

Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms

Guidance and Tools





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This document can also be found in HTML or PDF formats on our website www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-guidance-and-tools/.

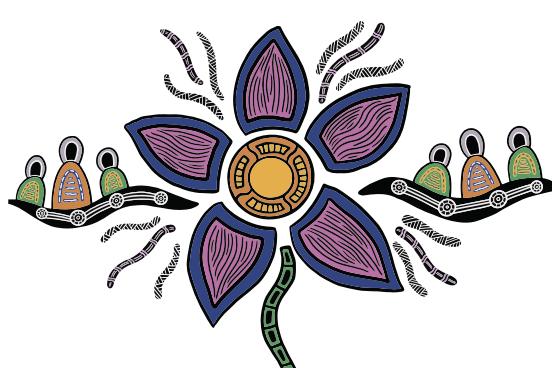
In this document, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Aboriginal people as Australia's First Peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and waterways upon which we depend.

We acknowledge Victoria's Aboriginal communities and culture and pay respect to their Elders past and present. Aboriginal culture is founded on a strong social and cultural order that has sustained up to 60,000 years of existence. Victorian Aboriginal communities and peoples are culturally diverse, with rich and varied heritages and histories. The impacts of colonisation — while having devastating effects on the traditional life of Aboriginal Nations — have not diminished Aboriginal people's connection to country, culture or community.

The Victorian Government recognises the long-standing leadership of Aboriginal communities in Victoria to prevent and respond to family violence, supported through self-determination and self-management, to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people and families, whilst also acknowledging the devastating impacts and accumulation of trauma across generations as a result of colonisation and the dispossession of land and children.

About the Aboriginal artwork in this publication



Nakia Cadd is a proud Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung and Bunitj woman living in northern metro Melbourne.

Nakia's artwork represents strong ties to community. Nakia chose a flower to represent a child who is nurtured and protected by a community of people. The different lines coming off the flower are to represent information that is gathered and shared. Whilst on both sides of the flower is family, community and organisations ensuring that every child's health, safety and wellbeing is paramount. The four gathering circles represent the people in our communities to the North, South, East and West; full of strength, love and connections.

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See How to use this resource on pages 3–4 for a list of tools and templates.

Introduction

About this resource

This resource is intended to support schools and services, system and statutory bodies, and education health, wellbeing, and inclusion workforces to:

- implement the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) in their workplaces
- share information confidently, safely, and appropriately to improve children's and families' wellbeing and safety, and manage family violence risk
- meet their responsibilities under the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)
- identify and respond to family violence in a safe and consistent way and make better reports and referrals.

This resource is divided into four audience-based sections:

Introduction

School and service leaders

All staff

Staff who use CISS and FVISS

MARAM nominated staff

It also includes the following resources:

Tools

Staff Supports and other resources

CISS, FVISS and MARAM are collectively known as **the Reforms** in this resource. This resource is for:

- long day care, kindergarten and before and after school hours care services (referred to as **services** in this resource)
- government, Catholic and independent schools (referred to as **schools** in this resource)
- Catholic and independent system bodies that assist, manage, or govern schools in Victoria (referred to as **system bodies** in this resource)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, and Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (referred to as **statutory bodies** in this resource)
- some education health, wellbeing, and inclusion workforces (for example, Department of Education's Health, Wellbeing, and Inclusion Workforces).



How to use this resource

Each section of this resource provides tailored guidance to reflect the different roles and responsibilities of staff at your school or service. You may need to read one or more sections depending on your role.

You can download all tools and templates from the **Information Sharing and Family Violence – Guidance and Tools** digital publication <www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-guidance-and-tools/>. All tools available for download will be marked with .

INTRODUCTION	SCHOOL AND SERVICE LEADERS	ALL STAFF
<p>Who should read this section? Leaders and all staff at your school or service.</p> <p>How will it help? This section provides an overview of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)• Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)• Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM). <p>It provides important context to help you understand your role, as outlined in the other sections.</p> <p>This section also provides information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• training and support for education and care workforces• resources for staff wellbeing.	<p>Who should read this section? Leaders or managers. For example, a school principal or early childhood Service manager.</p> <p>How will it help? This section gives you information and tools to support you to implement CISS, FVISS and MARAM at your school or service.</p> <p>Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information sharing and MARAM implementation checklist (page 18).	<p>Records Management All schools and services must ensure all tools and templates are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by relevant staff, such as school and service leaders, MARAM nominated staff and authorised staff.</p> <p>You must also follow all data security and record management requirements that apply to your school or service. For more information, please see How do I keep records? in the MARAM nominated staff section.</p>

STAFF WHO USE CISS AND FVISS

Who should read this section?

Staff who have been identified by their school and service leaders as holding information sharing responsibilities.

How will it help?

This section will help you to:

- understand CISS and FVISS, their similarities and differences
- understand consent requirements and how to seek the views and wishes of the child
- engage with children respectfully and safely
- respond to an information sharing request
- request information
- proactively share information
- keep appropriate records.

Tools (page 68)

- Requesting information in early childhood
- Proactively sharing information in a school setting
- Supporting a colleague disclosing family violence
- Can I share information under CISS?
- Can I share information under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)?
- Record keeping checklist
- Template for responding to a request under CISS
- Template for sharing information under CISS
- Template for responding to a request under FVISS
- Template for sharing information under FVISS
- Template for recording complaints made under CISS and/or FVISS
- Email template for declining a request under CISS and/or FVISS.

MARAM-NOMINATED STAFF

Who should read this section?

Staff who have qualifications, training, experience or a role aligned with wellbeing, and have been identified by their school or service leader to be a MARAM nominated staff member.

How will it help?

This section will help you to:

- understand your MARAM roles and responsibilities
- respond to disclosures of family violence
- screen for family violence
- plan for safety
- work with other staff who suspect a child or young person is experiencing family violence, or who have received a disclosure from a student
- collaborate with other services to provide ongoing support to the child, young person or their family
- keep appropriate records.

Tools (page 94)

- Family violence screening tool
- Family violence basic safety plan.

STAFF SUPPORTS AND OTHER RESOURCES

- Where can I find other resources and support?
- Resources for families and communities
- Glossary – terms and abbreviations.



Staff wellbeing support

Supporting children and families who are experiencing wellbeing and safety concerns, including family violence, can be highly stressful and challenging. Given the reported prevalence of family violence, there is also a high likelihood you may know or be someone who has experienced or is experiencing family violence.

Staff wellbeing is a shared responsibility between you, your team and your organisation.

It is important to be aware of the impacts that supporting people experiencing family violence can have on you. Signs of vicarious trauma and burnout include experiencing intrusive thoughts of a victim survivor's situation or taking on too great a sense of responsibility. These are common responses to the challenges of this type of work.

This resource addresses issues of family violence. If you are concerned for your safety or that of someone else, contact the police, and call 000 for emergency assistance.

If you have experienced violence or sexual assault and require immediate or ongoing assistance, contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) to talk to a counsellor from the National Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence hotline. For confidential support and information, contact Safe Steps 24/7 family violence response line on 1800 015 188.

If you need to talk to someone it is recommended that you speak to your leadership team about arranging appropriate support. You can also talk to your GP or an allied health professional. Victorian government school staff can also contact the Department of Education's Employee Wellbeing Support Services on 1300 291 071.

For more information, see Staff supports and other resources on page 110.

Training and support

The Department of Education (the department) offers a range of learning options on the Reforms for schools and services, system and statutory bodies, and education health, wellbeing, and inclusion workforces. This includes webinars, eLearning modules and face-to-face training.

For more information see **Training for the information sharing and MARAM reforms** <www.vic.gov.au/training-for-information-sharing-and-maram>.

If you have any further questions about CISS, FVISS and MARAM, or this resource, including support with implementation, contact the Enquiry Line via email at cisandfvis@education.vic.gov.au or phone 1800 549 646 from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Overview of the Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms

As educators, carers and health, wellbeing, and inclusion professionals, you share a common purpose – to give each child the best start to a happy, healthy, and prosperous life. The wellbeing and safety of children is essential for their learning and development, and you are well placed to support them.

