

# Safeguarding Procedure

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# Safeguarding Procedure

## 1. Purpose:

At the Y, our Safeguarding Vision is to ensure that all children and young people are empowered to feel safe and be safe at the Y, in their families and in communities.

This purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all staff and volunteers are supported to embody this vision by responding to and reporting all safeguarding concerns effectively, meeting our moral and legal responsibilities.

## 2. Scope:

This procedure applies to all Y People of Y Whittlesea in relation to the operations of Y Community School, inclusive of all alternate work locations.

This procedure applies to any complaints or concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or other persons while connected to the school environment.

Child abuse includes

- (a) any act committed against a child involving
  - (i) a sexual offence
  - (ii) a grooming offence under section 49M(1) of the crimes act 1958
- (b) the infliction on a child of
  - (i) physical violence; or
  - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm;
- (c) the serious neglect of a child

## 3. Stay Safe Tell Someone

The Y's Stay Safe, Tell Someone evidenced-based program uses simple images and words and aims to empower all children and young people to tell someone if they see, hear or feel something that worries or concerns them. It was developed in consultation with over 500 children from across Australia from ages 3-18.



## 4. Procedure:

This Safeguarding procedure maps out the specific responsibilities relating to the Y Community School, it's staff and students, and provides a guide as to "what next?", after we have received or become aware of a safeguarding concern or complaint. It is a guide for the staff and volunteers to respond effectively, to inform the right people and take the right actions, keeping the best interests of children and young people at the centre of our response.

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### 4.1 Y Community School Safeguarding Approach.

The Y Community School sits within the overarching policies and procedures of Y Whittlesea. The approach at the school must comply with both the legislated responsibilities of a registered school within the State of Victoria and the licensing requirements of Y Whittlesea as defined by YMCA Australia.

All staff at the school are required to ensure any complaint or concern relating to child abuse is taken seriously and reported appropriately. To ensure this is the case every staff member is required to report any complaint or concern relating to child abuse, including the risk of child abuse, to one of the Child Safety Officers at the school. These are the:

- Campus Wellbeing Leader
- Campus Principal
- Principal

Where the complaint or concern relates to one of either the Campus Wellbeing Leader or Campus Principal, they must report this to the Principal. Where the Complaint or Concern relates to the Principal, they must report this to the Y Whittlesea CEO who will assume the responsibilities listed below.

When one or more Child Safety Officers receives a complaint or concern relating to child abuse, they will ensure the complaint is managed promptly and thoroughly by taking the following actions:

- Ensure any actions required to ensure the immediate safety of all children and young people. This may include actions such as providing safe spaces, removing those alleged to be involved, or developing safety plans to ensure safety while follow up is occurring.
- Ensure all required reporting is undertaken including reporting to Police, Child Protection authorities, the Commission for Children and Young People and the Victorian Institute of Teaching as required. As appropriate they may either make these reports or work together with the staff member who has raised the concerns to ensure these reports are made to the required standard.
- Ensure that there is a high level of support for the children and young people connected to a complaint or concern relating to child abuse and that they are protected from any further harm until the complaint or concern is resolved. Where appropriate, communicate with the family of the children and young people and ensure they are supported as required.
- Ensure that there is full cooperation with law enforcement bodies as required.
- Ensure any staff members involved receive appropriate support and guidance.
- Advise, and where necessary consult, with the Y Whittlesea Safeguarding Lead and advise the CEO of Y Whittlesea as required.
- Complete the required YMCA incident reporting including board reporting.
- Ensure records are made of all complaints or concerns and that these are preserved. This includes ensuring all the relevant details regarding the children, others involved, the nature of the complaint or concern and the nature and outcome of any investigation are recorded with sufficient detail and are preserved as per the specifications in the Y Community School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Ensure that the above actions are carried out with a high level of concern for the privacy and confidentiality of those involved taking into account the need to report and ensure the protection of children and young people.

It is not the role of the school's Child Safety Officers to override the reasonable belief of a staff member. Rather their role is to consult, advise and support and to use their professional knowledge and experience to ensure that every possible action is taken to ensure the protection of children and young people.

Where a child, young person, their family or a staff member believes that their concerns are being minimised or ignored they should report this to:

- The Principal where they are concerned about the response from the Campus Wellbeing Leader or Campus Principal.
- The CEO of Y Whittlesea where they are concerned about the response from the Principal.

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Where a staff member at the school is unable, or believes it is inappropriate, to contact any one of the three Child Safety Officers they should contact Y Whittlesea's Safeguarding Lead, Geny Zambello. Geny can be contacted at [geny.zambello@YWhittlesea.org.au](mailto:geny.zambello@YWhittlesea.org.au) or on (03) 9407 6203.

