

St. Mary MacKillop internal school process for mandatory reporting

A Staff Member Must Take Action

A Staff Member Must Take Action As a school staff member, you play a critical role in protecting children in your care. You must act, by following the Four Critical Actions, 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. 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). It is strongly recommended that you use the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template to keep dear and comprehensive notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

* A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

Step One: Responding to an emergency

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

separating alleged victims and others involved

administering first aid

calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns

identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

Step Two: Reporting to Authorities/ Referring to Services

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 may amount to a criminal offence.