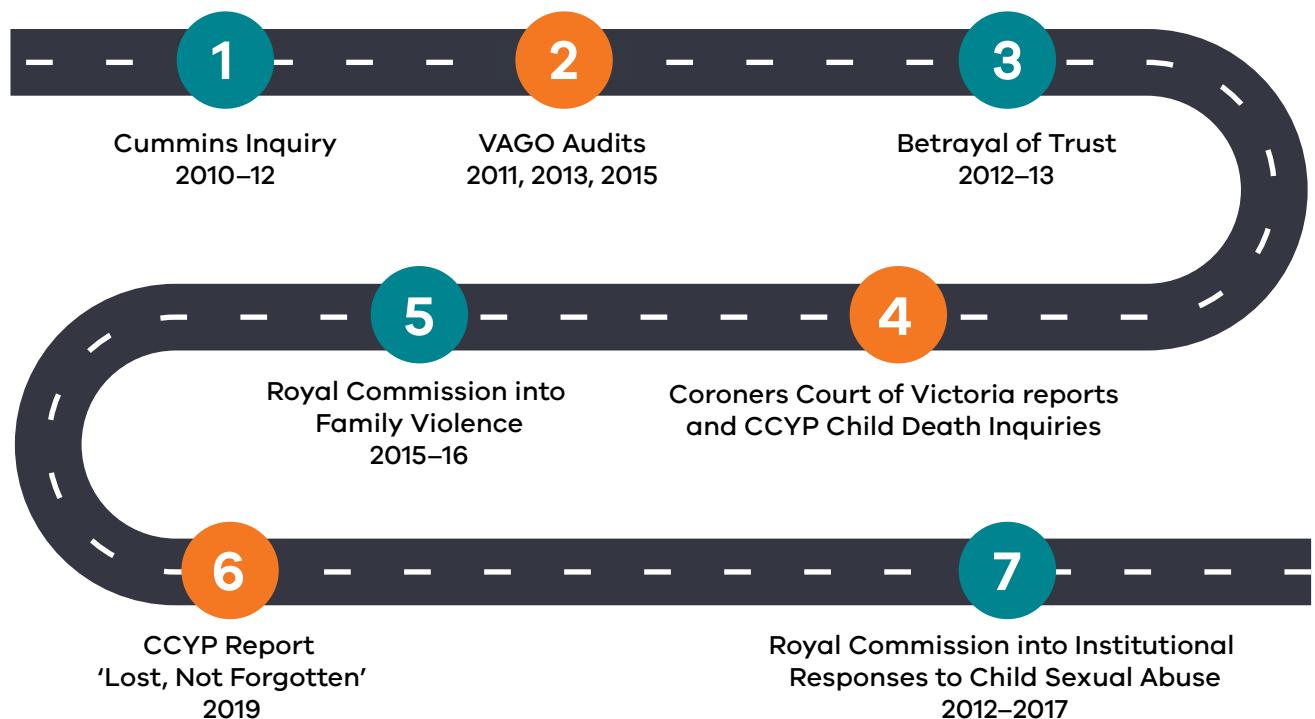
CISS, FVISS and MARAM (**the Reforms**) build on and complement your existing child and family wellbeing and safety responsibilities and practices. The Reforms aim to improve the wellbeing and safety of Victorian children, and to reduce family violence.

The Reforms enable Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) to request and share relevant information with one another to support child wellbeing and safety and assess or manage family violence risk. Information sharing and service collaboration are vital in identifying risks early and facilitating early and appropriately targeted support. Numerous Royal Commissions, coronial inquests and independent inquiries over a decade have made this clear.

The Reforms authorise schools and services, system and statutory bodies, and education health, wellbeing and inclusion workforces to:

- respond to requests for information to promote child wellbeing or safety, and/or assess and manage risk of family violence (this is mandatory)
- request information to promote child wellbeing or safety and/or manage risk of family violence
- proactively share information to promote child wellbeing or safety and/or manage risk of family violence.

Figure 1: Pathway to the reforms



The Reforms have been designed to promote the wellbeing and safety of children and families by:

- improving earlier identification of issues or risks, including family violence risk, and enabling earlier support and participation in services
- increasing collaboration and supporting a more coordinated and integrated approach to service delivery across the service system
- empowering professionals to make informed decisions
- promoting shared responsibility for wellbeing and safety, and defining responsibilities for identifying and responding to family violence across the service system, including creating consistent and collaborative practice
- identifying wellbeing and safety issues and risks, and obtaining relevant information to share in relation to family violence (by applying MARAM guidance on what to look for and what questions to ask).

CISS enables ISEs to share relevant information about any person to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children.

Consent is not required from any person when sharing under CISS.

FVISS enables ISEs to share relevant information to assess or manage risk of family violence.

It is best practice to seek and consider the views and wishes of victim survivors when sharing their information (if safe, reasonable, and appropriate to do so). However, under FVISS consent is only required from an adult victim survivor or third party where no children are involved and there is no serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety, or welfare.

Schools and services, system and statutory bodies, and education health, wellbeing and inclusion workforces have expanded permissions as ISEs to share information for wellbeing and safety. While the ISEs prescribed under CISS and FVISS are broadly similar, some services and organisations are prescribed under one scheme and not the other.

What is an ISE?

An ISE, or Information Sharing Entity, is an organisation or service that has been prescribed in legislation to request and share information under the Reforms.

ISEs include services that work with children, young people and families, such as:

- schools
- kindergartens
- long day care
- out of school hours care (OSHC)
- Child Protection
- youth justice
- Maternal and Child Health
- public hospitals
- Victoria Police.

For more information on the workforces prescribed as ISEs under CISS and FVISS, see **Who can share information under the information sharing and MARAM reforms** <www.vic.gov.au/ciss-and-fviss-who-can-share-information>. You can also search for details of the organisations that are prescribed as ISEs at the **ISE List** <www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search>.

MARAM aims to build a shared understanding of family violence across Victoria's service system. MARAM is embedded in law and establishes the foundations for a consistent statewide approach and shared responsibility for identifying and responding to family violence.

Schools and services are prescribed as MARAM Framework organisations and are required to follow MARAM when identifying and responding to family violence. Key services such as Victoria Police, family violence specialist services, Child Protection and hospitals across Victoria are also prescribed MARAM organisations. This means that everyone in the service system has the same understanding of family violence and can respond in the same way. This ensures people get the help they need and stops them from falling through any cracks in the system.

For a list of prescribed MARAM framework organisations, see **Appendix 1: Prescribed organisations** <www.vic.gov.au/report-implementation-family-violence-risk-assessment-and-management-framework-2021-22/appendix-1>.

For more information about MARAM, see **Information Sharing and MARAM reforms** <www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-schemes-and-the-maram-framework>.

Wellbeing and safety for all Victorian children

There are many factors that impact a child's wellbeing. Parental, family, and community wellbeing, as well as cultural context and intersectional identity, all have a significant impact on a child's wellbeing. 'Intersectionality' refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.

When these aspects or characteristics combine:

- there is a greater risk of people experiencing family violence
- people find it harder to get the help they need due to systemic barriers
- there is increased risk of social isolation.

You should reflect on your own practice and biases to ensure you can demonstrate an understanding of how this may be experienced by Aboriginal people or people from diverse communities or at-risk age groups. Where improvements can be made, you should tailor your approach accordingly to allow access to resources and support and services to respond to family violence risk.

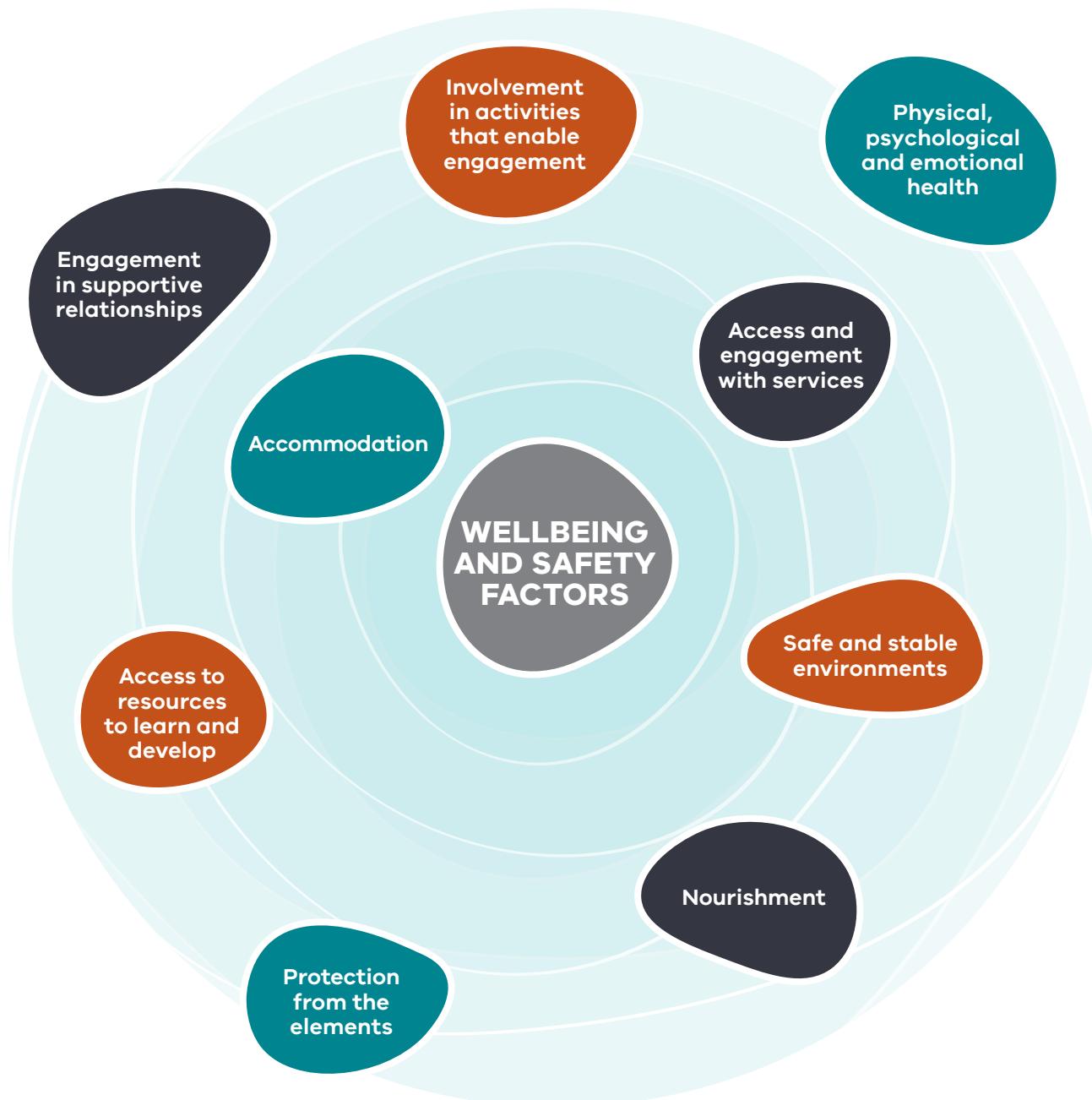
It is important to have a shared understanding of the protective factors for children, such as engagement in education and safe housing, as well as the factors that contribute to the wellbeing and safety of the children and families in your care. You are encouraged to use your professional judgement and build and strengthen your current practice, informed by your organisation's existing wellbeing frameworks.