The above actions are designed to ensure the school acts promptly, effectively and strongly to protect children and young people experiencing or at risk of abuse. Taking the above actions or any actions outlined in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise where a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

The document Four Critical actions for Schools provides a useful guide to actions and can be found at [FourCriticalActions\\_ChildAbuse.pdf \(education.vic.gov.au\)](#)

### 4.2 Ensuring compliance with Safeguarding obligations.

The Board holds the responsibility to ensure that the school's arrangements comply with all required obligations. The Principal has overall responsibility to ensure the school operationalises and meets its safeguarding obligations and to manage the staff, operational requirements and embed a culture of child safety within the school.

Compliance with this procedure and the overall safeguarding obligations of the school is achieved through the following mechanisms.

- The Principal is a permanent member of the Y Whittlesea Safeguarding Committee which is a subcommittee of and reports to the Board. A Board member and the CEO also sit on this committee to ensure a direct link between operational and governance responsibilities. The terms of reference for this committee include oversight of all safeguarding activities, lessons learned and continuous improvement actions.
- Safeguarding is a standing agenda item on the Board's agenda and a safeguarding report is presented to the Board at each meeting. This report addresses compliance with legislation, policies and procedures, a summary of incidents for the previous month and follow up on required actions.
- The CEO, Principal and Safeguarding Lead all attend the Board and are answerable to the Board for their responsibilities.

As identified in the YCS Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy the principal will maintain a child safety risk register and report to the Board regarding the status of the register and any actions required to mitigate risks.

### 4.3 Communication with students, families, staff and community.

To promote a culture of child safety the school will ensure that key information is available in the following ways.

- This procedure along with the *YCS Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*, the *Teen and Youth Friendly Safeguarding Policy*, and the *YCS Complaints Policy* are published on the school's website. Safeguarding items will be regularly included in the schools newsletter.
- The *See, Hear, Feel Something – Tell Someone* poster (see p 2) is displayed at locations through the school.
- The Child Friendly Poster outlining the key actions in the safeguarding procedure (see appendix 10) is displayed at the school in student areas.
- These policies and procedures along with other safeguarding information is an integral part of the staff onboarding process.

When a student or family raise a complaint or concern relating to child abuse the procedure will be discussed with them and their attention will be drawn to the resources identified above to ensure they can easily access information regarding their concern or complaint.

## 5. Considering the diverse needs of children, young people and their families.

The nature of the Y Community School and its local community means that there are a wide range of student and family characteristics represented within the school community. These include diversity in terms of:

- First nations people,
- Culturally and linguistically diverse communities,
-

## Safeguarding Procedure

- Disability, including a range of disabilities among both the student and family groups attending the school,
- Gender identity and sexuality,
- A range of educational attainments and experiences including the potential for distrust of the education system and institutions.
- A range of socio-economic conditions including the likelihood of a high proportion of young people and families who are economically disadvantaged.

In managing the required procedures to protect children and young people and responding to any complaints or concerns of child abuse the school's Child Safety Officers must account and provide for the characteristics of the children and young people involved and their families. To do this they should wherever possible and appropriate:

- Appropriately consult the young people involved regarding their preferred supports and people best able to offer that support.
- Engage support through an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation or through an appropriate indigenous person identified by the young person or family to ensure cultural support for indigenous young people and their families.
- Engage supports through the care team, student support team or other group or agency involved with a young person's care and wellbeing.
- Where required ensure translation and interpretation services are available for students and their families.
- Ensure information is provided in a way that accounts for the disability and / or educational level of those involved and check for understanding throughout the process.
- Ensure that a person-centred approach is used wherever possible to maintain trust and connection with the school as an essential support for the young person / people involved.
- Take any reasonable steps to provide or engage additional supports for families or young people who are struggling to support themselves economically or otherwise.

The effect of these actions should be to ensure appropriate support is in place that reduces any negative impacts caused by a child or young person's circumstances, and which might otherwise reduce the effectiveness of supports, or compromise their experience in dealing with any complaint or concern.

### 6. Signs and Indicators of Abuse

It is important that all school staff are aware of the signs and indicators child abuse or harm. When reading or enacting this procedure the following link contains information regarding the physical and behavioural indicators of child abuse and. All staff undertaking training in this procedure are required to review the information and this will be discussed with your manager to confirm your understanding. The information regarding indicators of abuse can be found at [Identify child abuse | schools.vic.gov.au](https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/identify-child-abuse).

### 7. Managing Disclosures

The graphic below is a guide for Y People when supporting a child or young person who has made a disclosure of abuse or neglect. It is important for young people to feel listened to and that they can speak out about their concerns. At the same time staff need to remember that they are not investigators, and they should not probe for information beyond that required to report a concern. Y People should seek support from their manager or the Safeguarding lead.

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## Managing Disclosures

### Listen

Let them guide the conversation and to take their time. Try not to interrupt or finish their sentences. Ask open and general questions e.g. "Can you tell me what happened?", "Can you tell me more about that?". Your role is to be a supportive listener, not to be an investigator or counsellor. Don't probe for information beyond what is required to report a concern.



