



## 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, or 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 on 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*