

# Complaints and Grievances

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<b>Associated Documents</b> 4.16 Managing Complaints and Grievances (original policy document) <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> <i>Bullying and Harassment Policy</i>		

## 1. RATIONALE/POLICY STATEMENT

OneSchool Global Vic acknowledges the importance of establishing a transparent and consistent process for managing and responding to complaints and grievances. All complaints and grievances will be managed using the procedure for complaints and grievances in conjunction with other relevant policies and procedures.

It is recognised that complaints and grievances may be minor or major in nature. The policy applies to complaints and grievances of students, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

## 2. AIMS

- to ensure that student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school with a complaint or grievance has a process to lodge a complaint or grievance
- to ensure there are clear roles and responsibilities for complaints handling for efficient resolution, ensuring that outcomes are consistent, fair and just
- to use information collected from the complaints and grievance process to help facilitate continuous improvement.

## 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
<b>Campus Office Administrator (COA)</b>	At each Campus can assist parents, staff, members of the community and other stakeholders to access the online submission form, policies or appropriate person to deal with their initial complaint or concern.
<b>Campus Principal (CP)</b>	CPs will often be the first point of contact for matters of concern. They will refer complaints to the appropriate parties and inform the Regional Principal and/or CA Team. Support and protect any students who raises or is affected by a complaint or concern *Also Child Safe Champion
<b>Campus Administrator (CA) Team</b>	Are representative community members who have a voluntary support role. They meet with the CP on a weekly basis to give community guidance regarding Campus specific matters
<b>School staff</b>	Support and protect any students who raises or is affected by a complaint or concern
<b>Regional Principal (RP)</b>	The Regional Principal responds to escalated or child abuse complaints and attempts to effectively manage and resolve them.

<b>Regional Team Leader (RTL) or Board Members</b>	Directors are the alternate point of complaints management and are deferred to when complaints involve the Regional Principal or Campus Principals.
<b>Students, volunteers, parents, visitors</b>	to lodge concerns or complaints as
<b>External facilitators</b>	to intervene as required following unsuccessful school involvement (External facilitators may include Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) or another suitably qualified persons) to be engaged by the School.

If any person allocated responsibility under this clause cannot perform their role then the responsibility automatically transfers to the campus child safe champion or the Regional Principal.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in the procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

## 4. PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

Procedural fairness and due process underpin this policy, covering all complaints and grievances received including child abuse matters.

Procedural fairness is paramount for student and families from diverse backgrounds ensuring decisions are free from discrimination. We are sensitive to the diversity and characteristics of the school community. This includes culturally safe school for Aboriginal students, allowing them to make complaints (including those relating to child abuse) in a safe environment, where they feel respected.

At OneSchool Global Vic we will:

- recognise and respond to students' diverse circumstances
- understand that some students are at higher risk of harm than others
- provide easy access to information
- adjust procedures to respond to different needs
- make sure complaints processes are child-friendly, culturally safe and easy to understand.

## 5. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DOCUMENTATION

Complaint handling procedures must be confidential in nature.

When a complaint or concern is expressed the process of investigation and resolution will remain confidential, subject to law, and only involve those directly affected on a "need to know" basis or who may have been a witness.

For child abuse/protection related matters access levels are controlled according to role, protecting the confidentiality of the records and the integrity of the School.

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Should a staff member, parent or student have a complaint or grievance they feel has not been adequately addressed by the Campus Management Team they should consult with the Regional Principal.

6.2 Strict confidentiality will be maintained in all matters relating to a complaint or grievance. Information will be provided to relevant and appropriate parties only if necessary. Persons with a complaint or grievance will not be named as far as possible.

6.3 The procedure for handling complaints and grievances will be based on the principles of natural justice including:

- The equal treatment of all parties to the dispute
- Adequate notice to be given of the process
- Details of the concerns to be given to the respondent
- Facts of the case to be substantiated
- The rights of both sides to be heard and treated fairly
- Neither party to be victimised or discriminated against as a result of the complaint process
- An unbiased and impartial decision maker to resolve the dispute

6.4 A written record of all official complaints will be maintained inline with record keeping standards.

6.5 Complaints and grievance records will be used to help facilitate continuous improvement.

## 7. ACCESSIBILITY

The Complaints and Grievances submission form can be accessed here [Complaints and Grievances form](#)

The submission form is made available to student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person from the school community, on an ongoing basis, via

- school newsletters and
- school website
- Parent Portal

## 8. PROCESSING COMPLAINTS

OneSchool Global Vic leadership staff will receive a notification when a new complaints or grievance has been submitted.