### Respect

Let them feel believed. Take their disclosure seriously. Avoid denial or distrustful responses that could discourage them in the future.



### Don't

Don't make promises you can't keep, e.g. you can't keep information a secret. "I can't make that promise, but I can tell you I will do my best to keep you safe". Don't be afraid of saying the wrong thing. A disclosure is a sign that they trust you. As long as you listen supportively they will benefit from talking to you.

### Reassure

Let them know they're allowed to speak up and that they are doing the right thing, e.g. "You are brave for telling me, I believe you". We are here to help. Let them know the next steps: in order for them to be safe we will need share what they have told us with some Y People and our bosses (managers). We may also need to share with some people outside of the Y like agencies that protect children and young people. Let them know they can ask about what will happen next as often as needed.

**For assistance, contact your manager or Safeguarding Lead**  
[safe@ywhittlesea.org.au](mailto:safe@ywhittlesea.org.au)  
 (03) 9407 6222

### Respond

Continue to *Safeguarding Concern and Incident Procedure* for next steps and how to report the disclosure.

### Write

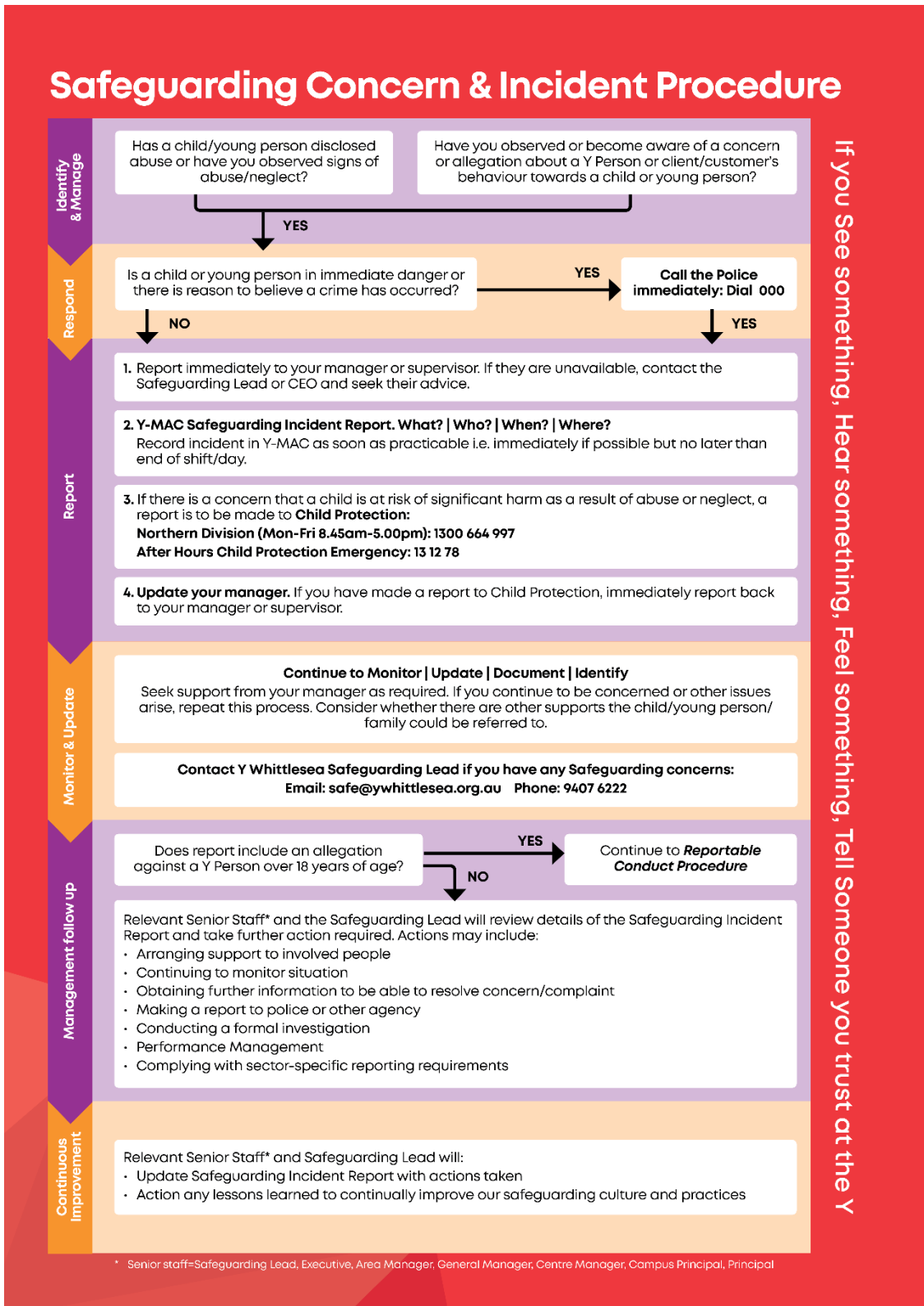
Make a record of the disclosure as soon as possible, including direct quotes of the exact words that the child or young used if possible.



