

Mandatory Reporting & Child Safety Response Procedure

The School of Chinese Education

School procedure | Version 1.0 | 27 August 2026

! IF THERE IS IMMEDIATE DANGER Call Victoria Police on 000. Make the child safe if you can do so without putting anyone else at risk. Do not wait for a manager or for the next school day.

THE RULE TO REMEMBER You do not need proof. If you are worried about a child, act, record what you know, and seek advice or report. An internal report never replaces or delays a legal report.

Document control

Item	School position
Owner	Principal and School Management Committee
Child Safety Officer	Name: _____ Chang Zhou _____ Mobile: ____ 0430479321 _____
After-hours school contact	Name/role: _____ Jun Ye Principal _____ Mobile: __ 0407188886 _____
Approval	Approved by the School Management Committee on: 31/01/26
Review	Review by 27 Nov 2027, and earlier after any incident or legal change
Related documents	Child Safety Policy and Procedures; Child Safety Code of Conduct; Complaints and Feedback Procedure; Child Safety Incident Report Form; Staff Induction Record

1. Purpose and scope

This procedure tells staff what to do when they see, hear or receive information that may mean a child is unsafe. It is written for the way our school actually operates: classes are mainly held on weekends, many teachers work part time, families commonly use Chinese-language communication channels, and WeChat is often used for study and administration.

It applies to committee members, the principal, the Child Safety Officer, teachers, relief teachers, administration staff, volunteers, contractors and any other adult engaged by the school. It applies during classes and school events, in online learning, in school-related WeChat groups, and when a staff member receives child-safety information outside their rostered hours.

Part-time does not mean part-responsibility. Legal duties depend on the information you hold and your role, not on whether you are full time, part time, paid, volunteering, on site or at home when the concern comes to you.

2. Our regulatory position as a community language school

The School of Chinese Education is an accredited community language school, not a mainstream registered school. This distinction matters, but it does not reduce our child-safety responsibilities.

- **Victorian Child Safe Standards:** Language schools are among the organisations required to comply with the Standards under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005. Standards 2, 7, 8, 9 and 11 are especially relevant to reporting, training, online contact and documented procedures.
- **Accreditation and funding:** The Department of Education accredits and funds community language schools and may seek evidence that staff understand their child-safety and reporting duties.
- **Ministerial Order 1359:** This Order is directed to registered schools and school boarding premises. We use its reporting, governance and online-safety expectations as a strong benchmark, without incorrectly describing our community language school as a mainstream registered school.
- **National framework:** The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are used as a supporting benchmark. The enforceable Victorian Child Safe Standards remain our primary organisational standard.

3. Four duties staff must not confuse

Duty	Who it applies to	When it is triggered	What to do
Mandatory reporting	People listed by Victorian law. In our setting this includes any VIT-registered teacher or person with Permission to Teach, and anyone who separately holds another listed profession.	While doing their professional work, they reasonably believe a child under 17 has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm from physical injury or sexual abuse, and the parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child.	Report to DFFH Child Protection as soon as practicable. The duty is personal and cannot be delegated or vetoed.
Failure to disclose	Every adult	The adult has information leading to a reasonable belief that another adult committed a sexual offence in Victoria against a child under 16.	Report to Victoria Police as soon as practicable, unless a legal exception or reasonable excuse applies. Protecting the school's or a person's reputation is not a reasonable excuse.

Duty	Who it applies to	When it is triggered	What to do
Failure to protect	A person in a position of authority who can reduce or remove the risk - for example the principal, committee president or another leader with real decision-making power.	They know there is a substantial risk that an adult associated with the school may sexually offend against a child under 16 in the school's care, supervision or authority.	Immediately take reasonable steps to reduce or remove the risk and report to Police where criminal conduct or risk is suspected.
Grooming offence	Adults aged 18 or over	An adult communicates by words or conduct with a child under 16, or with the child's carer, intending to facilitate a sexual offence.	Treat suspected grooming as a serious child-safety concern. Preserve messages and report to Victoria Police. Do not conduct your own investigation.

Not every community language teacher is automatically a mandatory reporter. Many community language teachers are not VIT registered. Even so, all staff must follow this school procedure, all adults are covered by the failure-to-disclose offence, and anyone may make a report to Child Protection or Police.

4. The response: act, report, support and record

Use the current Victorian PROTECT approach: identify the concern, report to the right authority, support the child, and refer for further help. The order may change depending on the source of harm. At all times, respond to an emergency, adapt if new information appears, and document what you do.

Step 1 - Make the situation safe

- Call 000 if a child is in immediate danger, seriously injured, needs urgent medical help, or a serious crime is occurring or has just occurred.
- Separate the child from the alleged person where this can be done safely. Arrange supervision by a safe adult.
- Do not confront the alleged person, interview witnesses or search devices unless Police direct you to do so.
- Preserve evidence. Keep messages, screenshots, devices, CCTV and notes secure and unchanged.