There may be instances where information needs to be shared to promote the wellbeing or safety of more than one child, including cases where one child poses a risk to another. In such cases, professionals should exercise their judgement to consider and balance each child's wellbeing and safety to achieve the best possible outcomes for each child.

You can and should also connect with other ISEs to gather or share relevant information, and to coordinate actions to support children's wellbeing and safety.

For more information, see **Understanding child wellbeing** <www.vic.gov.au/child-wellbeing>.

Figure 2: Factors that impact a child's wellbeing and safety



Cultural safety

Aboriginal peoples and families are extremely diverse in terms of their structure and dynamics. This diversity includes the concept of family, which can be much broader than for non-Aboriginal people, encompassing kinship relationships and the broader Aboriginal community. Whatever form they take, strong families are pivotal to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous communities.

In addition to the wellbeing factors listed in Figure 2, there are a range of cultural and spiritual factors that contribute to an Aboriginal person's wellbeing.

The wellbeing of Aboriginal peoples occurs in the context of colonisation, dispossession, and the loss of culture. This has contributed to the breakdown of kinship systems and traditional law.

To redress personal and systemic biases, all workforces engaged in risk assessment and management should participate in ongoing cultural awareness, trauma-informed practice and family violence training.

Organisations and services should promote cultural safety and recognise the cultural rights, kin and community connections of children from Aboriginal and diverse communities. They should actively value and respect a child's identity as a core aspect of their wellbeing and safety.

The department has developed resources to help schools, services and other organisations discuss the information sharing reforms with Aboriginal families. You can view them at **Child Information Sharing – caring for all Koorie children in Victoria** <www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander>.

Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidance on cultural safety

When sharing information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme, legislative principles 4 and 5 require information sharing entities to:

4. Be respectful of and have regard to a child's social, individual, and cultural identity, the child's strengths and abilities and any vulnerability relevant to the child's safety or wellbeing.
5. Promote a child's cultural safety and recognise the cultural rights and familial and community connections of children who are Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both."

For the full list of legislative principles, see the **Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines - Introduction** <www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme-ministerial-guidelines/introduction>.



Family violence

The **Family Violence Protection Act 2008** (Vic) defines family violence as behaviour that:

- is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically, or economically abusive
- is threatening or coercive
- is controlling or dominating
- causes fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person
- causes a child to hear, witness or otherwise be exposed to the effects of any behaviour referred to above.

Family violence is deeply gendered. While people of any gender can be perpetrators or victim survivors of family violence, overwhelmingly the perpetrators are men, who largely perpetrate violence against women (who are their current or former partner) and children.

Addressing family violence requires a whole-of-community response and a coordinated system working together to support adult and child victim survivors, address risk and safety needs, and promote perpetrator accountability.

"The significant majority of perpetrators are men and the significant majority of victims are women and their children."

The Royal Commission into Family Violence <www.vic.gov.au/about-royal-commission-family-violence>



Working collaboratively to support wellbeing and safety

Family violence and diverse communities and at-risk groups

The Royal Commission into Family Violence found that for diverse communities and at-risk groups, family violence is less visible and understood than for other parts of the Australian community. Many also face additional barriers to reporting, as well as seeking and obtaining the help they need to be safe and recover from violence due to structural inequality and discrimination based on background, identity, and culture.¹

While there can be similar dynamics to family violence across all communities, people from Aboriginal and diverse communities may also experience family violence differently. They may face barriers to reporting and finding appropriate responses and support. Barriers may result from:

- language
- visa status
- experiences of discrimination
- historic and ongoing systemic oppression
- fear of reprisals or exclusion or isolation
- concerns about their safety.

The level of risk for family violence can also change over time. For example, women are at greater risk of family violence during pregnancy or after separation from their partners.

These dynamics mean that there are additional considerations when sharing information about diverse communities and at-risk groups. Professionals are advised to seek guidance and support, including from specialist services, as needed.

For more information, see:

- Child Safe Standard 5: diversity and equity
 - Early childhood services – diversity and equity <www.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-services-diversity-and-equity>
 - Schools – diversity and equity guidance <www.vic.gov.au/schools-diversity-equity-guidance>.
- Child Safe Standard 1: culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children
 - Early childhood services - culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children <www.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-culturally-safe-environments>
 - Schools - culturally safe environments guidance <www.vic.gov.au/schools-culturally-safe-environments-guidance>.

“When services do not share information, they do not have all the necessary background to make a robust assessment that considers all the risks to a child ... when services do not meet and plan interventions, their responses can be uncoordinated and less effective.”

Commission for Children and Young People Annual report 2016-17 <ccyp.vic.gov.au/about-us/annual-reports/>

¹ Everybody Matters – Inclusion and Equity Statement – Victorian Government 2018. <www.vic.gov.au/everybody-matters-inclusion-and-equity-statement>

Existing child wellbeing and safety obligations

Existing child wellbeing and safety obligations continue to apply.

The Reforms expand circumstances in which confidential information (including personal, health and sensitive information) can be shared between prescribed professionals. The Reforms complement these obligations and work alongside them to support a more complete system of support for the wellbeing and safety of children.

Figure 3: Existing child wellbeing and safety obligations



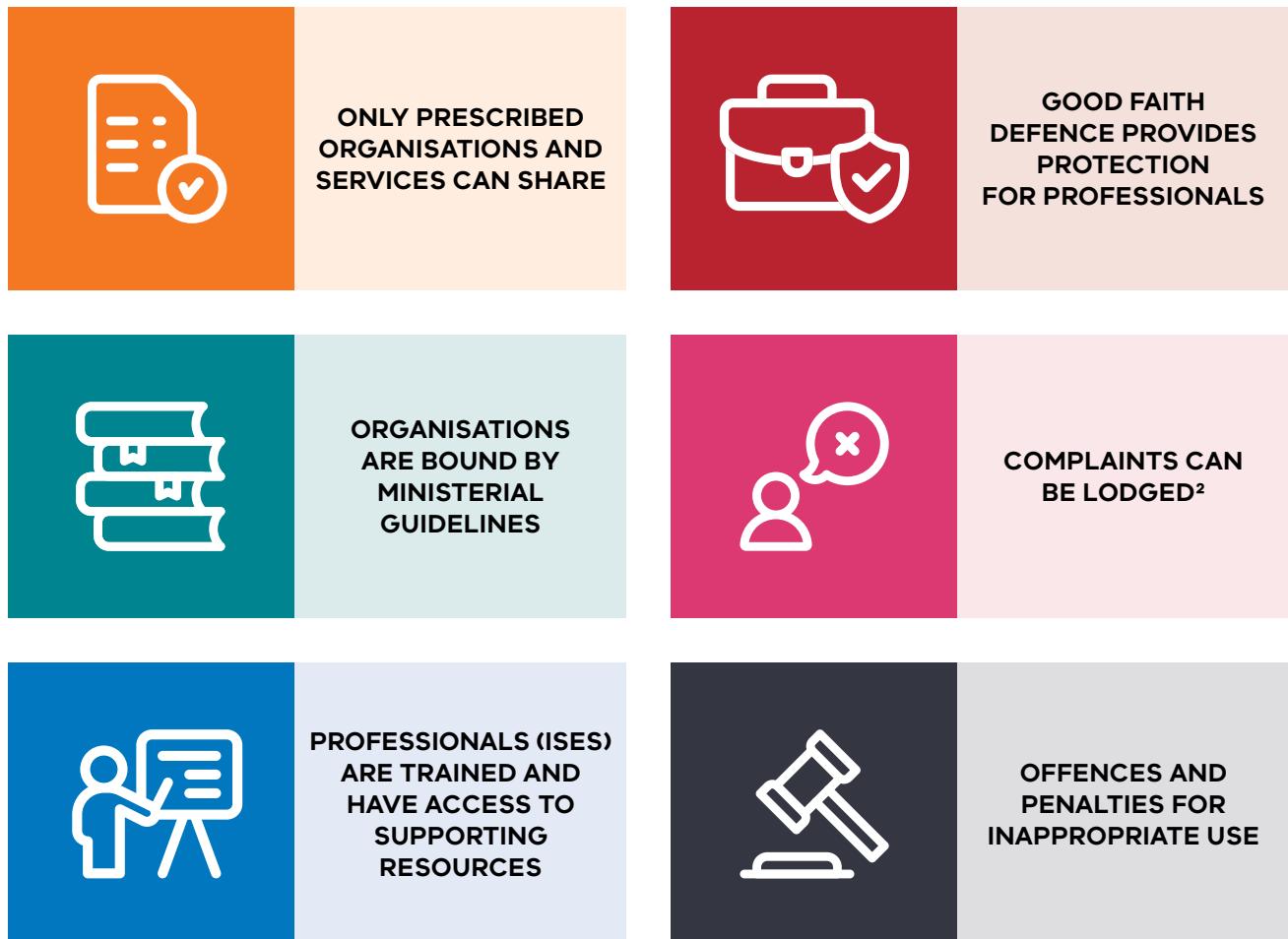
Safeguards for the Reforms

A range of safeguards and protections exist under the Reforms to ensure that professionals can safely, confidently and appropriately share information.