# Safeguarding Procedure

## 7.1 Safeguarding Concern and Incident Procedure

The flow chart below shows the steps in managing a safeguarding concern or incident. Y People should seek support and guidance from their manager or another senior staff member in following this procedure. If the concern is about your manager contact the Safeguarding Lead or CEO immediately.



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### 7.2 Reportable Conduct Scheme - Procedure

The Reportable Conduct Scheme sits alongside other reporting obligations. All Y People over 18 years of age: employees, volunteers and contractors are covered by the scheme.

The scheme is designed to capture inappropriate conduct by an employee, volunteer or contractor that affects children or young people under 18. Reportable conduct includes criminal conduct (e.g. sexual abuse) but also extends to professional breaches and other conduct that contravenes acceptable standards for an employee (e.g. breach of Code of Conduct Policy).

The categories of conduct we are required to report to the Commission for Children and Young People are:

- Sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child,
- Sexual misconduct committed, against, with or in the presence of a child.
- Physical Violence against, with or or in the presence of a child.
- Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
- Significant neglect of a child.

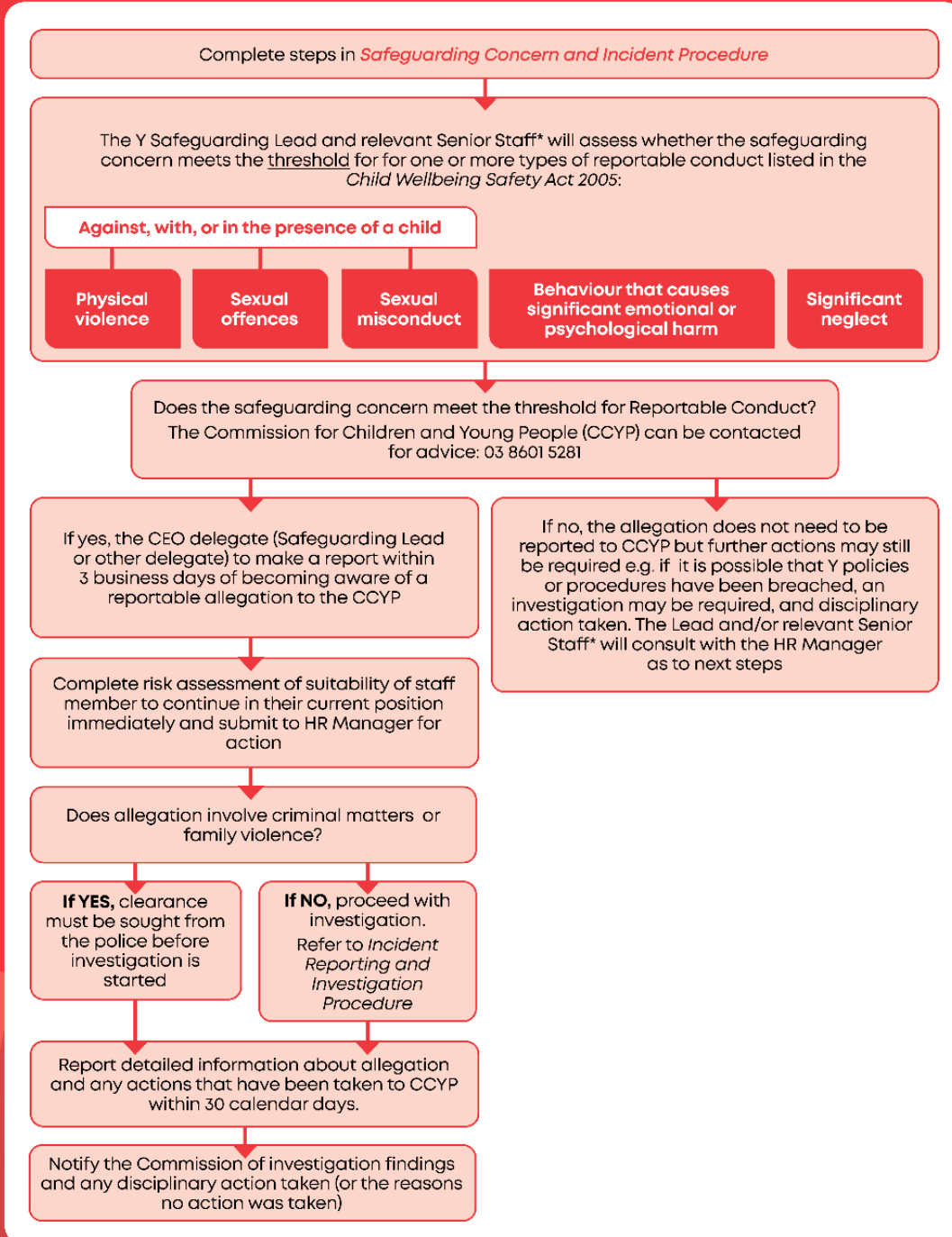
Reportable conduct may apply to conduct which is historic as well as recent conduct. Any behaviour of concern which may be Reportable Conduct must be reported as per *Safeguarding Concern and Incident Procedure* (see flowchart on previous page).

