

# Policy & Procedure

## Child Safe & Mandatory Reporting

Victorian organisations that provide services to children are required under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act to ensure that they implement compulsory child safe standards to protect children from harm.

### Commitment

ICMG Saturday Turkish School is strongly committed to the care and safety of all students' wellbeing. This policy applies to school staff, volunteers, visitors, students on placement and contractors. ICMG Saturday Turkish School has a legal and moral obligation to contact authorities if a child's safety is at risk and fully commits to the legislative responsibilities within the State of Victoria as below.

*Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.*

ICMG Saturday Turkish School is committed to child safety and has zero tolerance for child abuse; all allegations and safety concerns are treated seriously. Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

### MANDATORY REPORTING

ICMG Saturday Turkish School commits to Mandatory reporting requirements of the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) for the protection of children from harm due to physical abuse and sexual abuse. School personnel are mandated under this Act who, in the course of carrying out their duties, forms a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from abuse, school personnel must report that belief and the ground for it as soon as possible.

### FAILURE TO REPORT

All staff members who become aware that an adult associated with the school (employee, contractor, volunteer, student on placement or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse

to a child at the school must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce the risk. If a staff member fails to take reasonable steps, this may amount to a criminal offence and termination of employment.

### FAILURE TO PROTECT

All adults, not just professional who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to the Victorian Police where they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child. Failure to disclose the information may amount to a criminal offence and termination or employment.

Child Abuse includes:

- a) any act committed against a child involving:
  - i. a sexual offence
  - ii. an offence under section 49B (2) of the Crimes Act 1958
- b) the infliction, on a child, of:
  - i. physical violence
  - ii. serious emotional or psychological harm
- c) serious neglect of a child. (Ministerial Order No. 870)

*Crimes Amendment (Grooming Act) 2014* – A grooming offence is committed if the offender communicates by words or conduct with a child under the age of 16 years or their carer or supervisor; and intends to commit a sexual offence involving the child. We support and respect all children, and are committed to providing a safe environment for all children and children of diverse background and children with a disability. The school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

*Working with Children Check Act 2005 (Vic)*

- Outlines the purpose of the WWC Check and what constitutes child-related work
  - Outlines occupations that apply
- Explains relevant Offences and findings that are relevant to the WWC Check
- Sets out obligations of individuals and organisations and how personal information is stored and disposed of  
*Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- Establishes the Victorian Children's Council and Child Safety Commissioner

- Establishes principles for the wellbeing of children in Victoria
- Provides for the notification of births to municipal councils

*Reportable Conduct Scheme* - From 1 July 2017, the Commission for Children and Young People will administer a 'reportable conduct scheme' in Victoria. The scheme will improve oversight of how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct by workers and volunteers. Under the scheme, the Commission for Children and Young People will have the power to: Monitor organisations' investigations of abuse or misconduct and report on trends; share information with key organisations, such as the Working with Children Check Unit and certain professional registration bodies, to improve child safety; inquire into the safety systems of organisations engaged in child-related work; and share relevant information to better protect children from the risks of abuse.

#### 1. Staff reporting obligation of Incidents, disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

- As an employee, volunteer, student on placement or contractor, you play a critical role in protecting children you care for.
- As an employee, volunteer, student on placement or contractor, you must act as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited. Refer to Appendix for Indicator of Abuse & Neglect. Refer to Four Critical Actions for School ICMG Saturday Turkish School Flow Chart & Child Safety Concern Reporting Template
- As an employee, volunteer, student on placement or contractor you must act if you form a suspicion/reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- As an employee, volunteer, student on placement or contractor you must report any observations or suspicions of concerning behaviour that are in breach of this policy and or the Code of Conduct or any other child safe related policy.
- As an employee, volunteer, student on placement or contractor you should discuss your concerns with the Cold

Principal or Child Safety Officer. All concern should be documented.

- If a staff member believes that a child is not subject to abuse, but still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing they must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice for Child First (in circumstance where the family are open to receiving support) or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police. A step to step Guide to Reporting to DHHS is included in Appendix 3. Contact information for the DHHS is included as Appendix 4.

