

Child Safety Incident Response and Reporting Procedure

Workplace Relations & Safety (People & Safety, Executive)

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1. Introduction

Monash City Council (MCC) ensures that all personnel strive for the highest possible standards in safeguarding children and young people from abuse. The Child Safety Incident Responding and Reporting Procedure (Procedure) outlines the steps Councillors, employees and other personnel must take when responding to and reporting incidents of suspected or actual child abuse once they form a reasonable belief.

This document should be read alongside the Child Safety Policy.

2. Commitment to Safeguarding Children and Young People

MCC values all children and young people and is committed to being a child-safe organisation. MCC has **zero** tolerance for child abuse and takes all child abuse allegations seriously. Safeguarding children and young people is **everyone's responsibility**, and MCC is committed to building a community that is safe and inclusive of all children and young people.

3. Scope

The Procedure applies to Councillors, employees and other personnel. This applies irrespective of their role or whether they work directly with children or not. There are no exclusions to the application of this Procedure for anyone representing MCC.

This document applies to personnel representing MCC who have contact with children and young people (in person or online), even if their contact is incidental and not a usual part of their role. Personnel with direct contact with children and young people must be particularly vigilant due to frequent and increased contact with children and young people.

Personnel	Definition
Councillor	A democratically elected member of Monash City Council.
Employee	Any worker directly employed by MCC, whether full-time, part-time or casual.
Other Personnel	<p>For the purpose of this Policy, reference to Other Personnel includes the following people whilst they are performing work for MCC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contractors or Consultants• workers supplied by a provider (e.g., labour hire, employment agency).• volunteers; and• secondees. <p>It also includes the following people while the personnel carry out work for MCC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual business owners (who employ or engage staff in a business that exercises care, supervision, or authority over children); and• Directors or office holders of companies when they are engaged by MCC through that company (e.g. sole directors)

4. Responding to Disclosures

4.1. From a Child or Young Person

1. Discretely separate the child or young person and listen carefully to their account.
2. Allow them to speak in their own words and time. Use appropriate communication methods if there is a disability, impairment or language barrier.
3. Remain calm and use a neutral, non-judgemental tone. Reassure the child or young person that you take their disclosure seriously.
4. Explain the need to share the information. Sometimes, the child or young person will request you keep the information confidential. Explain that due to the serious nature of the disclosure, and the need to keep them safe, that you must tell the appropriate authorities what they have shared. You can reassure them that no one who doesn't need to know, will know about what they have disclosed. Explain them that the information may be shared with the police, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection), another MCC Officer, and where appropriate, their parent/guardian or carer.
5. Do not make promises you cannot keep but assure them you will do your best to keep them safe.
6. Comfort the child or young person if distressed; however, avoid physical contact unless initiated by the child or young person. Physical contact must be at scale with the initiation and comfort level of the child or young person.
7. Avoid investigative, intrusive or repetitive questions.
8. Do not assess the validity of such allegations or concerns. Disregard factors such as the authority or position of the persons involved and any pre-existing views about the good character, or otherwise, of any person involved or under investigation.
9. Follow MCC's reporting process as per Section 5 of this procedure.

4.2. From a Parent, Guardian, Carer, or Other Member of the Public

1. Acknowledge the seriousness of the concern. Inquire about the child or young person's wellbeing.
2. Allow them to describe the incident or reason for concern in their own words. Avoid asking unreasonably intrusive or invasive questions.
3. Take notes during the discussion.
4. Explain the information will be shared with MCC management, and potentially the police, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection), and/or other regulatory body as appropriate.
5. Do not make premature promises. Ensure you aim to keep the child or young person safe within your power or control.
6. Do not assess the validity of such allegations or concerns. Disregard factors such as the authority or position of the persons involved and any pre-existing views about the good character, or otherwise, of any person involved or under investigation.
7. Report all allegations or concerns by following MCC's reporting process as per Section 5 of this procedure.

4.3. In an Emergency

If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of abuse or the situation constitutes an emergency:

1. Separate the alleged victim and others involved. Ensure both/all parties are supervised by MCC employees or other personnel, if possible.
2. **If urgent medical assistance is required:** arrange for the nearest First Aid Officer to assist. Call 000 and follow instructions from emergency service officers.
3. **If urgent police assistance is required:** Call 000 and follow instructions from emergency service officers.
4. Preserve the scene, taking reasonable steps to preserve the environment, clothing and other items until authorities arrive. Prevent discussion of the incident among those involved to the best of your ability.
5. Take note of potential witnesses to inform the authorities.
6. Notify your manager as soon as it is safe and possible for you to do so.
7. Follow MCC's reporting process as per Section 5 of this procedure.

5. Reporting: Who can/should/must report

5.1. Member of the public

A member of the public may make a report or disclosure to any MCC officer. If this occurs, follow the instructions as per 4.2 of this procedure. Alternatively, a member of the public may make a disclosure or report via anyone of the following methods.