Every instance of reportable conduct must be reported to the commission within 3 days of becoming aware of this. You must report all possible instances to the Campus Wellbeing Leader, the Campus Principal or the principal as soon as you become aware of this. If you are uncertain, contact one of the above people to discuss. They will liaise with the Y Whittlesea Safeguarding Lead and CEO, ensure the report is made and advise you of this and any follow up.



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## Reportable Conduct Procedure



\* Senior staff=Safeguarding Lead, Executive, Area Manager, General Manager, Centre Manager, Campus Principal, Principal

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### 7.3 Preparing to make a Child Protection Report

The relevant child protection agency will ask the Y Person to provide as many details as possible. They will want to know about the events that led to the report and how that has impacted on the child or young person. The information supplied will assist the agency in assessing your concerns.

#### Information to have at hand if known:

##### 1. Information about the child or young person:

Full name, including aliases; age; date of birth, home address, school the child/young person attends.

##### 2. Information about the parents/guardians:

Names, address; phone numbers; custody or care details

##### 3. Details of concerns/risk of significant harm

##### 4. Observations

Provide as much detail as possible such as dates, specific details, (e.g. a bruise- colour, size, location on body)

##### 5. Details of any disclosure

What a child or young person has said to you.

##### 6. Whether the child or young person is aware of the report:

Did you let the child or young person know that you would be making a report?

##### 7. Other information

This could include conversations with parents/guardians, observations recorded by yourself or another Y Person over a period of time, a description of the observations.

### 7.4 Legal Requirements in Victoria for individuals to report.

Y People will be supported after they have submitted a Safeguarding Incident report. It will usually be the Safeguarding Lead or Area Manager/Centre Manager / Principal/ Campus Principal who will make a report to Child Protection after consulting with the staff who has reported the concern.

However, it is important for Y People to understand that in Victoria there are several legal responsibilities for people to report suspected abuse. Any person can make a report to Child Protection or to Police at any time.

#### 1. Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting is the legal requirement for certain professional groups to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities.

##### **Mandatory Reporting Applies to:** Certain groups of people including:

- registered medical practitioners
- nurses
- midwives
- registered teachers and early childhood teachers including those registered through permission to teach arrangements
- school principals
- school counsellors
- police officers
- out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- early childhood workers
- youth justice workers
- registered psychologists
- people in religious ministry.

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### Legal requirement:

In Victoria, under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, mandatory reporters must make a report to the Secretary of the Department of Families Fairness and Housing when, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out duties of their office, position or employment:

- They form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.
- The reporter must make this report as soon as practicable after forming that belief.
- They must make a report each time they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for that belief.

This includes instances where the reporter is aware that the child has suffered physical and or sexual abuse and instances where there is a reasonable belief that the child may be at risk of these.

A report to the Secretary is made by reporting to the child protection intake contact on 1300 598 521.

Belief is defined as a belief on reasonable grounds if a reasonable person practising the profession or carrying out the duties of the office, position, or employment, as the case requires, would have formed the belief on those grounds.

Where a reporter honestly and reasonably believes that all of the reasonable grounds for his or her belief had been the subject of a report to the Secretary made by another person, they may be exempt from making a report. To avoid any doubt in the context of Y Community School, a staff member who advises the relevant member of the school leadership of any concern, they will be advised by the school leadership that a report has been made and the substance of that report. Any staff member who is uncertain should:

- Firstly, discuss this with the campus or school principal.
- If any doubt remains, they should make a report on their own behalf. This includes any instance in which the reporter holds a reasonable belief, and this is not shared by the principal, campus principal or wellbeing leader.

### 2. Failure to Protect Offence

Any person who:

- by reason of the position he or she occupies within the Y Community School or Y Whittlesea has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a relevant child will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by a person of or over the age of 18 years, and
- who knows that there is a substantial risk that the person will commit a sexual offence against a relevant child,

must not negligently fail to reduce or remove that risk.

A relevant child is any child who is under the age of 16 years and is under the care, supervision or authority of the school,

A person who does not fulfil their responsibility to reduce or remove such a risk may, under the Crimes Act, 1958 (Vic), be subject to the Failure to Protect Offence.

At the Y Community School this responsibility applies to all employees. The most senior employee who is aware of such a substantial risk carries the responsibility to ensure the necessary actions are taken.

All staff should ensure they communicate their concerns regarding any risks they may be concerned about to the Wellbeing Leader, the Campus principal or the Principalk as soon as possible.