Once the complaint has been received, the school will respond within 3 days, with the aim to reach a resolution within 7 days.

The School will encourage all persons involved to document or provide any further information relevant to the complaint. This would include all contact with staff members, students, parents and guardians and the general community member and any other involved parties.

The Complaints and Grievances register will be updated with relevant information around the complaint as point of reference and record, including any actions and resolutions.

A plan of action will be developed, where necessary, to resolve the complaint in a timely manner. Mediation may be offered at any time during the process if this is seen as a possible way to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

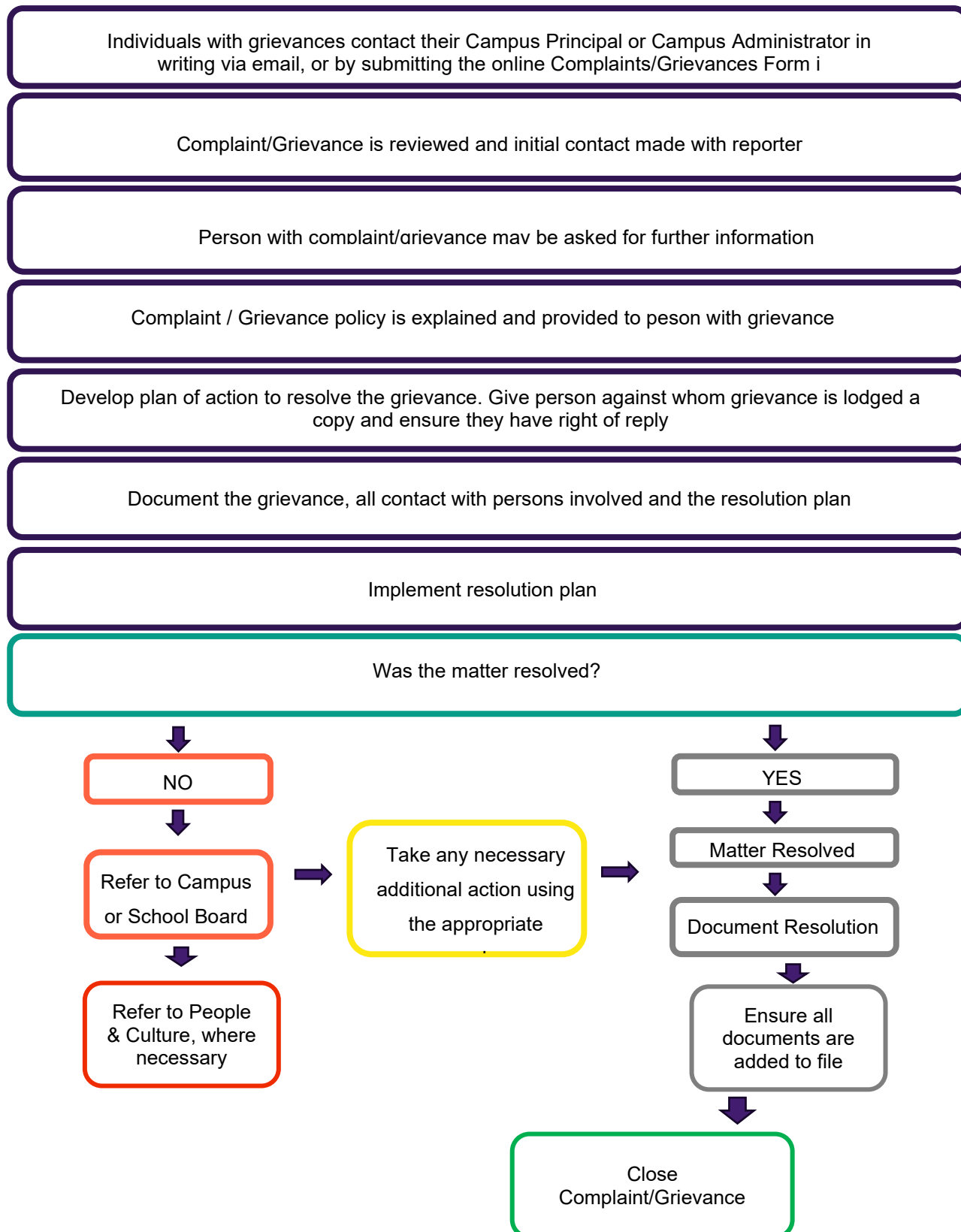
If the resolution plan isn't successful there will be further discussion with the person who lodged the complaint and any other involved parties until the matter reaches a satisfactory resolution, as per the steps in the procedure and flowchart.

