

RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURES AND SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE FOR HOMESTAY PROVIDERS

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION:

As a homestay provider, you play a critical role in protecting children in your care.

You **must** act by following the 4 critical actions as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.

You **must** act if you form a suspicion/reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g.: if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).

ACTION 1: RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to ACTION 2

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

- Separating the 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 the contact person at the school for future liaison with Police

When necessary, you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS

The School Principal is responsible for contacting the parents of overseas students. The principal must consult with DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria police to determine what information can be shared with parents.

ACTION 2: REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, you must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual abuse, may amount to a criminal offence.

You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse to Victoria Police. This can be done by calling 000 or contacting your local police station:
Heidelberg Police Station 9450 8000

You **must** also report all instances of suspected child abuse to the school Principal:
Mr Mario Panaccio 9459 0222 or 0401 282 533

Do not contact student's parents as this is the Principal's responsibility.

If the source of suspected abuse is from within the school, liaise with Victoria Police and IED in who should be contacted at the school

ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Macleod College **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals.

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

How does this affect homestay providers?

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act.