

All educators and staff employed by Young Adventurers Early Childhood Education Services are required to protect children from harm, protect their rights and promote their development in culturally, age and gender appropriate ways (see also Education and Care Services National Regulation 84 Awareness of child protection law, Child Safe Standards, Child Safe Environment/Child Safety & Wellbeing/Child Safe Standards Policy, Code of Conduct, National Regulations, Code of Ethics, Confidentiality/Privacy/Sharing Information Policy).

All educators and staff may from time to time consider they should report or refer a concern to either Child Protection or ChildFIRST (Orange door) intake service as per the provisions in the *Children, Youth and Act 2005* that commenced in April 2007 (NQS QA 2). Child Protection and/or ChildFIRST (Orange door) may refer any report regarding children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to a relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service. It's important for educators to check if a child or family identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander on the child's enrolment form when making a report although if this information is not currently available it should not prevent the educator from making the report.

To ensure educators and staff have a thorough understanding of child protection the Approved Provider will provide annual in-service training on child protection law. In addition, when relevant child protection external training is available educators and staff will be required to undertake this training.

The Child Safe Environment/Child Safety & Wellbeing/Child Safe Standards Policy

To help protect children from abuse, the Victorian Government has introduced compulsory minimum Child Safe Standards that apply to organisations that provide services for children. The Child Safe Standards are designed to help protect children from all forms of abuse – Refer Child Safe Environment/Child Safety & Wellbeing/Child Safe Standards Policy for more information on how our Service is meeting the Victorian Government requirements.

Making a notification

Educators and staff will adhere to the range of reporting and referral arrangements that replace what has been known as a child protection notification.

A referral to Child FIRST (Orange door) may be the best way of connecting children, young people and their families to the services they need, where exhibit any of the following factors that may impact upon a child's safety, stability or development:

- Significant parenting problems that may be affecting the child's development
- Family conflict, including family breakdown.
- under pressure due to a family member's physical or mental illness, substance abuse, disability or bereavement
- Young isolated and / or unsupported
- Significant social or economic disadvantage that may adversely impact on a child's care and development.

A referral to Child FIRST (Orange door) should be considered if, after consideration of the available information you are, on balance, more inclined to form the view that the concerns currently have a low to moderate impact on the child, where the immediate safety of the child is not compromised.

A report to Child Protection should be made in any of the following circumstances:

- Physical abuse of, or non-accidental or unexplained injury to, a child (mandatory reporters must report)
- A disclosure of sexual abuse by a child or witness, or a combination of factors suggesting the likelihood of sexual abuse - the child exhibiting concerning behaviours, for example after the mother takes on a new partner or where a known or suspected perpetrator has had unsupervised contact with the child (mandatory reporters must notify)
- Emotional abuse and ill treatment of a child impacting on the child's stability and healthy development.
- Persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision, where there is a likelihood of significant harm to the child, the child's stability or development.
- 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 development.
- Where a child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child
- 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.

A report to Child Protection should be considered if, after consideration of the available information you are, on balance, more inclined toward a view that the concerns currently have a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability or development, or the concerns are persistent, entrenched and likely to have a serious impact on the child's development.

If you are still unsure about who to report to or refer to, contact either Child Protection or ChildFIRST (Orange door) for further advice.

PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION

- (i) Anyone including any educator or staff member may report to **Child Protection** directly any of the circumstances as listed or immediately contact the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor. In the latter case the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor, following consultation with the educator or staff member will immediately contact Child Protection Intake Services on 1300 598521 and ask to speak with the "Intake Worker" to make a protective notification. For NSW residents there is a 24hour/7day a week Child Protection Hotline ph: 13 21 11.
- (ii) Intake Worker will take details and inform of proposed course of action. This may involve Intake Worker re-contacting the person making the notification at a later time.
- (iii) Child Protection will seek further information, usually from professionals who may also be involved with the child or family, to determine whether action is required. In most circumstances Child Protection will inform you of the outcome of your report.
- (iv) In all cases involving suspected sexual abuse or serious physical abuse, Child Protection Services will contact the Police, and they will jointly plan what action, if any, to take.

- (v) Child Protection Services is responsible for liaising with the Approved Provider arrangements for any interviews of the child in the Young Adventurers Early Childhood Education Services setting.
- (vi) The Approved Provider will be responsible for liaising with Child Protection Services who are responsible for determining when, and by whom, the parents will be informed of the notification.
- (vii) Child Protection Services is responsible for informing any other parties as appropriate of their involvement with the child.

PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A REFERRAL TO CHILD FIRST (Orange door)

- (i) Any educator or staff member may form a view that a referral to ChildFIRST (Orange door) is appropriate if the concerns currently have a low to moderate impact on the child, and where the immediate safety of the child is not compromised. In this instance educators or staff should raise their concerns with the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor and together they will determine the need for a referral to Child FIRST (Orange door). The contact number for Swan Hill is 1800 290943.
- (ii) If necessary, a referral can be made without the consent of the child or their family.

SHARING INFORMATION TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S SAFETY AND WELLBEING

A key feature of the Children, Youth and Act 2005 is that it allows professionals to share information with Child Protection and Child FIRST (Orange door) to promote the safety and development of vulnerable children.

- When you share information with Child FIRST (Orange door) or Child Protection, you are allowed to share any information that may help them to make an initial assessment about a child.
- In the case of Child Protection, you may also share information that is relevant to the protection or development of a child when Child Protection is investigating a report, or during a subsequent Child Protection intervention
- Your identity will not be disclosed without your consent.
- You are legally protected (for example you cannot be successfully sued)
- You are professionally protected (you cannot incur any adverse professional consequences)
- The person in charge of your service is authorised to share relevant information with Child Protection when they have decided that a child is in need of protection and are working with the child and family.
- Where a child is subject to a Children's Court Protection Order, the person in charge can be required by law to provide relevant information.
- The "person in charge" is the person who is in charge at the time and on the day that the information is requested and disclosed.

CONTACT NUMBERS.

Child Protection Intake: 1300 598521 North Division intake (Mon-Fri 8.45am to 5pm)

After Hours: 131 278 A state-wide after hours emergency service that receives new reports, as well as concerns for existing child protection clients who are considered to be at immediate risk and require urgent after hours service

CHILDFIRST (Orange door): 1800 290943

Mandatory reporting

Changes to the mandatory reporting requirements for early childhood providers and staff members are in effect as of 1 March 2019.

Who this applies to

The following early childhood professionals are mandatory reporters:

- New: All educators with post-secondary qualifications in the care, education or minding of children and employed or engaged in an education and care service or a children's service.
- New: All proprietors, nominees of a children's service, approved providers, and nominated supervisors of an education and care service (see definitions below).
- Educators registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).

All mandatory reporters must report to Victoria Police and/or Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury and/or sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type

It is a criminal offence not to report in these circumstances.

References:

Education and Care Services National Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Every Child Every Chance, Department of Human Services Victoria

Education and Care Service National Law Act & Regulations 2010

Revised National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education 2018

Department of Education Child Protection Protocol available from
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/protectionprotocol.aspx> as at
12/09/2025