It may be the case that an outside mediator/independent person will need to be appointed to assist resolution of the issue through mutually acceptable conciliation procedures. This is the final step of the procedure.

## 9. PROCEDURE

Should any parent, student, staff member, volunteer or have a grievance on matters they feel have not been adequately addressed by the Campus Leadership Team, they are encouraged to consult with the Regional Principal.

The following flow chart sets out the procedure that will then be followed.



## 10. CHILD ABUSE COMPLAINTS

Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

OneSchool Global Vic fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Any complaint made by students, staff or volunteers etc. that are covered by existing laws relating to reporting will be reported to the relevant authority. The school will cooperate with law enforcement for any requests or required investigations.

### Accessibility

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The Complaints and Grievances submission tool has a list of Child Abuse categories for selection by the reporter, including:

- Bullying
- Child Safety
- Emotional child abuse
- Family violence
- Harassment
- Grooming
- Neglect
- Physical child abuse

Additionally, all students have been provided access to the Learning Management System – *Report It* button. This has been rolled out and explained to all students and families that it is to be used for students to make any report linked to child safety or wellbeing.

Reports made via this feature are elevated immediately to the Regional Director of Education.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
<b>Campus Office Administrator (COA)</b>	At each Campus can assist parents, staff, members of the community and other stakeholders to access the online submission form, policies or appropriate person to deal with their initial complaint or concern.
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If any person allocated responsibility under this clause cannot perform their role then the responsibility automatically transfers to the campus child safe champion or the Regional Principal.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in the procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