In writing:	Private and Confidential Child Safety Officer People & Safety PO Box 1, GLEN WAVERLY VIC 3150
Via email:	childsafestandards@monash.vic.gov.au
Online:	Via the complaints form
Telephone:	03 9518 3555 Ask to speak with the Child Safety Officer Advise that you wish to make a report in relation to a child safety concern.
In person:	Ask to speak with the Child Safety Officer or speak with any other employee. Monash Civic Centre, 295 Springvale Road GLEN WAVERLY VIC 3150

5.2. Children and young people

A member of the public may make a report or disclosure to any MCC officer. If this occurs, follow the instructions as per 4.1 of this procedure.

When receiving a report or disclosure from a child or young person, it is important to make concessions based on their communication level or ability. This means that the disclosure will often be received verbally, and notes recorded by the officer receiving the complaint.

5.3. Employees

Employees witnessing or becoming aware of the child safety concern are responsible for ensuring that a report is made. If more than one person witnesses or become aware of a child safety concern, relevant parties should verify that a report has been made and by whom. Employees should first inform their People Leader (if appropriate) for support in making the report. A [Child Safety Report](#) should then be submitted via MCC's safety management system.

5.4. Other Personnel (Volunteers, Contractors and Third Parties)

All volunteers engaged by MCC must immediately report any child safety concerns to their supervisor.

All contractors engaged by MCC must immediately report any child safety concern to their designated MCC Contract Manager. This ensures the matter is escalated through the MCC's child safety reporting process without delay. Similarly, any other third-party individuals or organisations working with MCC must report concerns to their initial point of contact person within MCC. These contacts will then follow MCC's internal child safety procedures, including notifying the Child Safety Officer and/or the Workplace Relations and Safety team and authorities where required.

5.5. Councillors

Reports from Councillors

Must be made to the CEO, or directly to the Manager Workplace Relations & Safety. If the concern relates to the conduct of the CEO, the report must be made to the Social Services Regulator (SSR) on 1300 782 978 **within three business days**.

Reports related to Councillors

Reports in relation to the conduct of Councillors must be made to the Manager Workplace Relations & Safety. Given the unique employment / engagement relationship of Councillors, actions will be undertaken within the context of legal advice and consideration of Protected Disclosure legislation.

6. When must a report be made?

Reports to other authorities/regulatory bodies, and via MCC's safety management system, must be made as soon as reasonably possible, and before the end of the workday.

6.1. A report must be made anytime:

- there is a **disclosure** from a child or young person,
- a **disclosure** by a parent, guardian, carer or other member of the public,
- you witness an **incident**, and have formed a reasonable belief that a child is unsafe or at risk of being harmed, or
- you become aware of a **breach** or **potential breach** of MCC's Child Safety Policy, Procedures, and/or Code of Conduct.
- Any **concern** you have for a child's welfare that is engaged with MCC services/programs.
- **Allegations** raised that involve suspected or actual child abuse.
- Any **near-miss** that had the potential to cause harm to a child or young person, however an incident was avoided.

6.2. This may include occasions such as:

- A child or young person shares information with you about abuse, harm and/or neglect they have experienced. This disclosure could be directly shared or reasonably inferred. (E.g. A child or young person states or implies that they are being harmed.)
- A concern raised by a parent, guardian, carer or member of the public, suspecting abuse, harm and/or neglect of a child or young person.
- You witness behaviour that you reasonably believe could cause a child or young person harm, constitute abuse, to be taken advantage of or exploited. (Note: there does not need to be proof or evidence, if you form as reasonable belief, you should always report).
- Any other child safety issue, including hazards in an area that children frequent (E. g. aquatic centre, park/open space, library, gallery, event).

6.3. A report may be about:

- The conduct of employees, other personnel or Councillors that occurs during work or work-related activities,
- The conduct of employees, other personnel or Councillors that occurs outside of work,
- The conduct of a member of the public that occurs in connection with MCC work, such as a program partner,
- The conduct of a service user at an MCC service or premises,
- Any child or young person under MCC's care or accessing MCC services or facilities.

There is no such thing as a wrongful report. So long as your motivation is genuine care and concern for a child or young person's safety, there is no disadvantage to making a report.

It is better to make a report, have it investigated by the appropriate authorities, and have it be determined that no further action is required, than ignore your instincts.

7. Reporting Procedure

MCC values all children and young people. We are a child-safe organisation and have zero tolerance for child abuse. MCC is required by law to comply with Victorian child safety legislation.

If a child abuse disclosure is made to you, or you form a **reasonable belief** that a child has been harmed or is at risk, **you must report it as soon as possible**.

7.1. Reporting to Authorities

- a) If a child is in **immediate danger** call 000 (Police) before doing anything else.
- b) If the child or young person is a participant in your service, make a report to:
 - DFFH East Division (Child Protection) – 1300 360 391 (business hours) / 13 12 78 (after hours) for urgent welfare concerns involving immediate risk of significant harm.