The good faith defence

A person who is authorised to share information under CISS and FVISS, who acts in good faith and with reasonable care when sharing information, will not be held liable for any criminal, civil or disciplinary action for providing information. They are not considered to have breached any code of conduct or professional ethics or to have departed from any accepted standards of professional conduct.

Figure 4: The range of safeguards and protections for the Reforms



² See **Complaints** on page 67.

Further reading

This resource complements training and should be read in conjunction with the Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines, Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines and MARAM Framework, as well as other resources relevant to CISS, FVISS and MARAM.

Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines

[<www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme-ministerial-guidelines>](http://www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme-ministerial-guidelines)

Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines

[<www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing>](http://www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing)

Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)

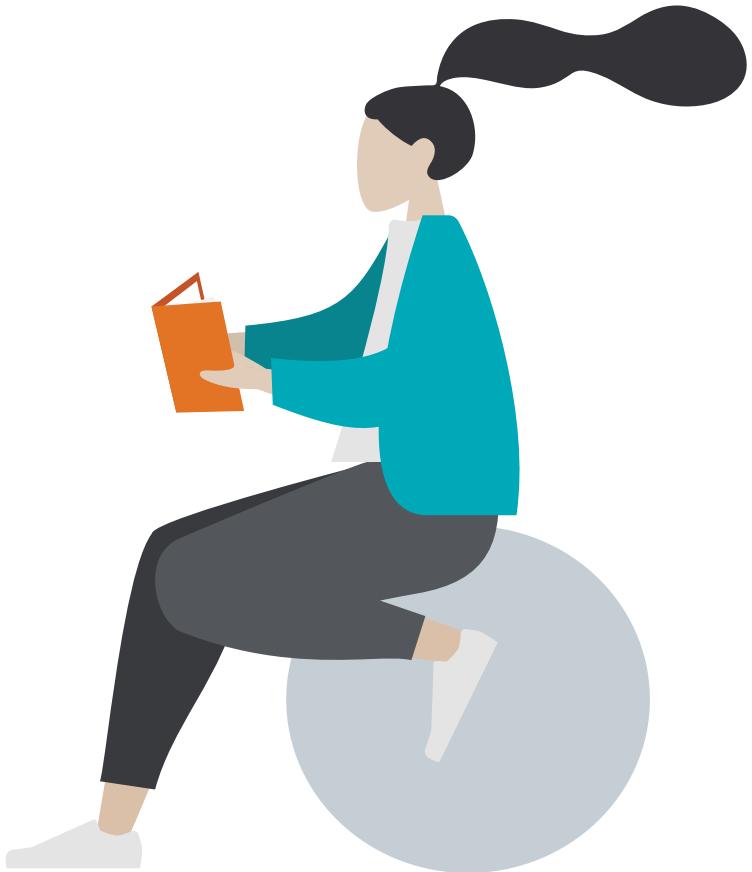
[<www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>](http://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources)

MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide and MARAM practice guides and resources

[<www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>](http://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources)

Information Sharing Entity list search (ISE List)

[<www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search>](http://www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search)



School and service leaders



Who am I?

I am a school principal or a member of my school's leadership team or an early childhood service manager.

Why is this resource important to me?

This resource tells me exactly what I need to know as a leader in my organisation to ensure:

- the wellbeing and safety needs of the children and young people in my school or service are met, and
- my staff know how to identify and respond to family violence risk.

What is my responsibility?

It is my responsibility to implement information sharing and MARAM in my school or service by ensuring my staff are supported to understand and meet our organisation's legislated obligations.

What training and support do I need?

Please refer to Staff supports and other resources on page 110.

Implementing information sharing and MARAM

The department recognises that reform implementation has no one-size-fits-all approach. There is great diversity across Victorian schools and services, system and statutory bodies, and education health, wellbeing and inclusion workforces.

As a school or service leader, you will determine what systems and processes are best suited to your organisation to support the implementation of the Reforms. This includes identifying employees who have information sharing responsibilities, as well as MARAM nominated staff. The MARAM Framework diagram on page 21 in the All Staff chapter outlines the MARAM responsibilities for schools. Please see **How to allocate MARAM responsibilities** for more information on how to meet your school or service's MARAM legislated obligations.

Employees who have information sharing responsibilities must have skills reasonably transferable to the promotion of child and family wellbeing or safety, and the appropriate and sensitive management of confidential information. MARAM nominated staff should have qualifications, training and experience or a role aligned with wellbeing, such as wellbeing coordinators or leadership staff.

As a school or service leader, you should work closely with your existing wellbeing and safety leads or key contacts to implement the steps outlined in the **Information sharing and MARAM implementation checklist** on page 18 to ensure your staff are able to utilise the Reforms safely and appropriately.

How to allocate MARAM responsibilities

All staff

- Responsibility 1: Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement. All staff can do this by listening to, partnering with and believing the experiences of victim survivors.
- All staff also **contribute** to MARAM Responsibilities 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10. All staff can do this by using the Family Violence Identification Tool to identify and respond to family violence. See All staff at page 20 for more details.

MARAM nominated staff

- Responsibilities 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10. MARAM nominated staff undertake screening, safety planning, information sharing and referrals. See MARAM nominated staff on page 86 for more details.



Information sharing and MARAM implementation checklist

Key tasks	Action	Person	Timeline
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES			
Work with your existing wellbeing and safety leads or key contacts to support implementation of information sharing reforms.			
Identify staff with responsibility for information sharing, and MARAM nominated staff. Consider staff members with qualifications, training, experience, or a role related to wellbeing.			
Identify role(s) to be the initial point of contact for information sharing requests from Information Sharing Entities (ISEs).			
Identify ISEs that currently have a relationship with the school or service.			
Map stakeholders, current networks in your community and ISEs, including Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs).			
AWARENESS AND CAPABILITY			
Ensure the leadership team has briefed all staff on their commitment to implementing the Reforms. Develop a culture that supports information sharing, MARAM and ongoing collaboration within and outside the organisation.			
Ensure all staff have a shared understanding of wellbeing and safety, and are aware of their responsibilities to identify and respond to family violence.			
Ensure all staff read appropriate guidance and support materials, including the relevant sections of this resource.			
Ensure all staff understand that the PROTECT Four Critical Actions and mandatory reporting still apply when family violence is identified.			
Ensure all staff responsible for information sharing, and MARAM nominated staff, complete relevant DE training.			
Ensure the community are aware of and have access to the CISS Information for families, carers, children and young people < www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-parents-and-families > and Aboriginal communities < www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander >			
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES			
Update or develop organisational policies and procedures to align with information sharing and MARAM. Government schools can view the Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy < www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/information-sharing-schemes/policy > ³			
Review current processes for sharing information with families and organisations, including managing family violence risk.			
Update staff onboarding processes to ensure relevant staff are trained.			
SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY			
Ensure current record keeping systems meet the record keeping requirements of the Reforms.			

* Schools and services must ensure that any copies of this checklist and the information in the checklist are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by school and service leaders, and authorised staff.

³ Catholic and independent schools may also refer to this policy for guidance.

All staff



Who am I?

I am someone who works at a school or early childhood education and care service.

Why is this resource important to me?

This resource tells me what my role and responsibilities are under the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM).

What is my responsibility?

I am responsible for MARAM Responsibility 1: Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement. I can do this by listening to, partnering with and believing the experiences of victim survivors.

I **contribute** to MARAM Responsibilities 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10. I can do this by using the Family Violence Identification Tool on page 45 to identify and respond to family violence.

What training and support do I need?

Please refer to Staff supports and other resources on page 110.

What is MARAM?

MARAM is a framework describing best practice for family violence risk assessment and management, based on current evidence and research. There are 10 responsibilities underpinning MARAM. The responsibilities are shared across the service system to support consistent and collaborative practice.

Under MARAM, schools and services have 6 responsibilities relating to 'identification and screening'. These are:

- Responsibility 1: Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement
- Responsibility 2: Identification of family violence
- Responsibility 5: Seek consultation for comprehensive risk assessment, risk management and referrals
- Responsibility 6: Contribute to information sharing with other services (as authorised by legislation) (this includes FVISS and can also include CISS)
- Responsibility 9: Contribute to coordinated risk management
- Responsibility 10: Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management.

Staff in schools and services are **not** required to undertake Responsibilities 3 and 4: Intermediate Risk Assessment and Management, and Responsibilities 7 and 8: Comprehensive Risk Assessment and Comprehensive Risk Management and Safety Planning. These responsibilities are undertaken by other services, including Child Protection, family violence specialist services and Victoria Police.