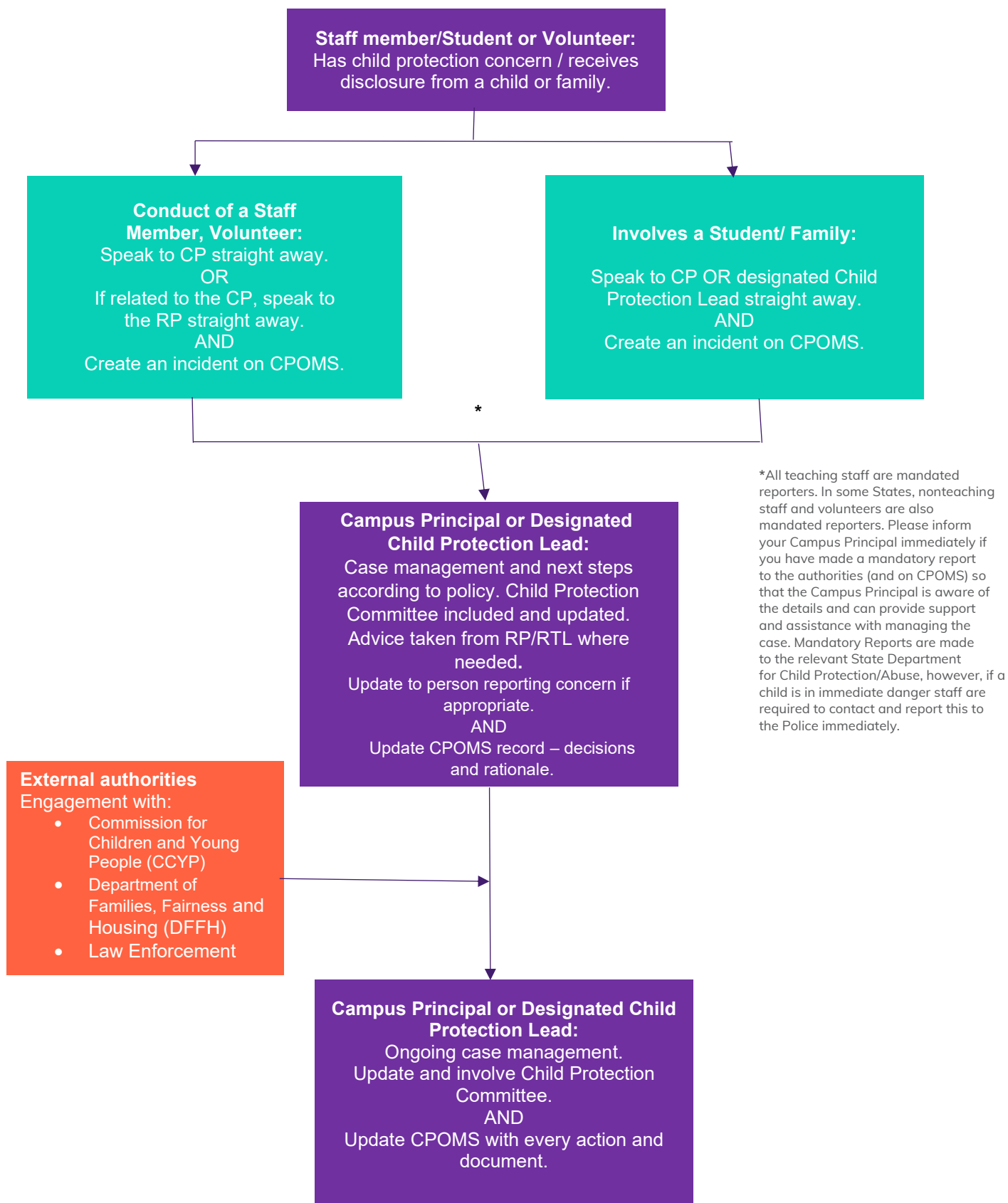
### **Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS)**

CPOMS is the OneSchool Global secure online platform, managing the recording and workflow of confidential child protection records.

Access levels are controlled according to role, protecting the confidentiality of the records and the integrity of the School.

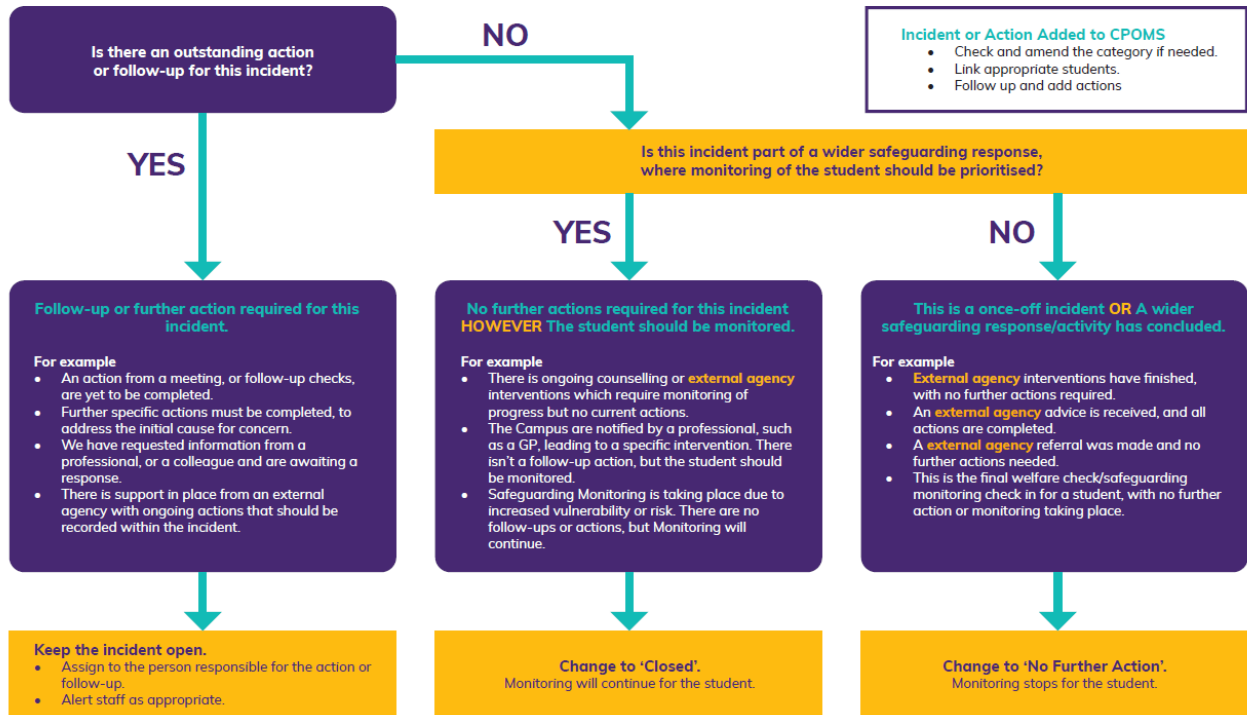
CPOMS Training is provided to all staff as part of induction and ongoing training.