## 2. Responding to an Emergency – Immediate Harm

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

- 2.1.1 Separating the alleged victim(s) and others involved.
- 2.1.2 Administering first aid if required.
- 2.1.3 Calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns.
- 2.1.4 Identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with the Police.
- 2.1.5 Maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

## 3. Reporting to Authorities

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

## 4. Reporting if the source of suspected abuse is an employee, volunteer, student on placement or contractor

- 4.1 You must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor or volunteer to Victoria Police.
- 4.2 You must also report internally to the School Principal. If in conflict report to another staff member in authority within management team.
- 4.3 If the suspect is an employee they will be stood down immediately pending the outcome of an investigation.

## 5. Reporting if the source of suspected abuse is from within the family or community (External)

5.1 You must report to Victorian Police or DHHS Child Protection as per Mandatory Reporting & Child Safe requirements students who are:

5.1.1 In need of protection from child abuse.

5.1.2 At risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, emotional stability or development. Child Safety Policy – ICMG Saturday Turkish School Child Policy

5.1.3 At risk of exploitation or neglect.

5.1.4 In the process of being groomed. You must also report all instance of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming – befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, and sometimes the family, to lower the child's inhibitions for child sexual abuse) to Victoria Police.

5.1.5 You must also report all instances to the School Principal. (Refer to Appendix 3)

#### 6. Contacting parents/carers

6.1 The School Principal must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

6.1.1 **NOT TO CONTACT** the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish their parents/carers to be contacted).

6.1.2 **TO CONTACT** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on

#### 7. Providing ongoing support the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

7.1 ICMG Saturday Turkish School will provide support for children impacted by abuse.

7.2 ICMG Saturday Turkish School will develop a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of the schools' responsibility of duty of care.

7.3 ICMG Saturday Turkish School will closely monitor children and siblings of family after any incident/report.

7.4 ICMG Saturday Turkish School will assist families by providing information and referrals for families showing signs of conflict, mental illness, addiction, significant social or economic disadvantage or any factor that may impact on the child's wellbeing.

## 8. Screening & Recruitment of School Staff

8.1 ICMG Saturday Turkish School takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled employees. The School selection criteria and employment advertisements clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and our awareness of social and legislative responsibilities. A rigorous screening process is applied in the recruitment of employees, volunteers and contractors.

8.2 When selecting employees, volunteers, student on placement and contractors ICMG Saturday Turkish School will:

8.2.1 Obtain a National Police check and an International Police check if the applicant resided overseas within the last 12 months.

8.2.2 Obtain proof of personal identity.

8.2.3 Review their history of working with children.

8.2.4 Obtain at least 3 references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children, history, including one from the most recent employer.

8.2.5 Verify all references by contacting the referee's landline and asking child safe related questions.

8.2.6 Ensure all position description include ICMG Saturday Turkish School's commitment to Child Safety.

8.2.7 Where immediate tradespeople need to undertake work a visitor onsite will not be supervised and be under clear direction of designated ICMG Saturday Turkish School employee

8.3 ICMG Saturday Turkish School monitors and assesses the continuing suitability of school staff, volunteers and contractors to work with children through appraisals, performance and conduct management procedures.

## 9. Child Safety – Staff Education & Training

9.1 ICMG Saturday Turkish School provides employees, volunteers with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge in abilities to address child safety matters. This includes ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that all staff understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

9.2 ICMG Saturday Turkish School provides visitors, students on placement and contractors information on their legal

obligations and child safe expectation via an agreement and an induction procedure to protect children.

9.3 All staff must undertake annual Mandatory Reporting Training.

9.4 New staff will be trained and informed at induction of their legal and moral responsibilities in relation to child safe

9.5 Volunteers, students on placement and contractors will also be made aware of their obligations to protect children.

9.6 Child safety is a regular agenda item for all staff meetings.

## 10. The Empowerment of Children

10.1 ICMG Saturday Turkish School recognises the importance of empowering all children in their care and teaching Personal Safety strategies.

10.2 ICMG Saturday Turkish School is committed to helping children understand the Code of Conduct in child friendly language.

10.3 ICMG Saturday Turkish School is committed to providing children with appropriate books and materials in child friendly language that support their own safety.

10.4 ICMG Saturday Turkish School will support parents and carers to reinforce personal safety messages at home.