Step 2 - Listen if a child speaks to you

Do	Do not
Stay calm. Listen. Let the child use the language in which they feel safest.	Do not show shock, blame the child or ask why they did not tell earlier.
Say: 'I believe you', 'You did the right thing by telling me', and 'This is not your fault.'	Do not promise secrecy. Explain that you must tell people who can help keep them safe.

Do	Do not
Ask only open questions needed for immediate safety, such as 'What happened?' or 'Are you safe now?'	Do not ask leading, repeated or detailed investigative questions.
Write the child's own words as soon as possible, including date, time and context.	Do not tidy up, translate away or add your own interpretation to the child's words.

Step 3 - Make the external report that your duty requires

A Child Safety Officer or principal can support you, but cannot decide that you must not report. If you are a mandatory reporter and you form the required belief, you make the report even if another person disagrees.

Situation	First external contact
Immediate danger, urgent medical need, serious crime in progress	Victoria Police 000
Reasonable belief an adult sexually offended against a child under 16, including suspected grooming	Victoria Police - 000 if urgent; otherwise 131 444 or local police
Mandatory reporting threshold: significant harm from physical injury or sexual abuse and parent has not protected/is unlikely to protect	DFFH Child Protection - call the division where the child lives; use 13 12 78 after hours/weekends
Significant concern for wellbeing that does not meet the Child Protection threshold	Seek advice from DFFH Child Protection or refer to The Orange Door, where safe and appropriate
Allegation against a school employee, volunteer, contractor or committee member	Police/Child Protection as above; then Principal/Committee President and CLV/Department. Leadership must check whether the Reportable Conduct Scheme applies and notify the SSR if required.

Step 4 - Notify the school and record

- Tell the Child Safety Officer and principal as soon as possible after urgent external reporting. If the concern is about either person, bypass them and contact the Committee President and the external authority directly.
- Complete the Child Safety Incident Report Form on the same day or as soon as practicable. Record facts, exact words, observations, actions, calls made, advice received, names, dates and times.
- Store the record in the restricted child-safety file. Do not place detailed child-abuse information in general student notes, open WeChat groups or ordinary staff chat.
- Do not contact parents or carers about the allegation until Police or Child Protection confirms it is safe to do so. A parent or carer may be involved in the harm or early contact may affect an investigation.

Step 5 - Keep supporting the child

- Maintain ordinary, respectful contact and avoid making the child repeat the account.
- Follow the safety plan and any directions from Police or Child Protection.
- Offer culturally and linguistically appropriate support without using a family or community member as interpreter where this may compromise safety or confidentiality.
- Monitor wellbeing and make another report whenever new information gives rise to a new belief or increased risk.

5. Weekend and after-hours response

Do not wait until Monday. Our classes and much of our communication happen on weekends. The DFFH after-hours service operates 24 hours on weekends and public holidays. If the concern cannot safely wait, call 13 12 78 or Police.

Contact	When to use	Number
Victoria Police	Immediate danger or urgent police attendance	000
Victoria Police	Non-emergency police assistance / suspected crime	131 444 or local police station
DFFH Child Protection - North	Business hours, child lives in North Division	1300 598 521
DFFH Child Protection - South	Business hours, child lives in South Division	1300 555 526
DFFH Child Protection - East	Business hours, child lives in East Division	1300 360 452
DFFH Child Protection - West	Business hours, child lives in West Division	1300 360 462
DFFH Child Protection after hours	5 pm-9 am weekdays; 24 hours weekends and public holidays	13 12 78
Social Services Regulator	Reportable Conduct Scheme advice/notification if the school is in scope	1300 310 778

6. Roles and decision rights

Role	What this role must do
Every adult engaged by the school	Act on concerns; protect immediate safety; report internally; comply with failure-to-disclose; preserve evidence; maintain confidentiality.
Mandatory reporter	Personally make the Child Protection report when the legal threshold is met; report each time a new belief is formed; do not rely on another person's report unless Child Protection confirms no further report is required.

Role	What this role must do
Child Safety Officer	Support the child and reporter; help locate contacts and complete records; coordinate safe internal action; keep records secure. The officer does not investigate, veto or take over an individual legal duty.
Principal	Ensure immediate safeguards, staffing decisions and support; notify committee leadership; coordinate with authorities; confirm any CLV/Department notifications; check Reportable Conduct Scheme status.
Committee President / authorised leader	Act if the concern involves the principal; reduce or remove known substantial risks; maintain oversight, training, resources and policy review.
Management Committee	Approve and review this procedure; receive de-identified assurance reports; make sure induction and annual refresher evidence is complete.