## a) Procedure for reporting and management of Child Abuse complaints





## b) Monitoring & management of Child Abuse complaints



## 11. RECORD KEEPING & INFORMATION SHARING

In Victoria, schools must maintain comprehensive and secure records of child safety and wellbeing incidents, creating and storing them according to the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) Recordkeeping Standards and the Child Safe Standards under Ministerial Order No. 1359.

Records must be retrievable, stored securely, and retained for:

- Student safety and wellbeing records are to be retained for a minimum of 75 years.
- Sexual abuse records:
  - Documents related to the reporting and investigation of sexual abuse incidents, allegations, or disclosures must be kept for at least 99 years.

Record keeping for child abuse should be:

- clear and objective: provide a factual account of events.
- thorough: capture all relevant information.
- secure: protected from unauthorised access.
- meet employment law obligations
- organised and accessible: maintained in a logical, indexed manner to ensure easy retrieval.

Purpose of long-term retention:

These long retention periods are crucial because:

- delayed disclosure: victims may not disclose abuse for many years.
- future legal action: survivors may need records for future civil legal proceedings, which in Victoria no longer have a statute of limitations for child sexual abuse.

### **Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS)**

Child abuse records are maintained within the OneSchool Global secure online platform CPOMS.

CPOMS manages the:

- recording of initial report information
- records are created & reviewed with real-time visibility
- confidential child protection records
- workflow through to resolution (closing the case)

### **Audit controls**

- All incidents, actions and key transactions performed in CPOMS are time, date and user stamped.
- Consequently, an audit trail is maintained that accurately records all key activities undertaken using the system. Track and analyse what has been done, by whom and when.
- This system ensures OneSchool Global Vic protects the confidentiality of the records and the integrity of the School.

### **Role-based access control and Identity Management**

To help protect sensitive systems and data, we enforce strict access management practices, including:

- Role-based access controls to ensure that employees only have access to the information required for their responsibilities. e.g. Child Protection Lead / Regional Principal
- Regular access reviews to ensure proper authorisation levels.
- Multi-factor authentication (mfa) for accessing critical systems.

### **Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery**

Our business continuity plan (bcp) and disaster recovery plan (drp) help ensure that we are prepared for unexpected events:

- Critical systems undergo daily incremental backups and weekly full backups.
- Backup systems are regularly tested to ensure effectiveness.
- Automated alerts notify our team of backup or system failures to ensure rapid resolution.

