MANDATORY REPORTING PROCEDURE

These procedures must be followed to support the implementation of the *Mandatory Reporting Policy* (Policy).

1.0 PURPOSE

This *Mandatory Reporting Procedure* (Procedure) provides clarity to ensure all St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Heyfield (the School) staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and, in particular, when mandatory reporting is required.

2.0 SCOPE

This Procedure applies to the School Principal and registered teachers as mandated reporters.

This Procedure is informed by *Mandatory Reporting Policy*.

3.0 CONTEXT

St Michael's Primary School, Heyfield is a Catholic primary school serving students from Foundation to Year 6 in a rural community. Drawing enrolments from Heyfield and surrounding areas, we are part of the St Michael's Heyfield–Cowwarr and St Mary's Maffra Parishes, with our other parish school being St Mary's Primary School, Maffra.

4.0 PROCEDURES

School staff have legal, professional and organisational obligations to act when they form a reasonable belief, suspicion or receive a disclosure of child abuse or harm, and to provide appropriate ongoing support to children and young people. These obligations arise under Victorian legislation, regulatory frameworks and common law duties, and include compliance with:

- the Child Safe Standards, which require organisations to take a proactive and preventative approach to child safety
- the Reportable Conduct Scheme, which mandates the reporting of certain conduct by employees, volunteers and contractors
- Mandatory Reporting requirements, which require mandated reporters to report certain types of child abuse to statutory authorities
- Criminal offences relating to Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect, which may apply to any adult who becomes aware of sexual abuse of a child

- the duty of care owed to students to take reasonable steps to protect them from foreseeable harm
- legal obligations relating to responding to student sexual offending [2]
- obligations to respond appropriately to significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child, including making referrals to external support services where required.

School staff must follow the Four Critical Actions when responding to an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse.

4.1 Critical Action 1: Responding to an emergency

4 If there is no risk of immediate harm, go to Critical Action 2.
4 If a child is at immediate risk of harm, school staff must ensure their safety by:
- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the School for future liaison with police.

School staff may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

4.2 Critical Action 2: Reporting to authorities/referring to services

4.2.1 As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, school staff must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as practicable. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

4.2.2 If the source of suspected abuse comes from within the School, school staff must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor or volunteer to Victoria Police (call 000 or the local police station). School staff must also report internally to:

- School Principal and/or leadership team
- Chief Governance Officer Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL).

All allegations of 'reportable conduct' must be reported as soon as possible to the Chief Governance Officer (DOSCEL) – for more information refer to *Reportable and Notifiable Conduct*. This includes any reportable allegations relating to a staff member, volunteer or contractor regardless of whether the alleged victim is or was a student at the School.

4.2.3 If the source of suspected abuse comes from within the family or community, School staff must report to Child Protection if they form the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is:

- 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 and the parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child.

4.2.4 School staff must also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police (call 000 or the local police station). School staff must also report internally to the School Principal and/or leadership team and to the DOSCEL Chief Governance Officer. [3]

4.2.5 If staff believe that a child is not subject to abuse but still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing, staff must still act. This may include making a report or referral to or seeking advice from:

- Child FIRST or The Orange Door (in circumstances where the school staff member believes the family is open to receiving support)
- Safe and Equal – for information and guidance to help respond to family violence
- Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to 1800 Respect for counselling, information and a referral service – 1800 737 732
- Child Protection
- Victoria Police — call 000 or the local police station.

4.3 Critical Action 3: contacting parents/carers

4 The Principal must consult with Child Protection or Victoria Police (call 000 or the local police station) to determine what information can be shared with parents/guardians/carers. They may advise:

- not to contact the parents/guardians/carers (for example, in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/guardian/carer to be contacted)
- to contact the parents/guardians/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- how to communicate with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

Where the alleged perpetrator is an adult connected to the School as a volunteer, staff member or contractor, the Principal must consider whether there are risks that other students may have been impacted by the abuse. After conducting a risk assessment, it may be necessary to communicate more broadly with the school community. DOSCEL Governance can provide further advice about communications.

4.4 Critical Action 4: providing ongoing support

4.4.1 The School must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This can include the development of a student support plan in consultation with DOSCEL Psychologist: Learning Adjustment (Behaviour Support). This is an essential part of the School's duty of care requirements. [4]

4.4.2 Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to health and wellbeing professionals and support services.

4.4.3 Other students at the School may also be impacted by allegations or charges against staff members, volunteers or contractors that have worked at the School. The School needs to provide appropriate referrals or support for those students.

4.4.4 School staff must follow the Four Critical Actions every time they become aware of any further instances or risks of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

4.5 Staff Training:

4.5.1 The School provides annual training to staff through completion and recording of Mandatory Reporting Modules. The Mandatory Reporting training is supported through a range of additional practices to ensure staff remain informed and confident in their responsibilities. This includes regular staff briefings, updates during staff meetings, and the sharing of relevant information and resources. The school also incorporates Mandatory Reporting into induction processes for new staff, provides access to online training modules, and revisits procedures and expectations as part of ongoing professional learning. Child safety scenarios and discussions are used to reinforce understanding and promote consistent practice across the school.

5.0 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

ROLE	REPONSIBILITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Mandatory reporter	• Complete annual Mandatory Reporting training. • Follow required reporting obligations and processes.	Legal Requirements

ROLE	REPONSIBILITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Principals	• Ensure that all relevant staff complete annual training in their mandatory reporting obligations, and that the school keeps up-to-date records of this. • Where a staff member is unable to perform their role in responding to and/or reporting a matter to authorities, identify an appropriate alternative person and allocate responsibility for responding to and/or reporting the matter to that person.	Legal Requirements
All DOSCEL Office Staff, including DOSCEL board directors, board committee members, principals, teachers, other staff members, volunteers, contractors, clergy and those involved in religious ministry	• Be aware of and comply with their legal obligations to report suspected child abuse (this may include completing Mandatory Reporting training) and provide ongoing support to all students connected to the concern, complaint or allegation of child abuse. • When dealing with an incident or disclosure of suspicion of child abuse, ensure that the principal and school leadership team are made aware. • When a staff member who has witnessed a child abuse incident, received a disclosure or developed a suspicion of child abuse is unable to perform their role in responding to and/or reporting the matter, the staff member must inform the principal.	Legal Requirements

6.0 COMMUNICATION

7 This Procedure is available on the School website and provided to parents upon request.
7 This Procedure is available to Staff through the staff portal and annual training of staff.

7.0 PROCEDURE INFORMATION

Procedure Owner	St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Heyfield
Approving Authority	Principal
Risk Rating	High

Implementation	March 2026
Review Date	2027