

# STEP BY STEP GUIDANCE FOR CONCERNS, INFORMATION AND INCIDENTS OF CHILD ABUSE



## All workers\* must respond to and report all concerns and information about child abuse.

- Child abuse encompasses all forms of abuse and/or the neglect of anyone under the age of 18, including physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse, and exposure to or involvement in domestic and family violence.
- Child sexual abuse is any act (including grooming) that exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual activities that are beyond their understanding, contrary to accepted community standards or outside what is permitted by law.

If you have any concerns about child abuse or if you are unsure about your reporting obligations phone the [Strong Families Safe Kids Advice Referral Line](#) on 1800 000 123.

*All children and young people have the right to feel safe and be heard, respected and protected from harm*

The Department for Education, Children and Young People is committed to safeguarding children and young people. We are committed to help them:



feel **safe** and are safe



be **secure** in the knowledge that they can trust us to listen, be present, care, believe and stand up for them when we find out that they are not or do not feel safe



know that they will be **supported** while we take visible and effective action to protect them from harm or further harm, and that we will support them to recover, rebuild trust, heal and grow

\* A worker is any individual engaged by the department who is a member of staff, volunteer, trainee or student on work experience placement, contractor or sub-contractor over the age of 18.

For the definition of any terms used in this Guidance, please refer to the [Safeguarding Framework](#).

## STEP 1

### PROVIDE IMMEDIATE SAFETY

1. If you have any concerns or become aware of information or evidence of child abuse and there are **immediate threats** to safety or wellbeing, you must ensure that the child or young person is and feels safe, and address identified risks.
2. If urgent police or medical assistance is required, phone **000**.
3. Notify your **manager/principal**.
4. Managers/principals must refer to the [additional guidance](#).

## STEP 2

### PROVIDE SUPPORT, SEEK ADVICE

1. Make sure the **safety and best interests of the child** are prioritised over all other considerations. Put measures in place to enable them to **feel and be safe, secure and supported** including having a parent, carer or other support person present if appropriate.
2. Uphold the rights of the child. All children and young people have a right to be safe, listened to and believed, consulted and actively participate in all decisions that affect them.
3. If a child or young person tells you they have been abused, are at immediate risk or are displaying signs of abuse or trauma:
  - a. Reassure them and tell them what will happen next and why and provide them with a choice as appropriate. For example, they may choose to be with you when you make a report and call (or choose not to call, if appropriate) parents or caregivers.
  - b. If you need to ask questions for mandatory reporting, be supportive, sensitive and responsive to any trauma they may be experiencing. You must not interview the child or investigate further (unless authorised by the department).
4. Seek early support from your manager/school principal to provide appropriate support.
5. The [Office of Safeguarding Children and Young People](#) provides guidance for managers responding to different types of incidents involving child abuse.

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## STEP 3


### REPORT AND RECORD

1. You must promptly report any concerns and information about child abuse, including information about abuse at any place or time – present or past, in the broader community or online. **Failure to report child abuse is an offence.**
2. As a DECYP worker **you are required to:**
  - For Harmful Sexual Behaviour only**
    - a) Stop here and follow the process in the [Responding to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of harmful sexual behaviour initiated by a child or young person](#)
  - For Child Abuse (not including harmful sexual behaviour)**
    - a) Report to the Child Safety Service through the [Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line](#) on **1800 000 123** if your concern relates to a specific child or young person.
    - b) Report reasonable beliefs or knowledge of child abuse offences to [Tasmania Police](#) on **131 444**.
    - c) For concerns about the conduct of a DECYP worker's around children and young people, record your concerns in the Concern Notice.
    - d) For all other concerns, record this information in your workplace's approved format and location.
    - e) If the child or young person would like to record the details, give them a [tell someone form](#) (this is not compulsory). This must also be saved in your workplace's approved format and location.
3. Notify your manager, school principal or director that you have lodged a report about child abuse. Your manager/principal can refer to additional guidance provided by the [Office of Safeguarding Children and Young People](#).
4. You must **respect the rights and privacy** of the child or young person. You must not discuss any details of the situation with anyone other than those who are authorised in the specific case.

## STEP 4

### SUPPORT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

1. Being concerned or knowing about child abuse can be emotionally challenging. It is important to look after yourself and others and support ongoing wellbeing at work and in your personal life. Confidential support to help manage personal and professional challenges, concerns or issues is available through the [Employee Assistance Program](#). External providers and volunteers should speak to their DECYP contact person.
2. If your concern relates to particular children or young people, your manager/principal and professional support staff will coordinate ongoing specialist support to help them recover, heal and grow.



*Preventing and responding to child abuse is everyone's responsibility*

For more information and links to helpful resources, please refer to our [Safeguarding Framework: Safe. Secure. Supported.](#)