The MARAM Framework

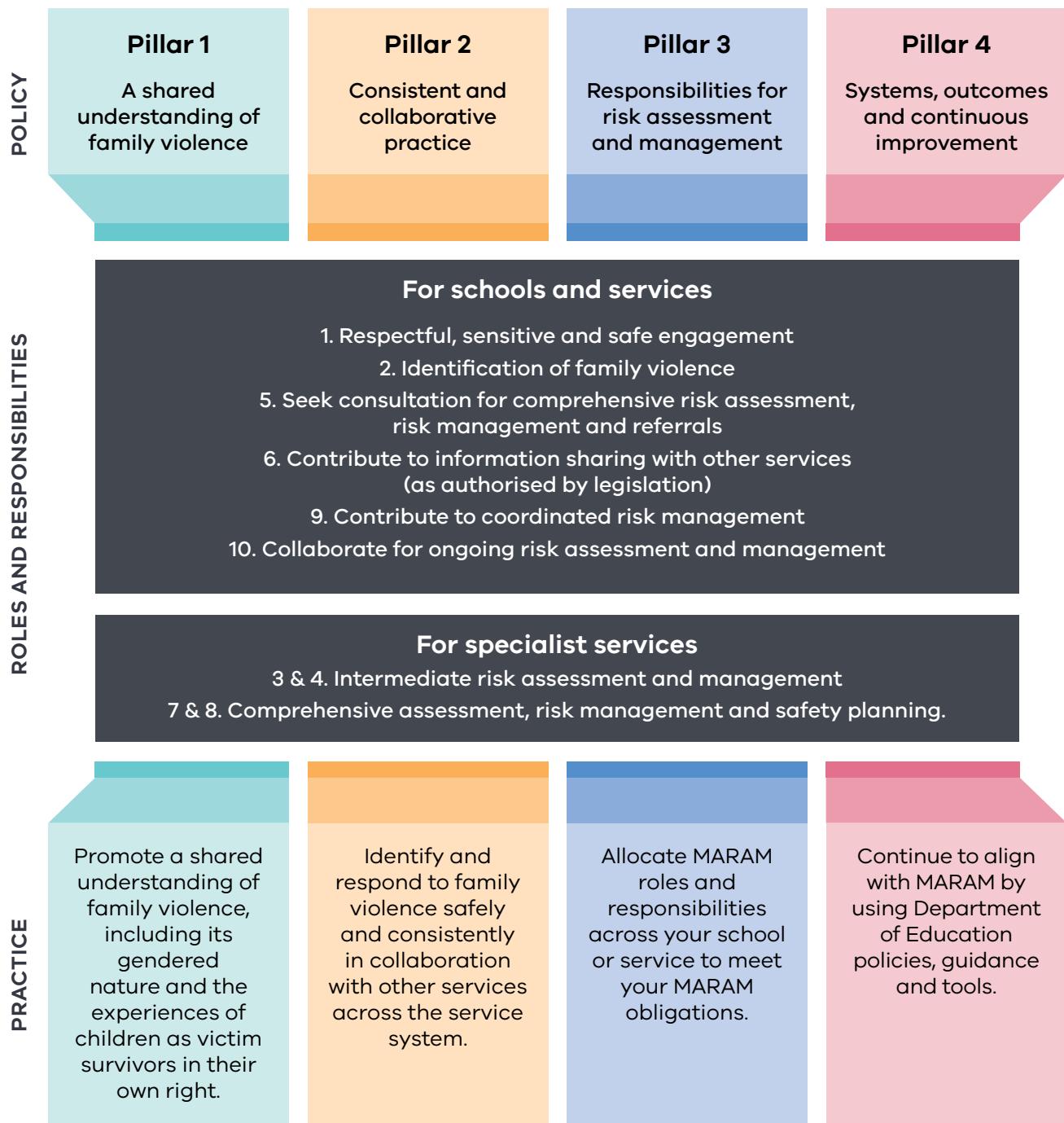


Figure 5: The MARAM Framework

How does MARAM align with PROTECT in schools and services?

Following the **Four Critical Actions** <www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools> will help you to meet your MARAM responsibilities. The following table outlines this. If the situation is not an emergency requiring response (Critical Action 1), schools and services must still consider Critical Actions 2, 3 and 4.

Remember - Mandatory reporting obligations continue to apply to individuals who are required to report under the **Children, Youth and Families Act 2005**. By itself, making a mandatory report does not acquit your school or service's obligations under MARAM. The guidance in this resource supports staff decision-making before and after making a mandatory report.

PROTECT CRITICAL ACTION	ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	MARAM RESPONSIBILITY
1. Respond to an emergency	By responding to an emergency, you are contributing to your MARAM responsibility to create a respectful, sensitive and safe environment for people experiencing family violence. This includes prioritising the immediate health and safety of victim survivors and responding to disclosures sensitively.	1
2. Report to authorities or refer to specialist services	By reporting to authorities and referring to the Orange Door or specialist family violence services, you are contributing to MARAM responsibilities to identify family violence, make referrals, and share information. Any staff member can use the Family Violence Identification Tool to record observable signs of trauma that may indicate family violence, evidence-based risk factors and observed narratives (e.g. statements or stories) and behaviours that may indicate an adult is using family violence.	1, 2, 5 and 6
3. Contact parents/ carers	By contacting parents or carers (if safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so) about referrals to specialist family violence services, you are contributing to MARAM responsibilities to share information and make referrals.	1, 5 and 6
4. Provide ongoing support	By providing ongoing support, you are contributing to MARAM responsibilities for coordinated risk management and collaborating for ongoing risk assessment and management.	1, 5, 6, 9 and 10



How do I identify family violence?

Responsibility 1: Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement

Responsibility 2: Identification of family violence

Use the Family Violence Identification Tool (on page 45) to record information if you:

- receive a disclosure of family violence
- observe
 - signs of trauma that may indicate a child or young person is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, family violence
 - family violence risk factors
 - narratives (e.g. statements or stories) or behaviours that indicate an adult is using family violence.

You must act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion or reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused. You do not have to directly witness the child abuse or know the source of the abuse.

The tool is self-contained and includes instructions. The information you record in this tool will help you decide next steps.



Further information to help you identify family violence

The Family Violence Identification Tool supports you to identify family violence. This section gives you more information including more observable signs of trauma, family violence risk factors, and narratives and behaviours which may indicate an adult is using violence. If you observe or become aware of any of the following, you can record them in the Family Violence Identification Tool.

Impacts of family violence on children and young people

When responding to children experiencing family violence, it is important to remember that children are not passive witnesses or secondary victim survivors – **children are victim survivors in their own right, with their own needs and experiences.**

Even if violence is not directed towards the child, infants and young children can sense and understand what is occurring. A child's exposure alone to family violence constitutes child abuse; and the longer that a child experiences or is exposed to family violence, the more harmful it is.

For more information, schools should refer to **Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools**, see under the heading **Guides for identifying and responding to child abuse on Report Child Abuse in Schools** <www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools>. Services should see **Identify signs of Child Abuse** <www.vic.gov.au/child-protection-early-childhood-protect/identify-signs-child-abuse>.

A child or young person might be a victim of family violence in the following ways:

- being hit, yelled at, or otherwise directly abused
- being injured
- being sexually abused
- experiencing fear for self
- experiencing fear for another person, a pet or belongings
- seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing violence directed against another person
- seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing the aftermath of violence (such as broken furniture, smashed crockery, an atmosphere of tension)
- knowing or sensing that a family member is in fear
- being told to do something (such as to be quiet or to 'behave') to prevent violence
- being blamed for not preventing violence
- attempting to prevent or minimise violence
- attempting to mediate between the perpetrator and another family member
- being threatened or co-opted by the perpetrator into using violent behaviour against another family member
- being co-opted into supporting the perpetrator or taking their side
- being isolated or socially marginalised in ways that are directly attributable to the perpetrator's controlling behaviours.

The impacts of family violence on children are profound. Trauma caused by family violence during childhood can have significant lifelong effects. There is now strong evidence that shows that early childhood attachment, safety and wellbeing provide the crucial foundation for a child's long-term physical, social and emotional development. For example, children who experience family violence are more likely to abuse substances, be involved in crime and experience or perpetrate family violence in future relationships themselves later in life.

Key impacts of family violence on children and adolescents

Depression

Anxiety

Self-harm or suicidal ideation

Behavioural problems

Academic outcomes

Cognitive ability

Coping mechanisms and resilience

Peer relationships



Observable signs of trauma in children and young people

The trauma of experiencing family violence may manifest in children and young people in different ways, depending on their age or stage of development. The following tables list behaviours you may observe in children and young people which may indicate that they are experiencing family violence, or another type of abuse or harm.

If you observe the following signs of trauma, you can record them in the Family Violence Identification Tool.

Signs of trauma for babies and toddlers

OBSERVABLE SIGNS OF TRAUMA THAT MAY INDICATE FAMILY VIOLENCE FOR:

A baby (under 18 months)	A toddler
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excessive crying• Excessive passivity• Underweight for age• Significant sleep and/or feeding difficulties• Reactions to loud voices or noises• Extreme wariness of new people• No verbal 'play' (such as imitating sounds)• Frequent illness• Anxiety, overly clingy to primary caregiver	<p>As for baby (under 18 months), and also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excessive irritability• Excessive compliance• Poor language development• Delayed mobility• Blood in nappy, underwear

Age-related signs of trauma that may indicate family violence in a child or young person

Some indicators are related to trauma from specific forms of family violence, including sexual abuse (indicated by ~) or emotional abuse (indicated by *), or indicated by signs of neglect.

