



## ST CHRISTOPHER'S INTERNAL SCHOOL PROCESS FOR MANDATORY REPORTING

Responding to and reporting child protection concerns

The approach to responding to and reporting child protection concerns in the joint protocol incorporates [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) (refer to **Child Abuse Support Resource 1**).

At St. Christopher's, a staff member must act, and follow the Four Critical Actions, as soon as they become aware of a child protection incident – that is, when **a child is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, abuse**.

### *Becoming aware of a child protection incident*

There are four main ways in which a school staff member may become aware that a child is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, abuse:

#### **1. Witnessing an incident**

If you witness an incident where you believe a child has been subjected to, or may be at risk of, abuse, including exposure to family violence, you must first take immediate action to protect the safety of the child or children involved and then refer to [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

#### **2. Forming a suspicion or reasonable belief**

All suspicions that a child has been, is being or is at risk of being abused must be taken seriously, including suspicions that the abuse is taking or may take place outside school grounds or areas. If your suspicion develops into a reasonable belief, you must act and refer to [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

#### **3. Receiving a disclosure about or from a current student**

All disclosures must be treated seriously. You should immediately refer to [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

#### **4. Receiving a disclosure about or from a former student**

If you receive a disclosure from a former student about historical abuse, you must act. If the former student is currently of school age and attending a Victorian school, you must immediately refer to [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

If the former student is no longer of school age or attending a Victorian school, you must still report the disclosure to [DHHS Child Protection](#).

## Notes and records

St. Christopher's staff members are to keep clear and comprehensive notes relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse using [PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools.](#)

Even if a St. Christopher's staff member decides not to make a report, they must still accurately document their notes relating to the incident, disclosure or allegation of child abuse using [PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools.](#)

Notes and records must be kept securely on school grounds and must not be destroyed as they may be needed at a later time.

## Disclosures

It is the role of St. Christopher's staff members to reassure and support a child or young person who makes a disclosure of abuse. However, school staff members should never promise to keep any disclosures confidential, as all disclosures of abuse must be reported.

The role of St. Christopher's staff remains the same if disclosures are made by a parent/carer or a sibling, or if disclosures involve family violence.

For strategies on how to manage a disclosure, refer to [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools.](#)

## The Four Critical Actions

There are Four Critical Actions which must be taken when responding to and reporting a child protection incident, disclosure or suspicion:

1. Responding to an Emergency
2. Reporting to Authorities
3. Contacting Parents/Carers
4. Providing Ongoing Support.

### Critical Action 1: Responding to an Emergency

This first step is only applicable if a child **has just been abused** or **is at risk of immediate harm**. If this is not the case, go straight to **Critical Action 2: Reporting to Authorities**.

If the child **has just been abused** or **is at risk of immediate harm**, you must take reasonable steps to protect the child, including:

- separating the alleged victim and others involved, ensuring that if the parties involved are all present at the school, they are supervised separately by a school staff member
- arranging and providing urgent medical assistance where necessary, including administering first aid or calling 000 for an ambulance
- calling 000 for urgent police assistance if the person who is alleged to have engaged in the abuse poses an immediate risk to the health and safety of any person.

If the child protection incident has occurred at St. Christopher's, staff should also ensure that reasonable steps are taken to preserve the environment, the clothing and other items, and to prevent any potential witnesses (including school staff members, volunteers and contractors) from discussing the incident until Victoria Police or relevant authorities arrive on the premises.

### Critical Action 2: Reporting to Authorities

All forms and instances of suspected or alleged child abuse must be reported to the appropriate authority.

Once immediate health and safety concerns have been addressed, the St. Christopher’s staff member must take steps to report the incident, suspicion or disclosure of child abuse as soon as practicable. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence (refer to [Failure to disclose](#)).

There are different reporting procedures depending on:

- whether the source of the suspected or alleged abuse comes from within the school or within the family or community of the child
- the type of abuse.

In all cases, St. Christopher’s staff members must report internally to the Principal or, if the Principal is involved in the allegation, the Leadership Team.

Additionally:

- where the source of the abuse comes from within St. Christopher’s, that is, the suspected or alleged abuse involves a school staff member, volunteer, allied health professional, officer/office holder, contractor or visitor at St. Christopher’s, it must be reported to Victoria Police
- where the suspicion, belief or disclosure relates to sexual abuse or grooming, it must be reported to Victoria Police
- where the source of the abuse comes from within the family or community and is not sexual abuse or grooming, it must be reported to DHHS Child Protection.