7. WeChat, email and after-hours communication

It is not automatically unlawful for a teacher to contact a student after school hours. The risk comes from private, unmonitored or personal contact, blurred boundaries, secrecy, inappropriate content, and opportunities for grooming. Our approach is controlled, transparent educational communication - not a complete ban on useful contact.

Allowed when all safeguards are followed

- The communication has a genuine learning, class administration or student-safety purpose.
- The channel is approved by the school. Class WeChat groups are set up or authorised by the school and have at least two adult administrators.
- For a direct message to a student under 18, include the parent/carer or a second authorised staff member wherever practical. If an urgent first message arrives privately, respond only as needed for safety, preserve it, and move the conversation into an approved visible channel.
- Use a school role account where available. Do not use a personal social-media profile or gaming account to connect with students.
- Messages are professional, capable of being retained, and limited to the school matter. Voice/video calls with an individual student must be scheduled, parent/carer informed, and another authorised adult able to observe or join.
- Routine messages should be sent during the school's normal contact window, preferably 8 am-5pm. Messages outside that window should wait unless there is a genuine safety or urgent operational issue.
- Platform terms and Australian age restrictions must be followed. Under-age students must not be directed to create an account contrary to a platform's terms or Australian law.

Never acceptable

- Secret, disappearing or deliberately deleted messages; asking a student to keep contact from parents, carers or the school.
- Personal, romantic, sexual, humiliating or overly familiar content; sharing adult problems; using pet names or flirting.
- Private gifts, money, special treatment, live-location sharing, or requests for personal photos or videos.
- Unapproved one-to-one tutoring, meetings, transport, social outings, babysitting or contact unrelated to school.
- Moving a conversation away from an approved group to a personal channel to avoid oversight.
- Using a personal device to store student images or sensitive child-safety records except briefly in an emergency, after which the material must be transferred securely and removed in line with school instructions.

If a student sends a worrying private message Check immediate safety, call 000 or Child Protection if needed, save the message without editing it, tell the Child Safety Officer/Principal after the external report, and document your actions. Do not conduct a long private counselling or investigative conversation.

8. Privacy, records and communication with families

- Share child-safety information only with people who need it to protect the child, meet legal duties or manage the response.
- Keep the reporter's identity and the child's information confidential as required by law. Do not discuss the matter in the community, even to correct rumours.
- Use a qualified interpreter where needed. Do not use the child, another student, or a person connected to the alleged harm as interpreter.
- Keep original notes and digital evidence. Do not rewrite the original. If a Chinese-language disclosure is translated, retain the original words and record who translated it, when and how.
- Leadership will maintain a restricted register showing the incident reference, date, external report status, safety action and review date. Detailed content remains in the secure case file.

9. Staff induction and refreshers

Before a new staff member or volunteer works with students, the school will provide a child-safety induction. Because staff are part time, the induction may be completed in a short face-to-face or online session, but it must include discussion, a practical scenario and a signed record - not only an emailed policy.

Evidence to retain	Minimum school practice
Induction record	Individual signed code of conduct and Annual Refresher Record before first work with students.
Procedure distribution	Record the document title, version and date given to each person.
Understanding check	Discuss at least one reporting scenario and one WeChat boundary scenario; trainer records whether the staff member answered correctly.
Training completion	Keep certificates for official PROTECT or CLV training where available. If a person cannot access the official module, retain evidence of the school briefing and knowledge check.
Annual refresher	Complete at the annual CLV onsite workshop and whenever the law, contacts, platform arrangements or procedure changes.
Staff meetings	Record a short child-safety agenda item at least once each term, including near misses, online risks or learning from incidents, without disclosing case details.
Governance review	Committee minutes record annual approval/review, gaps identified and actions completed.

10. Adoption and acknowledgement

This procedure takes effect when approved by the School Management Committee. If another school document is inconsistent with an immediate legal reporting obligation, the legal obligation and this procedure's no-delay rule prevail while the inconsistency is corrected.

Approval role	Name	Signature	Date
Committee President	Hong Zhu		
Principal	Jun Ye		
Child Safety Officer	Chang Zhou		

Official sources checked

This procedure was checked against the following official sources on 10 August 2026. Links should be checked at each annual review.

- [Victorian Government - Legal obligations and child safety frameworks](#)

MANDATORY REPORTING & CHILD SAFETY RESPONSE PROCEDURE

- [Victorian Government - 4 Critical Actions for schools](#)
- [DFFH - Child Protection contacts](#)
- [Victorian Government - Community language schools](#)
- [CCYP - Who the Child Safe Standards apply to](#)
- [CCYP - Standard 9: physical and online environments](#)
- [Victorian Government - Reportable Conduct Scheme / Social Services Regulator](#)
- [eSafety Commissioner - social media age restrictions](#)

Operational note: this procedure is designed for school use and does not replace legal advice. Seek advice from Victoria Police, DFFH Child Protection, CLV, the Department of Education or a qualified adviser where the circumstances are unclear.