If the child is a member of the public and **not known to you** immediately inform your People Leader and contact the appropriate external agency as per the below:

- Victoria Police – 131 444 (non-emergency criminal matters)

- DFFH East Division (Child Protection) – 1300 360 391 (business hours) / 13 12 78 (after hours) for urgent welfare concerns involving immediate risk of significant harm
 - The Orange Door – 1800 354 322 for wellbeing concerns where there is no immediate risk of significant harm
- c) If you are unsure if external reporting is required, contact the Child Safety Officer or Manager Workplace Relations and Safety.
- d) If reporting to an external authority is not required proceed to 7.2.

7.2. Internal Reporting

If a child abuse disclosure is made to you, or you form a reasonable belief for any other reason that a child has been harmed or is at risk, **you must report it as soon as possible** via MCC's safety management system, using the [Child Safety Report Form](#).

Record as many details as possible, including:

- Name, age, and contact details of the child or young person (if known)
- Name and contact details of the alleged offender
- Date, time, and location of the incident or disclosure
- Description of what was disclosed or observed (use the person's own words where possible)
- Any immediate actions taken (e.g., ensuring safety, contacting emergency services)

It is also advisable to let your People Leader know you have made the report.

If you and your People Leader need support during this process, contact the Child Safety Officer or Manager Workplace Relations and Safety.

Maintain confidentiality and only share information with relevant officers.

7.3. Internal Assessment

Reports are reviewed by MCC's Child Safety Officer and acted upon as required. Potential further actions may include one or more of the following:

- External reporting (if not already occurred)
- Referral to support organisation
- Referral to the Workplace Relations team for investigation of staff conduct
- Referral to Legal and Governance for specialist advice
- Meeting with service providers to debrief and discuss continuous improvement actions

Where the situation is ambiguous and/or it is unclear what further actions are required, the Child Safety Officer will call a meeting of the **Safeguarding Children and Young People Incident Response Team** for discussion and advice.

8. Mandatory Reporting Responsibilities

Certain professionals have additional legal requirements to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities, known as mandatory reporters.

In Victoria, under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, mandatory reporters must make a report to child protection if:

- While practising their profession or carrying out the duties of their office, position, or employment,

- They form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection from physical or sexual abuse.

The following mandatory reporters must report any reasonable belief as required by their professional regulator, as well as follow internal reporting requirements:

- registered medical practitioner
- nurse
- midwife
- person who is registered as a teacher under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 or has been granted permission to teach under the Act, including all early childhood teachers
- registered psychologists
- out of home care workers
- early childhood workers

9. Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Reportable Conduct Scheme (Scheme) is a government-mandated reporting system, aimed at strengthening child protection within organisations that work with children, such as MCC. The regulatory body, the Social Services Regulator (SSR), monitors MCC's investigations on reportable conduct, assesses organisational responses and can audit investigation quality. The regulator may also refer substantiated cases to other regulatory bodies such as the Department of Justice, professional registration entities or the police.

Matters that would be considered Reportable Conduct under the Scheme include allegations against MCC employee's or Other Personnel, of conduct towards a person under the age of 18 that may be considered:

1. **Sexual offences** (e.g., assault, indecent acts, grooming, child abuse material)
2. **Sexual misconduct** (e.g., inappropriate sexual conversations or relationships)
3. **Physical violence** (e.g., hitting, shaking, using objects, threats causing harm)
4. **Emotional or psychological harm** (significant distress, regression, self-harm patterns)
5. **Significant neglect**

The Scheme complements, not replaces, mandatory reporting of criminal acts or family violence to Police, Child Protection or other authorities and regulators.

Conduct can be considered reportable whether it occurred inside or outside the workplace, and it does not matter whether a person is in a child-facing role.

The Scheme applies only to adults (18+), and subjects of allegations under 18 are not captured under this Scheme.

Allegations of reportable conduct will be managed and investigated under MCC's Managing Misconduct Procedure by Workplace Relations, and reported to the [Social Services Regulator \(SSR\)](#) by the Child Safety Officer, as per regulatory requirements. Notification to the police and/or other regulatory body may also be required.

The Child Safety Officer and/or Manager, Workplace Relations & Safety must:

- Notify the Social Services Regulator (SSR) within 3 business days using the Reportable Conduct Scheme Notification Form.
- Provide SSR with a 30-day update on investigation progress, actions taken, and responses from involved personnel.

- Cooperate with Police and authorities as required.
- Take steps to protect children or young people, which may include redeployment, increased supervision, or suspension of implicated personnel pending investigation outcomes.

10. Supporting Resources

- Child Safety Policy.
- Child Safety Code of Conduct.

11. Related Legislation

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2014
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- The Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Worker Screening Act 2020

12. Review

This procedure will be reviewed at least every four years, in consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, including but not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes/learnings, and other matters deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer.

13. Document Version

Version Number	Date	Author	Reviewed By	Approved By	Comments
1	March 2026	Child Safety Officer	Manager Workplace Relations and Safety	CEO	

14. Contact

If you have any questions about this Policy, please contact the Child Safety Officer by emailing childsafestandards@monash.vic.gov.au or calling on 9518 3555.