### 3. Failure to Disclose Offence

Any person of or over the age of 18 (whether in Victoria or elsewhere) who has information that leads the person to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child under the age of 16 years by another person of or over the age of 18 years has an obligation to report that information to a police officer as soon as it is practicable to do so unless the person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so.

This legal obligation arises from the **Crimes Act, 1958 (Vic)** and applies to all People of or over the age of 18 (whether in Victoria or elsewhere). This obligation relates to the reasonable belief regarding a sexual offence committed against any child under the age of 16 within Victoria. It is NOT limited to clients of Y Whittlesea or to employees and volunteers at Y Whittlesea.

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You have a 'reasonable belief' if a reasonable person in the same circumstances as you would believe that an adult had sexually abused a child, for the same reasons you believed it. Examples of circumstances that may lead you to have a reasonable belief include where:

- the child tells you they have been sexually abused,
- the child tells you they know someone who has been sexually abused (which may be a way of talking about themselves),
- someone who knows the child tells you the child has been sexually abused,
- you observe signs of sexual abuse in the child,
- you are a qualified professional who observes the child's behaviour or development, which leads you to believe the child has been sexually abused.

You may have a 'reasonable excuse' for not reporting information about child sexual abuse to police if, for example:

- you fear for your safety, or the safety of another person, except the person you believe committed, or was involved in, the sexual offence, and your failure to report is a reasonable response in the circumstances. Or
- you believe on reasonable grounds that another person has already disclosed the information to police, and you have no further information to add. Please note this includes the circumstance where you have made a 'mandatory report' to the Secretary of the Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH) in accordance with your professional duties (see above) or are aware that another person has done so as DFFH are then required to report the alleged offence to the police.

A person may be exempt from the failure to disclose offence where:

- a victim aged 16 or over has provided the information and requests confidentiality,
- you were a child when you received the information,
- the information would be privileged,
- the information is a 'confidential communication',
- the information is in the public domain,
- you are a police officer acting in the course of your duty.

To make a report you should contact:

- The SOCIT (Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Team) based at Mernda Police Station on (03) 9216 1310
- Tripple zero (000) – this option should always be used where there is an immediate threat to the safety of a child
- Epping Police Station on (03) 9409 8100

### 7.5 Investigations

The Y will investigate allegations involving Y People in accordance with *Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure*. There may be occasions where an external investigator will be engaged to conduct an investigation.

When responding to allegations or concerns against a Y Person, the Y has a responsibility to ensure that each Y Person is treated fairly and that the rights of each individual are respected during an investigation process as well as during any applicable disciplinary process.

#### 7.5.1 Support

The Y will assist in addressing the support needs of people impacted by allegations including the child and their family, the person against whom the complaint is involved, and other Y People impacted by the allegations.

Y people may access the Employee Assistance program at any time. This service provides professional, confidential and free counselling.

**Details:** Lifeworks: 1300 361 008

For online support visit: <https://login.lifeworks.com/>

Log in username is **ymcavic** Password is **ymca**

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### 7.6 Privacy and Confidentiality

It is imperative to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of information relating to any person involved in a safeguarding concern including that of the child, family and anyone involved in an investigation.

Failure to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of such information may lead to disciplinary action. If you are unsure about who you can discuss a safeguarding concern with, please seek advice from your manager or Safeguarding Lead.

### 7.7 Information Sharing in Victoria

In Victoria, information-sharing schemes have been implemented, allowing certain information to be shared.

**At the Y, these schemes apply to:** Kindergartens, Long Day Care, OSCH, Schools

1. **Child Information Scheme (CISS)**, allowing professionals within authorised organisations to share information to support child wellbeing or safety, including in situations where family violence is suspected or established. The scheme allows professionals to gain a complete view of the child/young person they are working with, enabling them to identify wellbeing or safety needs earlier and to act on them sooner. Only information that is relevant to the safety or wellbeing of a child can be shared.
2. **Family violence information Scheme (FVISS)**, enables authorised organisations to share information to facilitate assessment and management of family violence risk to children and adults, with the aim of keeping perpetrators of family violence in view and promote the safety of victim survivors of family violence.

There are requirements around proactively sharing information, requesting information, responding to requests and record keeping. The Y's Children's Services General Managers or the Y Community School Principal, Campus Principal and Head of Wellbeing can authorise the sharing of information under these schemes. Refer to *Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms* for details.

### 7.8 Record Keeping

All records relating to safeguarding concerns and complaints must be recorded securely in YMAC. These records must remain available for a minimum 99 years. For further detail regarding record storage please refer to the detailed table in the *YCS Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*.