The DHHS and DET have deliberately set a low threshold for the formation of a ‘reasonable belief’. For more information, refer to the [Reasonable belief](#) section of this Policy.

[Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) requires all school staff to report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of abuse as soon as possible to the relevant authorities.

**How to make a mandatory report**

The table below describes the information to include when making a **mandatory report** about child abuse or child protection concerns. If a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact Victoria Police immediately.

Making a Mandatory Report	
Step	Description
1. Keep notes	<p>Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour)</li> <li>• the source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person)</li> <li>• the actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with the principal, report to DHHS Child Protection, etc.).</li> </ul> <p>St. Christopher’s staff can use the template provided in <a href="#">PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools</a> to record their notes.</p>

<p><b>2. Discuss concerns</b></p>	<p>Due to the complexity of child abuse incidents, disclosures and suspicions, it is recommended that concerns and observations regarding suspected physical or sexual abuse of a child are discussed with the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team and/or via the MACS Student Wellbeing Information Line.</p> <p>This is not a legal requirement; however, it will help to ensure support is provided to all involved in matters of this nature. The confidentiality of these discussions must be maintained.</p> <p>You should then make your own assessment about whether you are required to make a report about the child or young person and to whom the report should be made.</p> <p><b>It is important to remember that the duty to report abuse or suspicions of abuse exists even if the Principal, member of the Leadership Team or a representative of MACS advises you not to proceed with reporting suspected abuse.</b></p>
<p><b>3. Gather and document information</b></p>	<p>Gather the relevant information necessary to make the report. This should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● full name, date of birth and residential address of the child or young person</li> <li>● details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns</li> <li>● your involvement with the child or young person</li> <li>● details of any other agencies which may be involved with the child or young person.</li> </ul> <p>This information should be collected and documented using <a href="#">PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools</a>. The template is to be used to record as much information as possible to provide when you make your report to either Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection.</p> <p>It is critical that completing the template does not impact on reporting times – <b>if a child is in immediate danger, St. Christopher’s staff need to report the matter to Victoria Police immediately.</b></p>
<p><b>4. Make the report</b></p>	<p><b>To report concerns which are life-threatening, phone 000 or the local police station.</b></p> <p>Where the <b>source of the abuse comes from within</b> St. Christopher’s, that is, the suspected or alleged abuse involves a St. Christopher’s staff member, volunteer, allied health practitioner, officer/office holder, contractor or visitor at the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● contact Victoria Police, which will contact DHHS Child Protection when appropriate</li> <li>● report internally to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the Principal, or the Leadership Team if the Principal is involved in the allegation</li> <li>– MACS Student Wellbeing Information Line (9267 0228).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Where the source of the suspected or alleged abuse comes from <b>within the child’s family or community</b>, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● report sexual abuse and grooming to Victoria Police</li> <li>● report the matter to <a href="#">DHHS Child Protection</a> if you consider the child to be in need of protection due to child abuse, or that they have been, are being or are</li> </ul>

	<p>at risk of being harmed due to any form of abuse, including family violence. If after hours, call the <b>Child Protection Emergency Service on 13 12 78</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● report internally to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the Principal, or a member of the Leadership Team if the Principal is unavailable</li> <li>– MACS Student Wellbeing Information Line (9267 0228).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Document written records of report</b></p>	<p>Make a written record of the report, including the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the date and time of the report, and a summary of what was reported</li> <li>● the name and position of the person who made the report, and the person who received the report.</li> </ul> <p>The information initially recorded in <a href="#">PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools</a> and any additional information provided to either Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection are to be stored securely and maintained <b>indefinitely</b> by St. Christopher’s to ensure that records are accessible upon request by external authorities investigating the matter.</p>
<p><b>6. Additional steps for overseas students</b></p>	<p>Where a child protection incident, disclosure or suspicion involves an international student at the school and the school has issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter for that student (thereby assuming responsibility for the child’s accommodation, support and general welfare), the school will also need to contact the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).</p>

**Reporting that is non-mandatory**

St. Christopher’s staff members, volunteers, contractors and other service providers who are not mandatory reporters nevertheless have professional and moral (and sometimes legal) obligations to report a child protection incident, disclosure or suspicion. Please refer to St. Christopher’s protocols in relation to reporting a child protection incident, disclosure or suspicion that is not the subject of a mandatory reporting obligation.

