse or reportable conduct:

- By any adult engaged by the school or school council or any other adult while connected to the school environment (including e.g. staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers and visitors)
- Between students
- Towards students by members of their family
- Towards students by members of the community.

Child abuse and reportable conduct can occur in any physical or online environment and include grooming.

DEFINITIONS

There are many types of child abuse. For more information, see [Types of child abuse and what to look for](#) and [Child Safety Definitions](#).

Child abuse includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or grooming
- Physical violence against a child
- Serious emotional or psychological harm against a child
- Serious neglect of a child.

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) and is a form of child abuse and sexual misconduct. It is also a form of Reportable Conduct. The offence of grooming is when an adult engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person under the age of 16 for future

sexual activity. This can be with the groomer or with another adult. Grooming can occur face-to-face, online or a combination of both.

Grooming behaviour can involve the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques. These can be used to build trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour.

Reportable Conduct includes:

- A sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- Sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- Behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- Significant neglect of a child

by any adult working or volunteering at our school including any employees, volunteers or contractors.

For further information see: [Reportable and Notifiable Conduct Policy](#).

POLICY

Everyone at YRCHS has an important role to:

- Prevent child abuse (including grooming) in our school or during school activities
- Identify and respond to concerns of child abuse using the 4 Critical Actions – based on the source of abuse:
 - [By an adult engaged by the school](#)
 - [Between students](#)
 - [In the family](#)
 - [In the community](#).

YRCHS follows the Department of Education policies on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [Child abuse \(including grooming\) – identification and response](#)
- [Student to Student Abuse and Harmful Sexual Behaviour](#)
- [Reportable and Notifiable Conduct policy](#).

YRCHS has other policies that are part of our child safety framework and describe actions we take to ensure students are safe and feel safe to raise a complaint. These include:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy.

These policies are available on our school website at <https://www.rch.org.au/yalingbu-Yirramboi/>

PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE, OR ALLEGATION OF CHILD ABUSE

All staff at our school must use the 4 Critical Actions to identify and respond to child abuse. The 4 Critical Actions are:

- Identify child abuse

- Support students in the school
- Refer student to community services
- Report abuse to authorities.

At all times all staff must:

- [Respond to an emergency](#)
- [Adapt to changing circumstances](#)
- [Document their actions.](#)

All staff must follow the [4 Critical Actions](#) - based on the source of abuse:

- [4 Critical Actions to identify and respond to child abuse by an adult engaged by the school](#)
 - Any allegation, complaint, disclosure or concern of abuse (including grooming) by an adult engaged by a school may be reportable conduct under Victoria's [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#) and **must be reported**.
- [4 Critical Actions to identify and respond to student-to-student abuse](#)
 - As soon as you form a reasonable belief that a student has been, or is at risk of being, abused by another student **you must act**.
- [4 Critical Actions to identify and respond to child abuse in the family](#)
 - As soon as you form a reasonable belief that a student has been, or is at risk of being, abused by someone in the family **you must act**.
- [4 Critical Actions to identify and respond to child abuse in the community.](#)
 - As soon as you form a reasonable belief that a student has been, or is at risk of being, abused by someone in the community **you must act**.

Our school follows detailed guidance on the [4 Critical Actions](#) for each source of abuse on the [PROTECT website](#). This includes guidance on how to [respond to a disclosure](#) of child abuse made by a student or young person in a trauma-informed way and provide appropriate support, including suggested language to use.

To ensure the 4 Critical Actions are followed, staff must immediately notify one of our school's relevant child safety nominated contacts on becoming aware that a student is, or may be, experiencing child abuse (including grooming).

Our child safety nominated contacts are listed in the table below. Our school's child safety nominated contacts work with staff and school leadership to provide oversight and ensure:

- Child safety concerns are taken seriously
- The school's response is prompt and thorough
- The relevant 4 Critical Actions and PROTECT guidance are followed.

Anyone can contact these staff about a child safety concern. This includes students, parents/carers, volunteers, or anyone else in the school community who has concerns about child abuse including grooming.

Role	Name	Phone
Child Safety Response Team		
Principal	Naomi McBride	9968-2531
Assistant Principal	Emma Fraser	9968-2501
Leading Teacher	Jessica Murphy	9059-4384

1. Immediate action

If a school staff member or volunteer witnesses an incident of child abuse, or reasonably believes, suspects or receives a disclosure or allegation that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, they must:

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved and follow the MET or CODE Response to respond to immediate health or safety concerns (Appendix 1 and 2 – staff access only – not for public distribution).
- Notify the Principal as soon as possible, who will ensure our school follows the steps in these procedures.

