



Child Safety and Child Abuse Response and Reporting procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) This Procedure is effective from 23 March 2023.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This Procedure outlines the process that students, staff and associates are required to follow when they have concerns about the safety of a person under the age of 18 ('child').

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This Procedure applies to all students, staff and associates of the University.

Section 4 - Policy

(4) This Procedure is pursuant to the [Child Safety policy](#).

Section 5 - Procedure

Child abuse reporting obligations

(5) This Procedure includes information on how to report child abuse concerns within the University and to external authorities. It does not supersede legislative reporting requirements and is intended to be complementary to those requirements.

Identifying child abuse

(6) Students, staff or associates may have reasonable grounds for believing a child who is a student or visitor or who comes to the attention of a staff member, student or associate in the course of their employment, study, research or other connection to the University, is in need of protection, including in any of the following circumstances:

- a. where there are reasonable concerns about significant harm to a child;
- b. physical abuse of, or non-accidental or unexplained injury to, a child;
- c. a disclosure of sexual abuse by a child or witness, or a combination of factors suggesting the likelihood of sexual abuse, such as the child exhibiting concerning behaviours;
- d. emotional or psychological abuse and ill treatment of a child impacting on the child's stability and healthy development;
- e. child exploitation; committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a

child/possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material/committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of grooming or online grooming/using a minor for profit, labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage;

- f. persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision where there is a likelihood of significant harm to the child, or the child's stability and development;
- g. persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability where there is a likelihood of significant harm to the child, or the child's stability and development;
- h. where a child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the parents or caregivers are unwilling, or unable to protect the child;
- i. where a child appears to have been abandoned, or where the child's parents are dead or incapacitated and no other person is caring properly for the child;
- j. grooming of a child under 16 years of age by a person aged 18 years or older;
- k. definitions as defined by the World Health Organisation relating to types of child abuse can be found at the [Australian Institute of Family Studies](#).

(7) Students, staff and associates must respect confidentiality and comply with the [Privacy policy](#) when dealing with suspected child abuse. Details of the case and the identity of the child and their family may only be discussed with those directly involved in the management of the child's situation and to meet the reporting obligations set out in this Procedure and in the legislation. Advice may be sought from the Privacy Officer via privacy@deakin.edu.au.

Individual Mandatory Reporting Obligations

(8) The [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005](#), imposes an obligation on medical practitioners, nurses, midwives, psychologists, social workers, youth or child workers (welfare/justice), teachers, school principals and police officers to make a report to Child Protection if, while acting in the course of their employment or professional duties, they reasonably form the belief that a child is in need of protection. It is a criminal offence to not comply.

(9) All adults in Victoria are required to report sexual crimes against children (under the age of 16) to police under section 327 of the [Crimes Act 1958 \(Vic\)](#). It is a criminal offence to not comply.

How to report child abuse concerns

(10) In a situation of grave and immediate life threatening risk to a child, staff, students and associates must notify police immediately by telephone on 000.

(11) If there is a risk to the immediate safety of a child (non-life-threatening), staff, students or associates should immediately telephone [Child Protection](#) in their local government area (business hours) or the Child Protection Crisis Line after hours on 13 12 78. If the life-threatening or other immediate risk is occurring on campus, they should also telephone Deakin Security on 1800 062 579. Child Protection will only investigate if the abuse is by an adult against a child aged under 16 years.

(12) If the incident relates to a student, staff member or associate or arises in the course of employment, study or other connection to the University contact the Deakin Child Safety Officer via child-safety@deakin.edu.au. The Deakin Child Safety Officer (or nominee) will confirm details of the child safety concern.

(13) In addition, staff, students and associates must comply with individual applicable mandatory reporting obligations set out in clauses 8 and 9 of this procedure. The Deakin Child Safety Officer (or nominee) can answer any questions in relation to mandatory reporting.

Reportable Conduct

(14) Deakin staff and associates are required to notify the Child Safety Officer via [child-](#)

safety@deakin.edu.au immediately after forming a reasonable belief that a member of the University has engaged in reportable conduct

(15) Allegations of reportable conduct may also be made by persons external to the University, in the manner described above.

(16) Alternatively a report may be made via the independent and external service [Stopline](#) contracted by the University to receive reports from anyone who has knowledge of any unlawful or unethical conduct by a Deakin staff member, student or associate. Reports to [Stopline](#) may be made anonymously.

(17) Within three business days after becoming aware of a reportable allegation, the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) will notify the Commission for Children and Young People that a reportable allegation has been made against a member of the University and provide the Commission (within the prescribed period of 30 calendar days) detailed information about the Reportable Allegation and any action taken or proposed by the University.

(18) Deakin University will co-operate with any investigation undertaken by Victoria Police, the Commission for Children and Young People or other regulatory body; and will ensure that any internal workplace or student misconduct investigation, aimed at gathering and examining information to establish and make findings in relation to any relevant internal matter, does not interfere with police investigations.

(19) The Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) will determine whether (and when) it is appropriate to undertake an internal investigation or refer the matter to an appropriate internal process. An internal investigation would generally be warranted where a student, staff or associate is implicated in the allegation and is still involved with Deakin. If an allegation might involve criminal conduct and has been reported to Victoria Police, Deakin will not start their own investigation until and unless police have provided clearance to commence.

How to seek support

(20) Staff may seek support from their manager or supervisor in reporting their child abuse concern or from the Deakin Child Safety Officer via child-safety@deakin.edu.au.

(21) Students, staff or associates who are aged under 18 years and are concerned about their own safety are encouraged to seek help and support by contacting the Deakin Child Safety Officer via child-safety@deakin.edu.au.

(22) Further information for Deakin staff is located on the [Child Safety DeakinHub site](#).

Section 6 - Definitions

(23) In addition to the definitions contained in the [Child Safety Policy](#):

- a. immediately (for the purposes of notification in clause 13) means as soon as reasonably practicable, within a period of 24 hours or if after hours, the next business day
- b. Reportable Conduct means:
 - i. a sexual offence (committed against, with, or in the presence of a child, irrespective of whether or not criminal proceedings in relation to that offence has commenced or concluded);
 - ii. sexual misconduct (committed against, with, or in the presence of a child);
 - iii. physical violence (committed against, with, or in the presence of a child);
 - iv. any behaviour that causes (or is likely to cause) significant emotional or psychological harm to a child;
 - v. significant neglect of a child.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Kerrie Parker Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University Services dvc-us@deakin.edu.au
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