**How to report allegations of reportable conduct**

The table below describes the information to include when making **an allegation of reportable conduct** about an employee (persons engaged by the entity such as volunteers, contractors, office holders, board members, board committee members, school advisory council members and officers of a religious body) at the school. The Reportable Conduct Scheme is in addition to a St. Christopher’s staff member’s mandatory reporting or criminal reporting obligations. Reference should also be made to the Reportable Conduct Policy if an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

Any allegations of criminal conduct, including physical violence, significant emotional or psychological abuse, sexual offences and significant neglect must be reported to Victoria Police as the priority. However, school staff members may find they also need to make an allegation of reportable conduct for the same incident.

For further support and advice regarding reporting conduct in St. Christopher’s under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, contact the MACS Employee Relations Unit on 03 9267 0431 or [ceoir@macs.vic.edu.au](mailto:ceoir@macs.vic.edu.au).

## Making an Allegation of Reportable Conduct

Step	Description
1. Keep notes	<p>Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a description of the concerns (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour)</li> <li>• the source of those concerns (e.g. observation, report from child or another person)</li> <li>• any actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with the Principal, report to DHHS Child Protection, etc.).</li> </ul>
2. Make the report	<p>As soon as a person forms a reasonable belief that an employee (persons engaged by the entity such as volunteers, contractors, office holders, board members, board committee members, school advisory council members and officers of a religious body) at the school has engaged in reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, you must report this allegation to the school's Principal or, if the Principal is involved in the allegation, the Leadership Team or the Regional General Manager who will notify the MACS Employee Relations Unit on 03 9267 0431 or <a href="mailto:ceoir@macs.vic.edu.au">ceoir@macs.vic.edu.au</a>.</p>

What should the principal of St. Christopher's do about a reportable allegation?

Below are the steps that the principal of St. Christopher's take if there is a potential reportable allegation. These steps are in general order of priority, but the guidance may change depending on the circumstances. **In all cases, reportable allegations must be referred to the MACS Employee Relations Unit as soon as practicable on 03 9267 0431 or [ceoir@macs.vic.edu.au](mailto:ceoir@macs.vic.edu.au).**

Reference should also be made to the Reportable Conduct Policy to ensure that all obligations are complied with in relation to reporting an allegation of reportable conduct.

What if a student or another child informs you of a reportable allegation?	What if a staff member or another adult informs you of a reportable allegation?
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The first step should always be to ensure the student/child is safe. If you believe a child faces immediate danger or risk of harm, contact Victoria Police on 000.</li> </ol> |  |
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<p>2. When speaking with a child or young person, it is important to remember that if they have decided to speak to you, then there is a good chance they trust you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Give the child or young person your full attention.</li> <li>● Listen calmly and empathically.</li> <li>● Reassure the child or young person that it is right to tell.</li> <li>● Accept the child or young person will disclose only what they are comfortable disclosing and recognise the bravery/strength of the child for talking about something that is difficult.</li> <li>● Let the child or young person take their time.</li> <li>● Let the child or young person use their own words.</li> <li>● Don't make promises you can't keep.</li> </ul>	<p>2. Thank the individual for bringing the allegation to your attention. Offer them support and assistance as necessary. If they are a staff member, refer them to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), where available.</p>
<p>3. Tell the child or young person what you plan to do next.</p>	<p>3. Explain to the person making the report that the school will manage the concern confidentially and, to protect all parties, they should not discuss the matter.</p>
<p>4. Take a moment to make a record of the allegations. If appropriate, use <a href="#">PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools</a>. You may also make a note in your diary. If a staff member, parent or other adult was present, ask them to make a record as well.</p>	
<p>5. Consider whether you need to refer the matter to Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection. If necessary, report the matter in accordance with the actions documented in <a href="#">PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools</a> and <a href="#">Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse</a>, using <a href="#">PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools</a>.</p>	
<p>6. If relevant, notify the child's parents following advice in <a href="#">PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools</a> and <a href="#">Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse</a>.</p>	
<p>7. As soon as practicable, contact the MACS Employee Relations Unit for advice (including guidance as to whether the alleged conduct is reportable), support and assistance to discuss the circumstances, and notify the Executive Director of MACS.</p>	
<p>8. If the matter does involve a reportable allegation, the Principal, with the assistance of the MACS Employee Relations Unit, will notify the CCYP with authorisation from the Executive Director of MACS.</p>	
<p>9. Conduct a risk assessment (with the assistance of MACS Employee Relations Unit resources) to determine any measures that should be put in place to manage the person against whom allegations have been made, and to protect the student(s)/child(ren) against whom reportable conduct may have occurred.</p>	

If you think you have a reportable allegation, it is important that you:

- do not say or do anything to suggest to the student that you doubt them or make them feel ashamed to have revealed the allegation
- do not start investigating the allegation, including unnecessarily questioning the student or speaking with the person who is the subject of the allegation, without conducting a risk assessment; otherwise you may be putting the student, the staff member, the school or the investigation at risk.