OBSERVABLE SIGNS OF TRAUMA THAT MAY INDICATE FAMILY VIOLENCE FOR:

A preschooler	A primary school-aged child	An adolescent
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extreme clinginess• Significant sleep~ and/or eating difficulties• Poor concentration in play• Inability to empathise with other people• Frequent illness• Poor language development and/ or significant use of 'baby talk'• Displaying maladaptive behaviour such as frequent rocking, sucking and biting~• Aggression towards others• Adjustment problems (e.g. significant difficulties moving from kindergarten to school)• Antisocial play or lack of interest in engaging with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rebelliousness, defiant behaviour• Limited tolerance and poor impulse control• Temper tantrums or irritability, being aggressive or demanding*• Physical abuse or cruelty of others, including pets• Avoidance of conflict• Showing low self-esteem*• Extremely compliant behaviour, being passive, tearful or withdrawn*• Excessively oppositional or argumentative behaviour• Risk-taking behaviours that have severe or life-threatening consequences• Lack of interest in social activities• Delayed or poor language skills*• Experiencing problems with schoolwork~• Poor social competence (few or no friends, not getting on well with peers, difficulties relating to adults)*~• Acting like a much younger child*• Poor school performance• Poor coping skills• Excessive washing• Frequent illness• Complaining of headaches or stomach pains~• Self-harm• Displaying maladaptive behaviour~• Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge unusual for the child's age~• Telling someone sexual abuse has occurred~• Complaining of pain going to the toilet• Enacting sexual behaviour with other children• Excessive masturbation	<p>As for primary school-aged children, and also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School refusal or avoidance (absenteeism or disengagement)• Criminal or antisocial behaviours, including using violence against others• Eating disorders• Substance abuse• Depression• Suicidal ideation• Risk-taking behaviours• Anxiety• Pregnancy• Controlling or manipulative behaviour• Obsessive behaviour• Homelessness or frequent changes in housing arrangements

Family violence risk factors

Family violence risk factors are associated with family violence occurring and/or strongly linked to the likelihood of a perpetrator killing or seriously injuring a victim survivor.

It is important that you can recognise family violence risk factors, as they are vital for Child Protection, Victoria Police or family violence specialist services to understand and determine level of risk.

If you observe or become aware of the following family violence risk factors, you can record them in the Family Violence Identification Tool.

Risk factors specific to children's circumstances

THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE FOLLOWING CHILD CIRCUMSTANCE FACTORS MAY INDICATE THE PRESENCE OR ESCALATION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE RISK.

RISK FACTORS	EXPLANATION
History of professional involvement and/or statutory intervention	A history of involvement of Child Protection, youth justice, mental health professionals, or other relevant professionals may indicate the presence of family violence risk, including that family violence has escalated to the level where the child requires intervention or other service support.
Change in behaviour not explained by other causes	A change in the behaviour of a child that cannot be explained by other causes may indicate presence of family violence or an escalation of risk of harm from family violence for the child or other family members. Children may not always verbally communicate their concerns, but may change their behaviours to respond to and manage their own risk, which may include responses such as becoming hypervigilant, aggressive, withdrawn or overly compliant.
Child is a victim of other forms of harm	Children's exposure to family violence may occur within an environment of polyvictimisation. Child victims of family violence are also particularly vulnerable to further harm from opportunistic perpetrators outside the family, such as harassment, grooming and physical or sexual assault. Conversely, children who have experienced these other forms of harm are more susceptible to recurrent victimisation over their lifetimes, including family violence, and are more likely to suffer significant cumulative effects. Therefore, if a child is a victim of other forms of harm, this may indicate an elevated family violence risk.

Risk factors specific to children caused by perpetrator behaviours

THESE ARE IN ADDITION TO THE RISK FACTORS FOR ADULT OR CHILD VICTIMS CAUSED BY PERPETRATOR BEHAVIOURS (SEE TABLE ON PAGE 28)

RISK FACTORS	EXPLANATION
Exposure to family violence	<p>Children are impacted, both directly and indirectly, by family violence, including the effects of family violence on the physical environment or the control of other adult or child family members. Risk of harm may be higher if the perpetrator is targeting certain children, particularly non-biological children in the family. Children's exposure to violence may also be direct, include the perpetrator's use of control and coercion over the child, or physical violence. The effects on children experiencing family violence include impacts on development, social and emotional wellbeing, and possible cumulative harm.</p>
Sexualised behaviours towards a child by the perpetrator	<p>There is a strong link between family violence and sexual abuse. Perpetrators who demonstrate sexualised behaviours towards a child are also more likely to use other forms of violence against them, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• talking to a child in a sexually explicit way• sending sexual messages or emails to a child• exposing a child to sexual acts (including showing pornography to a child)• having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner (including child sexual exploitation). <p>Child sexual abuse also includes circumstances where a child may be manipulated into believing they have brought the abuse on themselves, or that the abuse is an expression of love, through a process of grooming.</p>
Child intervention in violence	<p>Children are more likely to be harmed by the perpetrator if they engage in protective behaviours for other family members or become physically or verbally involved in the violence.</p> <p>Additionally, where children use aggressive language and behaviour, this may indicate they are being exposed to or experiencing family violence.</p>

Risk factors specific to children caused by perpetrator behaviours (continued)

RISK FACTORS	EXPLANATION
Behaviour indicating non return of child	<p>Perpetrator behaviours including threatening or failing to return a child can be used to harm the child and the affected parent. This risk factor includes failure to adhere to, or the undermining of, agreed childcare arrangements (or threatening to do so), threatened or actual removal of children overseas, returning children late, or not responding to contact from the affected parent when children are in the perpetrator's care. This risk arises from or is linked to entitlement-based attitudes and a perpetrator's sense of ownership over children. The behaviour is used as a way to control the adult victim, but also poses a serious risk to the child's psychological, developmental and emotional wellbeing.</p>
Undermining the child–parent relationship	<p>Perpetrators often engage in behaviours that cause damage to the relationship between the adult victim survivor and their child or children. These can include tactics to undermine capacity and confidence in parenting and undermining the child–parent relationship, including manipulation of the child's perception of the adult victim. This can have long-term impacts on the psychological, developmental and emotional wellbeing of the children, and it indicates the perpetrator's willingness to involve children in their abuse.</p>
Professional and statutory intervention	<p>Involvement of Child Protection, counsellors, or other professionals indicates that the violence has escalated to a level where intervention is required and indicates a serious risk to a child's psychological, developmental and emotional wellbeing.</p>

Risk factors relevant to an adult victim's circumstances

RISK FACTORS	EXPLANATION
Physical assault while pregnant or following birth	Family violence often commences or intensifies during pregnancy and is associated with increased rates of miscarriage, low birth weight, premature birth, foetal injury and foetal death. Family violence during pregnancy is regarded as a significant indicator of future harm to the woman and child victim. This factor is associated with control and escalation of violence already occurring.
Self-assessed level of risk	Victims are often good predictors of their own level of safety and risk, including as a predictor of re-assault. Professionals should be aware that some victims may communicate a feeling of safety, or minimise their level of risk, due to the perpetrator's emotional abuse tactics creating uncertainty, denial or fear, and may still be at risk.
Planning to leave or recent separation	For victims who are experiencing family violence, the high-risk periods include when a victim starts planning to leave, immediately prior to taking action, and during the initial stages of or immediately after separation. Victims who stay with the perpetrator because they are afraid to leave often accurately anticipate that leaving would increase the risk of lethal assault. Victims (adult or child) are particularly at risk during the first 2 months of separation.
Escalation — increase in severity and/or frequency of violence	Violence occurring more often or becoming worse is associated with increased risk of lethal outcomes for victims.
Imminence	Certain situations can increase the risk of family violence escalating in a very short timeframe. The risk may relate to court matters, particularly family court proceedings, release from prison, relocation, or other matters outside the control of the victim which may imminently impact their level of risk.
Financial abuse or difficulties	Financial abuse (across socioeconomic groups), financial stress and gambling addiction, particularly of the perpetrator, are risk factors for family violence. Financial abuse is a relevant determinant of a victim survivor staying or leaving a relationship.

Risk factors for adult or child victim survivors caused by perpetrator behaviours

RISK FACTORS	EXPLANATION
Controlling behaviours	<p>Use of controlling behaviours is strongly linked to homicide. Perpetrators who feel entitled to get their way, irrespective of the views and needs of, or impact on, others are more likely to use various forms of violence against their victim, including sexual violence. Perpetrators may express ownership over family members as an articulation of control. Examples of controlling behaviours include the perpetrator telling the victim how to dress, who they can socialise with, what services they can access, limiting cultural and community connection or access to culturally appropriate services, preventing work or study, controlling their access to money or other financial abuse, and determining when they can see friends and family or use the car. Perpetrators may also use third parties to monitor and control a victim or use systems and services as a form of control over a victim, such as intervention orders and family court proceedings.</p>
Access to weapons	<p>A weapon is defined as any tool or object used by a perpetrator to threaten or intimidate, harm or kill a victim or victims, or to destroy property. Perpetrators with access to weapons, particularly guns and knives, are much more likely to seriously injure or kill a victim or victims than perpetrators without access to weapons.</p>
Use of weapon in most recent event	<p>Use of a weapon indicates a high level of risk because previous behaviour is a likely predictor of future behaviour.</p>
Has ever harmed or threatened to harm victim or family members	<p>Psychological and emotional abuse are good predictors of continued abuse, including physical abuse. Previous physical assaults also predict future assaults. Threats by the perpetrator to hurt or cause actual harm to family members, including extended family members, in Australia or overseas, can be a way of controlling the victim through fear.</p>
Has ever tried to strangle or choke the victim	<p>Strangulation or choking is a common method used by perpetrators to kill victims. It is also linked to a general increased lethality risk to a current or former partner. Loss of consciousness, including from forced restriction of airflow or blood flow to the brain, is linked to increased risk of lethality (both at the time of assault and in the following period of time) and hospitalisations, and of acquired brain injury.</p>