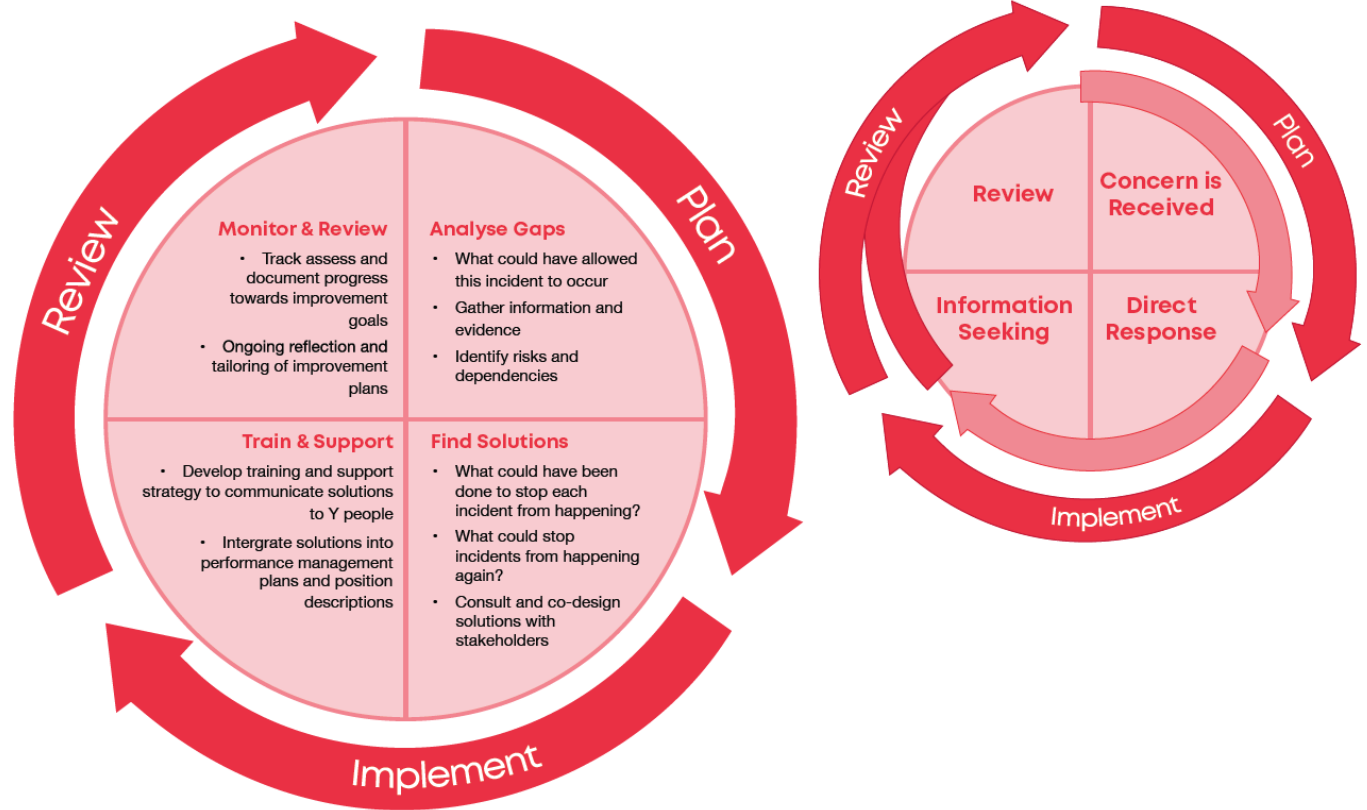
### 7.9 Continuous Improvement Procedure

Each concern is an opportunity for the Y to improve its safeguarding practice, so it is important to ensure that we review how we responded to each concern.

This is enabled by considering what we did, what we could have done, which resources were available and *should be* available, how well prepared the Y Person felt to be able to deal with the concern. This is achieved through the Lessons Learned Tool.

The diagram below shows how the review of the response for each concern feeds into the larger continuous improvement cycle and informs our future-focused business planning in areas such as training and policy review.

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### 7.10 Roles and Responsibilities for Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Role	Responsibility
Board Members	Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation.
CEO	Lead the governance of all Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Responsible for compliance with Reportable Conduct Scheme
Principal (Executive Manager Y Schools)	Ensure effective implementation of the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. Fill the role of one of 3 Child Safety Officers at the school Offer EAP if deemed necessary.
Safeguarding Lead	Review and update the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. Provide advice and guidance to Y People on Safeguarding matters.
Human Resources Department	Support all Y People to undertake relevant Safeguarding training on commencement and ongoing Offer EAP if deemed necessary
Campus Principal & Head of Wellbeing Y Community School	Child Safety Officers at the school Ensure that reporting occurs in a timely manner and that all involved are offered support during the process.
Employees, Volunteers, Contractors, Consultants, Student Placements	Follow all Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Report all safeguarding concerns. Seek assistance or support if unsure of the reporting process or any question relating to the safety of wellbeing of children.