### Child FIRST/The Orange Door

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, including family violence, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing (e.g. risk-taking behaviour, parenting difficulties, isolation from family or lack of support), **you must still act**. This may include making a referral to or seeking advice from Child FIRST/The Orange Door.

Child FIRST/The Orange Door is a family information, referral and support team run by a registered community service in a local area that can receive confidential referrals about a child of concern. It does not have any statutory powers to protect a child, but can refer matters to relevant services.

You should make a report to Child FIRST/The Orange Door if:

- you have a significant concern for a child's wellbeing
- your concerns are about circumstances that have a low-to-moderate impact on the child
- the child's immediate safety is not compromised
- you and the school have discussed the referral to Child FIRST/The Orange Door with the child's parents/carers, and all parties are supportive of this decision.

Where you believe that the child's parents/carers will not be supportive of the referral, or the child is partaking in any risk-taking activity that is illegal and extreme in nature or poses a high risk to the child or others, you may refer the matter to DHHS Child Protection.

If you are unsure of what action to take in response to your concerns about a child, speak to the Principal or a member of the school's Leadership Team, or contact DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST/The Orange Door for further advice.

For more information, refer to [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

### Making additional reports

After you have made a report, you may continue to suspect that a child is at risk and in need of protection. Any further observations should continue to be recorded and a report made on each separate occasion where a belief has been formed – on reasonable grounds – that a child is likely to be at risk and in need of protection. Additional reports should use the same format outlined above in this Policy at Critical Action 2: Reporting to Authorities.

If there is any suspicion that this relates to a sexual offence involving a person over 18 and a child under 16, then it must be reported to Victoria Police. For more information, refer to the [Failure to disclose](#) section of this Policy.

Where a St. Christopher's staff member is aware that another school staff member has formed a reasonable belief about the same child on the same occasion, or based on the same indicators of abuse, and has made a report to the appropriate authority, the St. Christopher's staff member need not make a further report.

However, if the St. Christopher's staff member has formed a reasonable belief of abuse or significant risk of abuse to the child based on different observations, further indicators or additional information, a further report must be made to the appropriate authority detailing this additional information.



### Critical Action 3: Contacting Parents/Carers

Where it is suspected that a child at St. Christopher's has been or is at risk of being abused, it is critical that parents/carers of the child are notified as soon as practicable after a report is made to the authorities.

St. Christopher's must always seek advice from Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection to ensure that it is appropriate to contact the parents/carers.

In circumstances of family violence, staff of St. Christopher's should:

- take care not to inadvertently alert the alleged perpetrator by notifying parents/carers as it could increase risk of harm to the child, other family members or school staff
- seek advice from DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST/The Orange Door before alerting parents/carers about safe strategies for communicating with a parent/carer who is experiencing family violence and on recommending family violence support services.

Advice from **Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection** will depend on a number of factors, including whether:

- the parents/carers of the child are alleged to have engaged in the abuse (including in circumstances of suspected family violence)
- a disclosure to the parents/carers may result in further abuse to the child
- the child is a mature minor (at least 17 years of age and assessed to be sufficiently mature and intelligent to make decisions for themselves) and has requested that their parents/carers not be notified – the school should insist that another responsible adult is notified in lieu of the parents/carers
- the notification of parents/carers would adversely affect an investigation of the matter by external authorities.

Where the suspicion of abuse or risk of abuse has not yet warranted a reasonable belief, parents/carers should also be notified promptly after the school has carefully considered the factors listed above.

In some circumstances, a child may have returned to the care of their parent/carer before advice has been received from Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection. In these circumstances, staff members of St. Christopher's should not share any information with the parent/carer that may place the child or any other person at risk, or where the child is a mature minor.

For detailed guidance on how to have this conversation with a parent or carer, refer to [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

### Critical Action 4: Providing Ongoing Support

St. Christopher's staff members who witness a child protection incident, receive a disclosure or develop a suspicion of child abuse (including exposure to family violence) have a critical role to play in supporting students impacted by the child protection matter to ensure that they feel supported and safe at the school. Schools also play a critical role in building students' resilience and protective factors, which can reduce the long-term impacts of child abuse by providing them with the opportunity to be supported and heard by a school staff member they trust.