Risk factors for adult or child victim survivors caused by perpetrator behaviours (continued)

RISK FACTORS	EXPLANATION
Has ever threatened to kill victim	Evidence shows that a perpetrator's threat to kill a victim (adult or child) is often genuine and should be taken seriously, particularly where the perpetrator has been specific or detailed, or used other forms of violence in conjunction to the threat indicating an increased risk of carrying out the threat, such as strangulation and physical violence. This includes where there are multiple victims, such as where there has been a history of family violence between intimate partners, and threats to kill or harm another family member or child or children.
Has ever harmed or threatened to harm or kill pets or other animals	There is a correlation between cruelty to animals and family violence, including a direct link between family violence and pets being abused or killed. Abuse or threats of abuse against pets may be used by perpetrators to control family members.
Has ever threatened or tried to self-harm or commit suicide	Threats or attempts to self-harm or commit suicide are a risk factor for murder-suicide. This factor is an extreme extension of controlling behaviours.
Stalking of victim	Stalkers are more likely to be violent if they have had an intimate relationship with the victim, including during, following separation and including when the victim has commenced a new relationship. Stalking when coupled with physical assault, is strongly connected to murder or attempted murder. Stalking behaviour and obsessive thinking are highly related behaviours. Technology-facilitated abuse, including on social media, surveillance technologies and apps is a type of stalking.
Sexual assault of victim	Perpetrators who sexually assault their victim (adult or child) are also more likely to use other forms of violence against them.
Previous or current breach of court orders or intervention orders	Breaching an intervention order, or any other order with family violence protection conditions, indicates the accused is not willing to abide by the orders of a court. It also indicates a disregard for the law and authority. Such behaviour is a serious indicator of increased risk of future violence.
History of family violence	Perpetrators with a history of family violence are more likely to continue to use violence against family members and in new relationships.

Risk factors for adult or child victim survivors caused by perpetrator behaviours (continued)

RISK FACTORS	EXPLANATION
History of violent behaviour (not family violence)	Perpetrators with a history of violence are more likely to use violence against family members. This can occur even if the violence has not previously been directed towards family members. The nature of the violence may include credible threats or use of weapons and attempted or actual assaults. Perpetrators who are violent men generally engage in more frequent and more severe family violence than perpetrators who do not have a violent past. A history of criminal justice system involvement (for example, amount of time and number of occasions in and out of prison) is linked with family violence risk.
Obsession or jealous behaviour toward victim	A perpetrator's obsessive and/or excessive behaviour when experiencing jealousy is often related to controlling behaviours founded in rigid beliefs about gender roles and ownership of victims and has been linked to violent attacks.
Unemployed or disengaged from education	A perpetrator's unemployment is associated with an increased risk of lethal assault, and a sudden change in employment status — such as being terminated and/or retrenched — may be associated with increased risk. Disengagement from education has similar associated risks to unemployment.
Drug and/or alcohol misuse or abuse	Perpetrators with a serious problem with illicit drugs, alcohol, prescription drugs or inhalants can lead to impairment in social functioning and creates an increased risk of family violence. This includes temporary drug-induced psychosis.
Mental illness, particularly depression	Murder-suicide outcomes in family violence have been associated with perpetrators who have mental illness, particularly depression. Mental illness may be linked with escalation, frequency and severity of violence.

Risk factors for adult or child victim survivors caused by perpetrator behaviours (continued)

RISK FACTORS	EXPLANATION
Isolation	A victim is more vulnerable if isolated from family, friends, their community (including cultural) and the wider community and other social networks. Isolation also increases the likelihood of violence and is not simply geographic. Other examples of isolation include systemic factors that limit social interaction or facilitate the perpetrator not allowing the victim to have social interaction.
Physical harm	Physical harm is an act of family violence and is an indicator of increased risk of continued or escalation in severity of violence. The severity and frequency of physical harm against the victim, and the nature of the physical harm tactics, informs an understanding of the severity of risk the victim may be facing. Physical harm resulting in head trauma is linked to increased risk of lethality and hospitalisations, and of acquired brain injury.
Emotional abuse	Perpetrators' use of emotional abuse can have significant impacts on the victim's physical and mental health. Emotional abuse is used as a method to control the victim and keep them from seeking assistance.
Property damage	Property damage is a method of controlling the victim, through fear and intimidation. It can also contribute to financial abuse, when property damage results in a need to finance repairs.



Narratives and behaviours which may indicate an adult is using violence

You may suspect an adult is using family violence due to the person's account or description of experiences, themselves and their relationships (their narrative) or behaviours towards family members or professionals – these may indicate use of family violence. To help you avoid collusion, it is useful to understand the narratives and behaviours which may be demonstrated by an adult using violence.

If you observe the following narratives, you can record them in the Family Violence Identification Tool on page 45.

OBSERVED NARRATIVES

Beliefs or attitudes

Narratives that may indicate beliefs (things that a person feels are right or correct) and attitudes (how a person expresses beliefs) that are commonly associated with likely use of family violence.

- Makes statements that indicate sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, ableist, ageist or racist beliefs (denigrating person or group based on identity).
- Makes statements that indicate gendered entitlement to power, control and decision making.
- Makes statements that indicate belief in ownership over victim survivor.
- Comments negatively on victim survivor's decisions and actions.
- Pathologises victim survivor (describing their behaviour or presentation as behavioural disorder, mental illness or addiction).
- Displays limited empathy or desire to understand experiences of victim survivor.
- Complains that victim survivor does not show them 'respect'.
- Openly dismisses victim survivor's viewpoints and/or needs, particularly if it conflicts with their own.
- [Adult victim survivor only] Makes decisions for adult victim survivor.
- Displays indicators of ownership and entitlement, in relation to children and rights to access and/or custody.
- Threatens to report partner or ex-partner to authorities about their 'poor parenting'.
- Criticises partner or ex-partner's parenting (put downs, devaluing worth).

Your experience engaging with the adult using violence

The adult may use these narratives or behaviours with you during your engagement with them or over time.

- Tries to get you [professional] to agree with their negative views about partner or family member [invitation to collude] throughout service engagement, over time.
- You observe or feel intimidated, manipulated and/or controlled during your engagement with the adult.

OBSERVED NARRATIVES... (CONTINUED)

<p>Minimising or justifying Narratives that deny, minimise or justify beliefs and attitudes, or physical and verbal behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimising physical harm and/or neglectful behaviour. Direct comments or euphemisms that could indicate use of violence. Presents or talks about themselves as the real victim (victim stance). Presents as having difficulty with emotional and/or behavioural regulation. Uses impulsivity as a justification of violent and abusive behaviours (may relate to presenting needs such as mental health, use of alcohol or drugs).
<p>Physical and verbal behaviours Physical or verbal behaviour that may reveal the use of coercive control and violence, such as aggression, hostility or malice (in physical and/or verbal behaviour).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses derogatory language about women, or anger about 'disrespect' shown to men or their position in the family. Displays controlling behaviour. Displays indicators of jealousy and/or possessiveness. Displays indicators of fixation with victim survivor's actions and whereabouts (monitoring, rumination and intent focus). Controls adult victim survivor's finances and/or access to employment. Demonstrates threatening non-verbal behaviour (physical standover, intrusion into personal space). Hostile language and attitudes towards authority figures and systems. Talks about victim survivor in emotionally abusive or degrading ways. Interrupts, corrects and/or dominates victim survivor in conversation. Raises voice and/or yells. Is violent and/or controlling towards victim survivor before, during or after the session. Insists on sitting in on appointments with victim survivor. Discloses any harm or threat to harm animals or pets. Physical signs of violent altercation (on victim survivor or person suspected of using violence). Expresses feelings of excessive anger that is 'outside their control'. Discloses that they have targeted and/or damaged victim survivor's property.

Young people using family violence

For adolescents and young people (aged 10 to 18 years old³), the term 'young person who uses family violence' is used, rather than 'perpetrator'.

It is important that this distinction be made from adults, as a more nuanced therapeutic response needs to be considered due to age, developmental stage, and that they may be victim survivors of family violence as well.

We avoid labelling these young people as 'violent' or as 'perpetrators', as it can lead to internalising within their identity and does not acknowledge their behaviour can be occurring within a trauma response.

Similar to adult perpetrators, family violence by young people is about patterns of power and coercive control. As with adult perpetrators, young people using violence must still be accountable for the use of violence and to learn skills and abilities to move away from the use of violence.

Violence used by young people can be towards:

a. a parent, carer or siblings, other family members, including grandparents, pets

Family members of the child or young person often feel shame, responsibility and that they will be disbelieved or blamed. Parents often want to protect their child, avoid Child Protection or police involvement, and for those who are separated from family, see reconciliation as the ideal outcome.

Most incidents of violence are committed by male adolescents against their mothers, but young people using violence is not as highly gendered as adult intimate partner violence.

b. their own intimate partner

Young people can experience family violence from partners, boyfriends or girlfriends in the same way that family violence is experienced in adults. Young people may also be too fearful of further abuse, violence or reprisals, or the social impacts of seeking help to disclose or act on behaviours.

