



Media Release

2 Years of Putting People First
VICTORIA

James Merlino
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education

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KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

New resources for Victorian schools and parents will help keep students safe from sexual predators and abuse.

They have been created to help parents, students and school staff identify the warning signs of sexual exploitation of children, including grooming, and how to respond to concerns of abuse.

A Guide to Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending has also been created to help school staff understand their responsibilities for responding to and reporting sexual offending by students.

It includes a checklist for principals and a reporting template to make it simpler for schools to meet their reporting obligations.

There has been an increase in reports of incidents of sexual behaviour in Victorian Schools over the past ten years, with the number of alleged incidents increasing from 132 in 2006 to 258 in 2015.

The increase is due partly to a stronger focus on schools reporting incidents and taking action to make sure our children are safe.

It includes a range of incidents from using sexualised language to more serious allegations that may have occurred either at school or involving a student away from school.

The new resources and guidelines have been created to help schools and early childhood centres meet the new mandatory Child Safe Standards.

The Standards were introduced this year in response to the Betrayal of Trust report into the handling of child abuse by religious and other non-government organisations.

More information on the new guidelines, resources and Child Safe Standards is available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx?Redirect=1>

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

“Every child deserves to be safe at home and at school.”

“Schools are often at the front line in identifying abuse, and these new resources will help parents, school staff and students to identify, prevent and respond to child abuse.”

“Protecting our children is paramount, which is why we are implementing all recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report.”

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