

What teachers and school staff can do to help prevent child sexual abuse

Teachers, school staff and school volunteers are an essential part of building a whole-school approach to the prevention of child sexual abuse. Adults working in schools have a responsibility to protect children from harm and can help build a healthy school culture in which child safety and concerns are at the centre. Staff in regular contact with children and their families are well-placed to help children know who they can speak to if they need help.

There are a range of ways that teachers and school staff can be part of a whole-school approach to the prevention of child sexual abuse.

Teachers and school staff can:

Help build school capability to protect against child sexual abuse

- Contribute to developing policies and procedures to prevent child sexual abuse.
- Participate in or lead whole-school self-assessments of the risk of child sexual abuse.
- Participate in or lead whole-school assessments of the degree to which current policies and procedures address the risk of child sexual abuse.
- Contribute to regular reviews and updates of school policies and procedures for preventing child sexual abuse.

Build their personal ability to protect against child sexual abuse

- Be aware of appropriate resources for educators such as the [eSafety Toolkit for Schools](#) and the [Practical Tools for Implementing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#).
- Seek ongoing learning and professional development about prevention of child sexual abuse, how to identify child sexual abuse (including grooming), understanding child sexual behaviour, and how to respond to concerns about or disclosures of child sexual abuse.
- Seek ongoing learning and professional development in understanding the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and students with disability who may be at risk of child sexual abuse.
- Seek education and training to support curriculum delivery for students in the areas of child sexual abuse prevention, online safety, sex and sexuality, and respectful relationships.
- Know how to report concerns about child sexual abuse, exploitation or grooming.

Help build a child-centred school culture

- Support and implement the principles of rights for children into school culture and daily practice.
- Place child safety at the centre of school life.
- Take child concerns seriously and act on them as appropriate.
- Take child disclosures of abuse or harm seriously and report these according to school policy.



- Build and cultivate participatory decision-making processes so that students have a voice.
- Let children know that they can speak up if they feel unsafe at school or in other places and let them know how to do this.
- Let children know that their concerns will be taken seriously and that they will be supported in seeking help.
- Help children identify five or more trustworthy and available adults in their lives. These are adults that children feel comfortable speaking to and confiding in. The list of adults should include people outside the child's home and might include other staff, family or community members.
- Help other school staff and volunteers know that they can and should speak up if they see students feeling unsafe at school or in other places.
- Communicate prevention efforts to the whole school community, including other school staff and student families.
- Share knowledge about prevention with the whole school community, including students' families, so that appropriate role modelling can continue in a home environment.