NOTE for staff and volunteers:

- If you are uncertain if an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion gives rise to a concern about child abuse you must always err on the side of caution and report the concern to the Principal.
- If the Principal is unavailable, the Assistant Principal will take on this role.
- If the concerns relates to the conduct of Principal, notify the Assistant Principal or the [relevant regional office](#) where the person nominated above is the principal who must then take on responsibility for ensuring our school follows these procedures.

2. Reporting to authorities and referring to services

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, the Principal **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible in line with the RCH procedure flowchart outlined in Appendix 2.

In addition to the above listed steps, the YRCHS also complies with the four critical actions as well as additional actions required under the Child Safe Standards.

The Principal must ensure:

- All relevant information is reported to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection, Victoria Police or relevant services where required
- The incident is reported to the Department's [eduSafe Plus portal](#) or the Incident Support and Operations Centre (1800 126 126) in accordance with the severity rating outlined in the [Managing and Reporting School Incidents Policy](#)
- All [reportable conduct](#) allegations or incidents are reported by the Principal to the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (03 7022 0005) – where a reportable conduct allegation is made against the Principal, the Regional Director must be informed who will then make a report to Employee Conduct Branch

NOTE: In circumstances where staff members are legally required to report child abuse to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police and they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another person at the school or the designated member of school staff does not agree that a report needs to be made, the staff member who has formed the reasonable belief must still contact DFFH Child Protection and Victoria Police to make the report.

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 or [The Orange Door](#) (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support) DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police.

3. Contacting parents or caregivers

The Principal must ensure parents and caregivers are notified unless advised otherwise by DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police, or there are other safety and wellbeing concerns in relation to informing parents/caregivers.

Principals may contact the Department of Education Legal Division for advice on notifying parents and caregivers, and where relevant, the wider school community.

For further guidance, refer to [PROTECT Contacting parents and carers](#)

4. Ongoing protection and support

The Principal must ensure appropriate steps are taken by the school to protect the child and other children from any continued risk of abuse. These steps must be taken in consultation with the Royal Children's Hospital any relevant external agency or Department staff such as DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police, Department of Education Legal Division or Employee Conduct Branch. Ongoing protection will also include further reports to authorities if new information comes to light or further incidents occur.

Appropriate, culturally sensitive and ongoing support must be offered and provided to all affected students. Ongoing support will be based on any available advice from the Department, parents and caregivers, health practitioners, and other authorities (such as DFFH or Victoria Police) and may include referral to wellbeing professionals, development of a safety plan, student support group meetings, and, for student-to-student incidents, behaviour management and support measures.

5. Record keeping

The Principal will ensure that:

- Detailed notes of the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion are taken [using the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template](#) or the [Responding to Student Sexual Offending: template](#)] including, where possible, by the staff member or volunteer who reported the incident, disclosure, or suspicion to them
- Detailed notes are taken of any immediate or ongoing action taken by the school to respond to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion
- All notes and other records relating to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, including the schools immediate and ongoing actions, are stored securely in digital location.

Escalating concerns

Following the 4 Critical Actions ensures that our staff take all the necessary steps where there is a concern about abuse, including grooming. If any staff member is concerned that these processes have not been followed they must:

- Raise their concerns with the principal and escalate to the regional office via [1800 338 663](tel:1800338663) or email enquiries@education.vic.gov.au if they remain unsatisfied
- Report concerns to the appropriate authorities (e.g. Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection) in line with the 4 Critical Actions.

Reporting concerns about child safety contacts or school leadership

To report any allegations or concerns of abuse including grooming about a listed child safety contact, notify the principal.

To report any allegations or concerns of abuse including grooming by a principal, please contact:

- Department of Education
 - Anyone can contact the Department of Education.
 - Email: enquiries@education.vic.gov.au
 - Phone: 1800 338 663
 - For more information see: [Report abuse if you're a current student.](#)
- Department of Education Speak Up service
 - Staff can use the Speak Up service to report improper conduct, fraud or corruption (including to make an anonymous report) or other improper conduct.
 - Website: <https://www.pkftalkintegrity.com/?det>
 - Email: educationspeakup@pkf.com.au
 - Phone 1800 633 462.

