



The Japanese School of Melbourne

Child Safety - Responding and Reporting Obligations

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact school office on 0395281978.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures The Japanese School of Melbourne (JSM) has in place to respond to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse and to ensure that all JSM staff, Volunteers, Contractors, school board members and members of school community understand and follow the various legal obligations that apply to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.

Scope

This policy applies to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school (physical and online).

Definitions

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- physical violence inflicted on a child
- sexual offences committed against a child
- grooming of a child by an adult
- family violence committed against or in the presence of a child
- serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

Grooming

Grooming is a criminal offence under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) and is a form of child abuse and sexual misconduct. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in sexual activity later. Grooming can include communicating (including electronic communications) and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.

School staff member

For the purpose of this policy a School staff member includes the staff directly engaged or employed by the school governing authority or a contractor engaged by the School governing authority.

Policy

JSM understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse. It has a range of [policies](#) and measures in place to prevent child abuse from occurring at our School or during school activities. JSM recognise the diversity of the children, young people, and families at the School and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering and responding to child safety incidents or concerns.

Information for students

All students should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.

If a student does not know who to approach at JSM they should start by speaking with their class teacher or the teacher they feel comfortable speaking to.

If a student feels unsafe, they can talk to any staff member.

Identifying child abuse

To ensure JSM can respond in the best interests of students and children when complaints or concerns relating to child abuse are raised, all School staff must:

- understand their various legal obligations in relation to reporting child abuse to relevant authorities.
- display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are justified by the educational or professional context
- follow the below procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse, which ensure our school acts in the best interests of students and children and complies with both our legal and other obligations.

Procedures for responding to an incident, disclosure, allegation, or suspicion of child abuse

In responding to a child safety incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, JSM will follow:

- the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) for complaints and concerns relating to all forms of child abuse
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending
- the [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#) and [Bullying Prevention Policy](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful student behaviours.
- [CCYP | Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

School staff and volunteer responsibilities

1. *Immediate action*

If a School staff member 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 follow the following steps:

- if a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, administer first aid (appropriate to their level of training) and call 000 for urgent medical or police assistance where required to respond to immediate health or safety concerns. Staff will continue to monitor the situation.
- notify a member of the Leadership Team (comprising the Principal, Assistant Principal, Administration Manager, Chief Teacher, Head of Primary Grade Teachers and Head of Secondary Grade Teachers), who will ensure our school follows the steps in these procedures.
- if the concerns relate to the Principal, Assistant Principal or Administration Manager can notify the Chairperson of the school Board, who must then take on responsibility for ensuring our school follows these procedures.

NOTE for the school staff:

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, Assistant Principal or Administration Manager. Principal is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Refer to [Responding to a child safety disclosure](#) on how to respond to a disclosure of child abuse.

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, reports of suspicions and disclosures of child abuse must be reported to appropriate authorities. Principal, Assistant Principal and/or Administration Manager will direct and support staff to make required reports in accordance with the [Four Critical Actions](#) as well as actions required under the Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The Principal must ensure:

- All relevant information is reported to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection, Victoria Police SOCIT(03 8530 5203) or relevant services where required
- all reportable Conduct allegations or incidents are reported by the Principal to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)– where a reportable conduct allegation is made against the Principal, the Board Chairperson must be informed who will then make a report to the CCYP.

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, the staff member who has formed the reasonable belief must still contact DFFH Child Protection and Victoria Police to make the report.

If the staff member who has formed a reasonable belief that a child needs protection does not agree with the decision of the Principal, Assistant Principal or Administration Manager not to report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police, the staff member should make the report regardless.

If a staff member believes that a child is not subject to abuse, but there are still significant concerns for their wellbeing such as parenting problems, disability, lack of support, action must still be taken. 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).

3. Contacting parents or carers

The Principal must ensure parents, guardians and carers 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/guardians/carers.

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

4. Ongoing protection and support

The Principal, Assistant Principal and Administration Manager 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 any relevant external agency such as DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police. 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, parents, guardians and carers, health practitioners, and other authorities (such as DFFH or Victoria Police) and may include referral to wellbeing professionals, development of a Safety Plan, Targeted Support Meetings, and, for student-to-student incidents, behaviour management and support measures.

5. Recordkeeping

We manage our records in accordance with the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.

The Principal and/or Assistant 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, notes by the School staff member to whom the incident, disclosure, or suspicion was reported
- 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 the principal room.

Mandatory Reporting

A mandatory reporter must report to Child Protection as soon as practicable if in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form 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.

It may be a criminal offence not to report in these circumstances.

Individuals who are required to report:

- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers, including principals, and early childhood teachers

- School staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT
- Registered medical practitioners, nurses and midwives
- Police officers
- Registered psychologists
- People in religious ministry
- Early childhood workers
- Youth justice workers
- Out-of-home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- School counsellors including staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional, or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) school health and wellbeing staff, primary welfare officers, student wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners, chaplains, and Student Support Services staff.

Criminal Offences

Failure to disclose

All adults must report to Victoria Police when they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16.

Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence unless there is a 'reasonable excuse' or an individual has an 'exemption' from doing so.

If an adult that reasonably believes that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 by another adult, then they must call Victoria Police on 000 or the local police station.

Failure to protect

Principals or school leadership staff who became aware that an adult associated with the school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care of the school (including grooming) must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult from child-connected and child related work pending investigation. Failure to do so may be a criminal offence.

Schools should contact the Employee Conduct Branch on 03 7022 0005 for advice before removing a person from child connected or child related work..

The obligation to protect a child applies to any staff member in a position of authority (for example principals, assistant principals).

School visitors and school community members

All community members aged 18 years or over have legal obligations relating to reporting child abuse.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. For contact details, refer to the [Four Critical Actions](#).

Members of the community do not have to inform the School that they are making a disclosure to DFFH Child Protection or the Victoria Police. However, where a community member is concerned about the safety of a child or children at the School, the community member should report this concern to the Principal so that appropriate steps to support the student can be taken.

Additional requirements for all staff

All staff play an important role in supporting student safety and wellbeing and have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in the above procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse. This means that if, after following the actions outlined in the procedure, a staff member reasonably believes that a child remains at risk of abuse, they must take the following steps:

- if they are concerned that the School has not taken reasonable steps to prevent or reduce the risk, raise these concerns with the Principal in the first instance, and report to the chair of school board if they remain unsatisfied.
- report the matter to the relevant authorities where they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another staff member

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- available publicly on our school's website
- included in staff induction processes and annual staff training
- included in volunteer induction processes and training
- discussed annually in staff briefings or meetings
- a hard copy can be made available from the school administration upon request

The following JSM School policies are also relevant to this policy:

- [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- [Duty of Care Policy](#)

Approval

Created date	April 2025
Consultation	Staff, School board
Endorsed by	School Board
Endorsed on	April 2025
Next review date	November 2026

This policy was drafted in English, and translated into Japanese for reference purposes only. In the case of a difference in interpretation the English version will prevail.