### **Ongoing Records**

All records within cpoms are:

- Created and maintained
  - Records, including notes, of meetings or discussions about the actual or alleged incident,

- Records of cases or decisions by bodies, tribunals, courts
- Surveillance images and footage (where available).
- Easily retrievable (\*access level required)
- Stored securely so that they cannot be lost, damaged, altered or tampered with over time.
- Confidentially - so that privacy is protected and only authorised people can access them for legitimate purposes.
- Contextual information is retained with the records
- Retained – CPOMS is a non-purge system. Data is not removed or deleted at anytime once a record has been opened

### **Information sharing:**

Sharing information appropriately and with due care is important to children's safety and wellbeing

Privacy laws allow school staff to share a child's personal and health information to enable other school staff to:

- Support the education of the student, plan for individual needs and address any barriers to learning
- Support the social and emotional wellbeing and health of the student
- Fulfil duty of care obligations to the student, other students, staff and visitors
- Make reasonable adjustments if the student has a disability, including a medical condition or mental illness
- Provide a safe and secure environment

The type of information that may be appropriate to share with other school staff about a child who is impacted, or suspected to be impacted by child abuse may include:

- That the child is in a difficult situation
- That the child should be monitored and may need support
- The content of any student support plan, including any signs or symptoms that the child may display when they are in need of support, and any strategies or support services that have been put in place to support the child while they are at school

As a school staff member, privacy legislation permits you to disclose personal information about a child to department families fairness and housing (dffh) child protection if:

- It is authorised or permitted by law
- Or if it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious and imminent risk to health, safety or welfare of any person.

Reporting suspected child abuse to [dffh child protection](#) or [victoria police](#) does not constitute a breach of victorian privacy laws because these disclosures are specifically permitted under the children youth and families act 2005 and the privacy and data protection act 2014.

Disclosure of information to dffh child protection in good faith does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics. This means that you cannot be successfully sued or suffer formal adverse consequences in your work.

If you've made a report or referral your identity will be protected, unless you consent to its disclosure or the disclosure is specifically authorised by a court or tribunal

### **Child information sharing scheme (CISS)**

CISS allows Schools to share information to support child wellbeing or safety.

This ensures that professionals working with children, young people and families can gain a complete view of the children and young people they work with, making it easier to identify wellbeing or safety needs earlier, and to act on them sooner. This will allow children to receive the best support possible across services.

### **Information sharing & volunteer confidentiality**

Volunteers engaged and approved by oneschool global vic are required to complete both a:

- Volunteer agreement
- Confidentiality agreement

The Confidentiality agreement outlined that any disclosure of confidential student information is a breach of the deed.

## Supporting Resources:

[creating managing and retaining records of child sexual abuse final 0.pdf](#)

[organisational response to child sexual abuse incidents and allegations | prov](#)

## 12. OUTCOME

The end result of the Procedure should be the resolution of Complaint or Grievance.

## 13. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
<b>Complaint</b>	A complaint is a problem or concern raised by staff, students, parents and guardians or the general Community who consider they have been wronged because of an action, decision or omission within the control or responsibility of the school. The subject of a complaint is normally an action, decision or omission within the control or responsibility of the school that causes a person to feel they have been wronged.
<b>Grievance</b>	A real or imagined wrong or other cause for complaint or protest, especially perceived unfair treatment. An official statement of a complaint over something believed to be wrong or unfair.

## 14. RELEVANT AUTHORITIES / LEGISLATION

- Children, youth and families act 2005 - sections 183/184
- Crimes act 1958
- Education and training reform act 2006
- Victorian institute of teaching act 2001
- [Ministerial order 1359](#)
- [department of families fairness and housing victoria](#)

## 15. CHILD SAFE STATEMENT

OneSchool Global Vic is committed to the protection and wellbeing of all students whilst participating in school activities both during and outside school hours.

Staff have responsibility for building and maintaining a child safe environment. This responsibility extends to the identification and timely response to all concerns with regard to the safety of any student of OneSchool Global Vic.

## 16. VERSION CONTROL

Policy Code	Date	Version No.	Nature of Change
<b>4.16</b>	August 2017	1.1	Reviewed Policy
<b>POL_VIC_OP_Complaints and Grievances_V2.0</b>	January 2021	2.0	Major review and rebranding

<b>POL_VIC_OP_Complaints and Grievances</b>	May 2024	3.0	Policy review
<b>POL_VIC_OP_Complaints and Grievances</b>	April 2025	4.0	Updated process and inclusion of Register
<b>POL_VIC_OP_Complaints and Grievances</b>	August 2025	5.0	Updated process and inclusion of Closing CPOMS incidents, updated record keeping