Meeting our legal obligations

Our staff must take reasonable steps to minimise risks of harm to students in their care that is reasonably foreseeable. For further information see: [PROTECT child safety frameworks and legal obligations.](#)

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community. It may be:

- Published on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes and annual staff training
- Included in volunteer induction processes and training for relevant volunteers
- Discussed in annual staff briefings or meetings
- Included in staff competency training
- Made available in hard copy available from school administration upon request.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education policies and guidance are relevant to this policy:

- [PROTECT](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Reportable and Notifiable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Child abuse \(including grooming\) – identification and response](#)
- [Student-to-student abuse and harmful sexual behaviour](#)
- [Managing and Reporting School Incidents](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

The following RCH policies and guidance are relevant to this policy:



Department
of Education



- [RCH Emergency Management](#)
- [RCH Code Grey](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2026
Consultation	School Council President (RCH Director Allied Health) and YRCHS Child Safety Response Team
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2028 (or following a relevant child safety incident)

APPENDIX 1: MET OR CODE RESPONSE IN KELPIE GROUP LEARNING SPACE

Calling a Code Grey

Staff Member

The initial response to aggression/violence is to ensure safety of self and others in the area.

Remove staff, patients, family and visitors from the area if possible

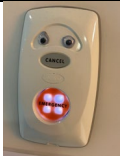


Try and diffuse the situation if feeling capable of doing so with calm, quiet engagement and discussion with the person involved

Do not allow other parents/visitors to become involved

Do not attempt to restrain the aggressor

PROCESS:

1. Hit Staff Emergency Button (red button). This is the highest order of emergency buttons
2. Contact the RCH Switchboard on **22 22** and ensure accurate location is given
Call via the phone in the group learning space
3. Allow priority access for MET team
4. Remove other students from classroom to area outside Kelpie ward (if appropriate)
5. RCHEI staff who hear MET to assemble outside and assist as required
Assistance such as:
 - Take students back to wards
 - Supervise outpatients until parents arrive
 - Call/locate parents of outpatients
 - Follow up with NUMs of wards (management team)
- Teachers to follow up with their students/families if debrief required
- Depending on the severity of the MET, RCH medical/ward/executive to manage follow up

<p><u>Staff Emergency Button</u></p>		<p>Staff Emergency Button (red button). This is the highest order of emergency buttons.</p>
<p><u>Staff Assist Button</u></p>		<p>The staff assist button will alert a team of nurses.</p>
<p><u>Duress Alarms</u></p>		<p>The duress alarms can be activated to discretely send an alert to the Security Team Security will dispatch a security team to the scene</p>

*When a duress alarm is activated, security staff are unable to distinguish if a staff member is requiring a Code Black or Code Grey response. Security will dispatch a security team to the scene, at the same time attempt to establish the nature of the incident using CCTV and make contact with other staff in the incident area.

Independent Key Switch Control – Lifts

In addition to the automated calls, any lift car can be controlled for extended periods of time by imposing 'independent control.' The independent control uses a mechanical key (the keyhole being in the lift car itself) to take a lift out of group control (so it will not be allocated landing calls) and allows the user to control the lift from the operating buttons within the car.

Note: once overridden by the key switch, the lift will ignore all subsequent emergency calls and travel only under the control of the car operating buttons. In Code Grey calls attempt to avoid locking out lifts 24 and 25 as they are required to service the Helipad.

An Independent Key Switch can be provided to the Code Grey response team if required.

Definition of Terms

Code Grey	Signifies an unarmed threat including aggressive behaviour where any person (patient, visitor or intruder) threatens injury to others or themselves (including suicide) or damage to property.
Planned Code Grey	Activated when staff anticipate an unarmed threat, including aggressive behaviour from any person, could potentially threaten injury to others or themselves
Duress alarms	Can refer to either a fixed-point, wall mounted or ASCOM duress alarm. The duress alarms can be activated to discretely send an alert to the Security Team and the Code Grey Coordinator when to pre-empt, or respond to Occupational Violence and Aggression
Aggressive behaviour	Can be defined as any form of behaviour which causes actual or perceived harm to people or property and occurs with or without forethought, an act or gesture that suggests violence may occur.

APPENDIX 2: RCH FLOWCHART RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Flowchart of Steps for Responding to Suspected Child Abuse

Yalingbu Yirramboi
– The Royal
Children’s Hospital
School process.