Support provided to students at St. Christopher's includes:

- regularly communicating with the student and their parents/carers where appropriate
- convening a Student Support Group of school wellbeing staff and teachers to plan, support and monitor affected students

- developing Student Support Plans for students impacted by the incident to ensure appropriate levels of care and support are provided depending on their involvement.

You should contact MACS' Student Wellbeing Information Line (9267 0228) for a description of the range of school-based support services that may be available, including SAFEMinds and referrals to family violence services, Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA) or headspace.

Where external authorities are investigating a report of abuse or risk of abuse, it is the role of the Principal of St. Christopher's to ensure that students are supported throughout interviews at the school. For more information on this topic, refer to [School Guidelines 2.19a: Police and DHHS Interview Protocols](#).

St. Christopher's and our governing body have a duty to provide support to school staff members who have witnessed an incident or disclosure, or who have made a report to external authorities about a reasonable belief of child abuse. It is important that we remember that staff members may have also experienced child abuse (including family violence) or be experiencing family violence and abuse in their own lives. St. Christopher's staff members requiring wellbeing support can contact the school's EAP provider.

Information to support Victorian Catholic schools in understanding their obligation to employees and to provide suggestions of how to assist employees experiencing family and domestic violence may be found in the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd's [Family and Domestic Violence: A Guide to Supporting Staff](#).

St. Christopher's should conduct a review of the reporting process four–six weeks after a report has been made to identify if any follow-up support actions are needed. Refer to [PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#) for more information.

*Potential consequences of making a report*

This table describes the potential consequences of making a report.

Potential consequence	Description
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<p>The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or parent of the report</li> <li>● the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed</li> <li>● a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child</li> <li>● a court or tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to provide evidence.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional protection</b>	<p>If a report is made in good faith:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● it does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter</li> <li>● the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews</b>	<p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police may conduct interviews of children and young people at the school without their parent’s knowledge or consent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interviewing children and young people at St. Christopher’s should only occur in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the best interests of the child to proceed in this manner.</li> <li>● DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police will notify the principal or a member of the Leadership Team of their intention to interview the child or young person on the school premises.</li> <li>● When DHHS Child Protection workers/police officers come to St. Christopher’s premises, the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to the child or young person.</li> <li>● When a child or young person is being interviewed by DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, St. Christopher’s staff must arrange to have a supportive adult present with the child or young person.</li> </ul> <p>For more information on these requests and school responsibilities, see MACS’ <a href="#">School Guidelines 2.19a: Police and DHHS Interview Protocols</a>.</p>
<b>Support for the child or young person</b>	<p>The roles and responsibilities of the principal or other school staff in supporting children who are involved with DHHS Child Protection may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● acting as a support person for the child or young person</li> <li>● attending DHHS Child Protection case-planning meetings</li> <li>● observing and monitoring the child’s behaviour</li> <li>● liaising with professionals.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Requests for information</b></p>	<p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Child FIRST/The Orange Door and/or Victoria Police may request information about the child or family for the purpose of investigating a report and assessing the risk to the child or young person.</p> <p>In certain circumstances, DHHS Child Protection can also direct St. Christopher’s staff to provide information or documents about the protection or development of the child. Such directions should be in writing and only be made by authorised persons within DHHS Child Protection. Refer to <a href="#"><u>PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools</u></a>.</p>
<p><b>Witness summons</b></p>	<p>If DHHS Child Protection makes a protection application in the Children’s Court of Victoria, any party to the application may issue a witness summons to produce documents and/or to give evidence in the proceedings. See MACS’ <a href="#"><u>School Guidelines 2.19a: Police and DHHS Interview Protocols</u></a>.</p>

*Responding to complaints or concerns*

St. Christopher’s may receive complaints or concerns about St. Christopher’s staff management of a child protection incident. These complaints or concerns may be voiced by parents/carers or others within the school community.

St. Christopher's should follow its internal complaints-handling procedure and process to ensure that all complaints, concerns or feedback on school policies, procedures or processes are effectively captured and appropriately managed.

It is important that, as a first step, St. Christopher's ensures that the complaint does not raise concerns that child abuse or a risk of child abuse has gone unreported.

If this is the case, St. Christopher's staff should follow [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) to ensure that any new information received through a complaint or concern from a member of the school community is reported to authorities where required.