## Safeguarding Procedure

### 7.11 Further contacts and resources

Name	Contact Details	Service
<b>Orange Door</b>	<b>1800 319 355</b> <a href="mailto:nema@orangedoor.vic.gov.au">nema@orangedoor.vic.gov.au</a> 56 Burgundy Street Heidelberg, 3084 9am-5pm Monday - Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adults, children and young people's family violence services</li> <li>Child and family services</li> <li>Aboriginal services</li> <li>Services for people who use violence</li> </ul> Any adult can make a referral to Orange Door
<b>Safe Steps</b>	<b>1800 015 188</b> 24 hours a day, 7 days a week week <u>web chat support service</u> Monday to Friday 9am until midnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for women and children who are victims of family violence</li> </ul>
<b>Kids Helpline</b>	<b>1800 55 1800</b> 24 hours a day, 7 days a week week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a free, private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service for young people aged between 5 and 25</li> </ul>
<b>Rainbow Door</b>	<b>1800 729 367</b> or text <b>0480 017 246</b> 10am-5pm, 7 days a week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>specialist advice to LGBTIQ+ people and their friends and families.</li> </ul>



## Safeguarding Procedure

### 8. Definitions:

<b>'The Y', 'Y' or 'Y Whittlesea'</b>	Refers to YMCA Whittlesea Inc and YMCA Whittlesea Youth and Community Services Ltd
<b>Child or young person</b>	The Y considers a child or young person to be a person under the age of 18 years
<b>Y Person/ Y People</b>	Includes employees, volunteers, contractors or sub-contractors, labour hire employees, apprentices or trainees and volunteers involved with the activities of the Y Whittlesea. It also includes Y Whittlesea Board members and any person serving the Y Whittlesea on a committee or in an advisory capacity.
<b>Client or Customer</b>	Any user of the Y's services including children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents/guardians, and facility users
<b>Harm</b>	Harm to a child or young person, is any detrimental or harmful effect of a significant nature to the child or young person's or other person's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. It is does not matter how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation, a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
<b>Reasonable Belief</b>	Is not the same as having proof. Reasonable belief is formed when a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a reasonable belief might be formed when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person states that they have been abused.</li> <li>• A person states that they know someone who has been abused (sometimes the child, young, vulnerable person may be talking about themselves).</li> <li>• Someone who knows the person states that the child, young or vulnerable person has been abused.</li> <li>• Observations of the child, young or vulnerable behaviours or signs that indicate abuse</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	The involvement of a child or young person in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, they are unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child or young person is not developmentally prepared, or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Children and young people can be sexually abused by both adults and other children or young people who are – by virtue of their age or stage of development – in a position of responsibility, trust or power over the victim.
<b>Sexual Exploitation</b>	A type of sexual abuse involving control of a child through force, threats or manipulation. It can happen to both boys and girls. Often, the first step is someone befriending a young person to gain their trust or have control over them. Children can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know. An abuser can be any age, even the same age as the child.
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	Physical abuse of a child or young person is the intentional use of physical force against a child or young person that results in – or has a high likelihood of resulting in – harm for the child or young person's health, survival, development or dignity. This includes but is not limited to, hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating. Much physical violence against children and young people in the home is inflicted with the object of punishing.
<b>Emotional or Psychological Abuse</b>	Emotional or psychological abuse of a child or young person refers to an inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts towards a child or young person and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child or young person with adequate non-physical nurturing and emotional availability. Such acts of commission or omission are likely to damage a child's or young persons' self-esteem or social competence.
<b>Bullying</b>	Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated overtime. Bullying may take many forms (including direct and indirect) that are often interrelated and can include: verbal, physical, social or psychological. For the avoidance of doubt, bullying includes cyber bullying, which can also have lasting and damaging consequences.
<b>Grooming</b>	Grooming occurs when an adult (person aged 18 years or over) communicates by words or conduct with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority of the child (e.g. the child's parents) with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.

## Safeguarding Procedure

<b>Neglect</b>	Neglect of a child or young person includes both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time to provide for the development and wellbeing of the child or young person, in one or more of the following areas; health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions
<b>Family Violence</b>	Family violence is physical, emotional and/or financial conduct, whether actual or threatened, by a person towards a member of the person's family (or towards the property of a member of the person's family) that causes any other member of the person's family network to fear for, or to be apprehensive about their personal wellbeing or safety.

### 9. Related policies:

- YCS Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- YCS Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Privacy Policy

### 10. Related procedures and supporting documents:

- Incident and Investigation Procedure
- Reportable Conduct Scheme Scope and Procedure
- Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms
- Signs and Indicators of Abuse

### 11. Consequences of breaching this procedure:

All elements of this procedure must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).

### 12. Variations:

Y Whittlesea reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this procedure

### 13. Procedure owner:

The Principal Y Community School (Executive Director Y Schools)

### 14. Document Control:

Review of this procedure will be undertaken yearly. This procedure is due to be reviewed by 1/10/24.

# Safeguarding Procedure

## Appendix 1: Child friendly poster