RCH led process

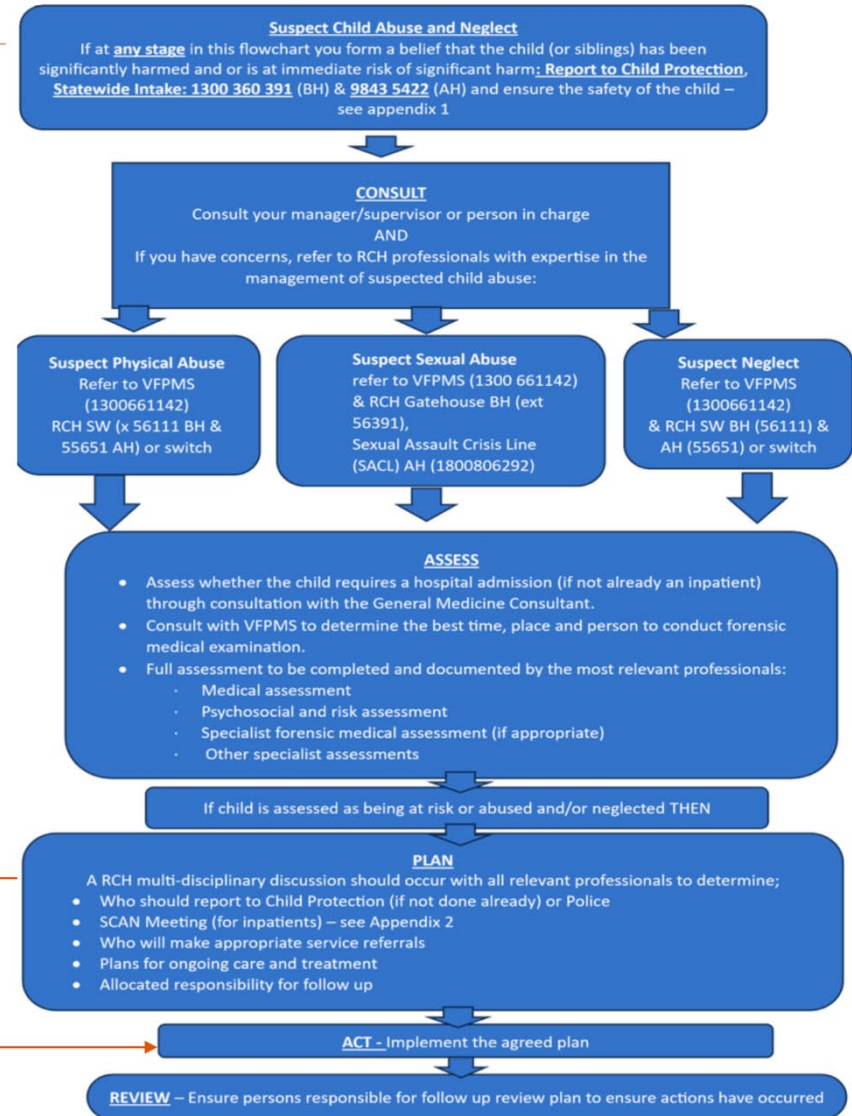
Key Terms and Services:

Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service: VFPMS
Support After Sexual Harm: SASH (RCH sexual assault crisis response)
Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect: SCAN

This is RCH standard operating procedure and Yalingbu Yirramboi- The Royal Children’s Hospital School will continue to engage with and adhere to this process.

Department of Education additional reporting requirement:

- the incident is reported to the Department’s [eduSafe Plus portal](#) or the Incident Support and Operations Centre (1800 126 126) in accordance with the severity rating outlined in the [Managing and Reporting School Incidents Policy](#)
- all [reportable conduct](#) allegations or incidents are reported by the Principal to the Department’s Employee Conduct Branch (03 7022 0005) – where a reportable conduct allegation is made against the Principal, the Regional Director must be informed who will then make a report to Employee Conduct Branch



APPENDIX 3: CHILD SAFETY FRAMEWORKS AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

This policy ensures compliance with child safety frameworks and our legal obligations and our school's duty of care obligations. These include:

Child Safe Standards: Victoria's Child Safe Standards help schools create and maintain a child-safe organisation and protect children and young people from harm and abuse. All Victorian schools and school boarding premises must comply with Ministerial Order 1359. Ministerial Order 1359 sets out the actions schools must take to implement the Child Safe Standards.

Reportable Conduct Scheme: The Reportable Conduct Scheme is a child safety mechanism that provides central oversight of how organisations respond to allegations of reportable conduct by a person engaged by the school.

Information sharing: Victorian schools can share confidential information under the Information Sharing Schemes, including the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS). Under CISS, schools can share relevant information about any person to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children. Under FVISS, schools can share relevant information to assess or manage risk of family violence.

Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management for family violence (MARAM): MARAM sets a consistent, shared approach across Victoria's service system to identify and respond to family violence. The FVISS enables schools to meet their obligations under MARAM.

Mandatory reporting: If a mandatory reporter, while doing their job, forms a belief on reasonable grounds that:

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

this must be reported to Child Protection as soon as practicable.

Failure to disclose offence: All adults must report to Victoria Police if they have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child in Victoria.

Failure to protect offence: 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.

Further information about these legal obligations is available from:

- [Child Safety Frameworks and Legal Obligations](#)
- Department of Education Policy and Advisory Library:
 - [Child abuse \(including grooming\) – identification and response](#)
 - [Reportable and Notifiable Conduct](#).