



NORTHCOTE HIGH SCHOOL CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR HOMESTAY FAMILIES

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

YOU SHOULD TAKE ACTION:

As a homestay parent, you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

You **should** act, by following the critical actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused.

You **should** act if you form a suspicion and/or 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).

ACTION 2. REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

You should 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.

VICTORIA POLICE: If you believe a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused, contact local police station or 000 if it's an emergency.

You **must** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - NORTHCOTE HIGH SCHOOL (NHS): You should also report the suspected abuse to the **School Principal** at Northcote High School on **(03) 9488 2211** and /or year level program leaders:

Year 10: (03) 9488 2227

Year 11: (03) 9488 2286

Year 12: (03) 9488 2312

ACTION 1. RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to ACTION 2

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

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid if you can
- call 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.

ACTION 3. CONTACTING PARENTS

The school principal is responsible and must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents.

ACTION 4. PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Northcote High School must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Plan or Safety Plan, referral to wellbeing professionals, etc. NHS will work with you to ensure your homestay student is provided with appropriate support.

You **must** follow the Critical Actions every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you should still act.

This may include seeking advice from the school or Victoria police.