Victim survivors may accept these behaviours or not identify them as problematic for a range of reasons:

- the behaviours are not seen as abuse or as a form of family violence
- the relationship has priority and behaviours are accepted as part of love and trust building
- the behaviours are accepted as part of gendered norms which normalise men's dominance and control over women.
- they are not aware of the legal and financial consequences of some actions.



³ Although at 18 years, the young person is treated as an adult by the legal system.

How do I use the tool with adult victim survivors?

If children and young people hear, witness, or are exposed to the effects of family violence, they are victim survivors in their own right. The Family Violence Identification Tool supports you to identify family violence when engaging with adults in order to protect children and young people.

Observable signs of trauma

Adult victim survivors may display signs of trauma which may indicate they are experiencing family violence.

You may observe or become aware of these signs when engaging with parents or carers, such as at school pick up and drop off, parent teacher interviews or other conversations that centre around the child or young person in your care. You can record any of the signs of trauma in the table below in the Family Violence Identification Tool on page 45.

FORM	SIGNS OF TRAUMA THAT MAY INDICATE FAMILY VIOLENCE IS OCCURRING FOR ADULT VICTIMS	
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bruising• fractures• chronic pain (neck, back)• fresh scars or minor cuts• terminations of pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• complications during pregnancy• gastrointestinal disorders• sexually transmitted diseases• strangulation
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• depression• anxiety• self-harming behaviour• eating disorders• phobias• somatic disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sleep problems• impaired concentration• harmful alcohol use• legal and illegal drug use• physical exhaustion• suicide attempts
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• fear• shame• anger• no support networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness• feeling disassociated and emotionally numb
Social or financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• homelessness• unemployment• financial debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• no friends or family support• isolation• parenting difficulties
Demeanor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• unconvincing explanations of any injuries• describe a partner as controlling or prone to anger• anxiety in the presence of a partner• recent separation or divorce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be accompanied by their partner, who does most of the talking• needing to be back home by a certain time and becoming stressed about this• reluctance to follow advice

Working collaboratively with children, young people and adult victim survivors from diverse communities

When engaging with children, young people and adult victim survivors with diverse identities, backgrounds or circumstances, ensure that equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.

This can be done through the following actions.

Recognise diverse backgrounds, needs and circumstances

Pay attention to:

- the needs of children, young people and adult victim survivors with disability or from diverse religious and cultural communities
- the impact of prior trauma from family violence or other circumstances
- gender differences in prevalence and experience of family violence
- the diverse experiences of LGBTIQA+ young people and adult victim survivors
- challenges for children and young people who are in foster care, out of home care, living away from home or international students
- young people experiencing pregnancy or young parents
- socio-economic factors (experiencing family homelessness, insecure employment or accommodation, individual or family contact with the justice system, poverty, addiction, low educational attainment, remote or regional isolation).

Identify and address challenges that people experience due to their diverse attributes

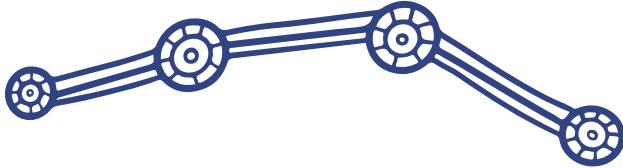
- Check in with children, young people and adult victim survivors to confirm their needs are being met. This should be in private and may occur at pick-up or drop-off, one-on-one meetings or informal discussions.
- Normalise asking for and using people's pronouns and preferred names.
- Arrange for an interpreter if required.

Put in place policies and strategies to help meet diverse needs

- Ensure school and service environments are welcoming and inclusive by displaying flags representing different cultures within the community, providing materials in different languages and decorating with artistic expressions from children and young people.
- Conduct meetings in private and safe spaces. If meeting at the school or service, schedule the meeting so adult victim survivors do not have to navigate the grounds full of children or young people.
- Seek out expert advice to support inclusion. For example, an occupational therapist, speech pathologist, LGBTIQA+ services or specialist services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Participate in professional development and practice

- Reflect on your own privilege, preconceptions and biases when engaging with children, young people and adult victim survivors with diverse identities, backgrounds or circumstances.
- Learn about **intersectionality** – how individuals and communities experience multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination – and the presentations of family violence in different communities.
- Understand the systemic barriers victim survivors may face and the particular tactics perpetrators can use against them.



Aboriginal communities, family violence and cultural safety

Aboriginal people are disproportionately impacted by family violence. Evidence also shows that overwhelmingly perpetrators of family violence towards Aboriginal women are not Aboriginal people.

When working with Aboriginal children and families, it is critically important that your practice is culturally safe and responsive. To practice cultural safety means to carry out practice in collaboration with the victim survivor, with care and insight for their culture, while being mindful of your own. A culturally safe environment is one where people feel safe and where there is no challenge or need for the denial of their identity.

Cultural safety includes recognising Aboriginal community understandings of family and rights to self-determination and self-management. Culturally safe practice acknowledges Aboriginal experiences of colonisation, systemic violence and discrimination and recognises the ongoing and present-day impacts of historical events, policies, and practices.

The injustices experienced by Aboriginal people, including the dispossession of their land and traditional culture and the wrongful removal of children from their families, both historic and current, have had a profound impact on Aboriginal communities. This may impact the way children, young people, and adult victim survivors present, disclose information, and engage with services.

When working with Aboriginal people and communities, you should:

- acknowledge and respond to fears about Child Protection and the possibility of children being removed from their care when working with adult victim survivors.
- make referrals to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations that support Aboriginal led decision making wherever possible (for nominated staff only).
- use a strengths-based approach that respects and values the collective strengths of Aboriginal knowledge, systems and expertise. Aboriginal people are the experts in their own lives.
- acknowledge that family violence against Aboriginal people can include perpetrators denying or disconnecting victim survivors from cultural identity and connection to family, community and culture.
- understand that Aboriginal family violence may relate to relationships that aren't captured by the Western nuclear family model, for example, uncles and aunts, cousins and other community-and culturally-defined relationships.

For more information, see **Child Safe Standard 5: diversity and equity guidance for early childhood services** <www.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-services-diversity-and-equity> and **Guidance for schools** <www.vic.gov.au/schools-diversity-equity-guidance>.



Engaging with someone who is suspected or known to be using violence

There may be times when you come into contact with people (such as a parent, carer or adolescent) who you suspect or know may be using family violence.

It is important that you do not ask a person you suspect of using family violence, about their use of violence, or ask questions in front of them. You should use the Family Violence Identification Tool to record any narratives (e.g. statements or stories) or behaviours that may indicate an adult is using family violence. It is the role of specialist family violence services to safely communicate with a person using violence and engage them with appropriate interventions and services.

You must act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused. You must act if you form a suspicion or reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse.

If you are engaging with someone who may be using violence, you should learn to identify collusion and how to avoid it, and take steps to keep yourself safe.

Avoiding collusion

The term **collusion** refers to ways that you might (usually unintentionally) reinforce, excuse, minimise or deny a person's use of violence and the extent or impact of that violence. It can be expressed in a nod of agreement, a sympathetic smile or by laughing at a sexist or demeaning joke. Collusion can happen when a person's excuses for violence are accepted without question.

You can actively avoid collusion by:

- not speaking directly with a person about their use of family violence (suspected or confirmed) – this is the role of specialist family violence services. Instead, talk to your school or service's leadership team.
- not asking a victim survivor questions in front of a person who may be using violence – this may increase the risk for a child and their family.



How to talk about family violence

This section supports you to meet your obligations under the following MARAM responsibilities:

Responsibility 1: Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement

Responsibility 2: Identification of family violence

There may be times when you need to talk to a child, young person and/or adult victim survivor about family violence. For example, you might need to:

- respond immediately if a child, young person and/or adult victim survivor discloses family violence to you
- start the conversation if you suspect a child, young person and/or adult victim survivor is experiencing some wellbeing concerns or not acting like their usual selves (for example, by asking prompting questions).

You should only talk to a child, young person and/or adult victim survivor if it is safe, appropriate and reasonable to do so.

Even if it is not part of your role to screen for family violence, it is important to know how to talk to children, young people and/or adult victim survivors about family violence in a safe and supportive way. This is because a child or adult may disclose family violence to you (regardless of your role) and it is important to feel confident to respond respectfully, sensitively and safely before referring to the nominated staff at your school or service.

You do not have to be an expert in family violence. Your role is to identify if family violence might be happening and connect the family to the appropriate supports, whether that is the nominated staff or specialist services that can help assess and manage risk and support the family.

For strategies on managing disclosures, see

- **Report child abuse in schools - Strategies for managing a disclosure**
<www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools> and
- **Report child abuse in early childhood - Strategies for managing a disclosure**
<www.vic.gov.au/child-protection-early-childhood-protect/report-child-abuse-early-childhood>.



Tools for all staff

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Family violence identification tool



INSTRUCTIONS – before completing tool

Why	<p>Your school or service is prescribed under the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM). This means your school or service is required to ensure its policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools align with MARAM.</p> <p>The Four Critical Actions set out the actions schools and services must take when responding to a suspicion, incident, disclosure, or reasonable belief of child abuse, including exposure to family violence. Following the Four Critical Actions helps your school or service to meet MARAM obligations.</p> <p>For more information, see Report child abuse in schools <www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools> or Report child abuse in early childhood <www.vic.gov.au/child-protection-early-childhood-protect/report-child-abuse-early-childhood></p> <p>This tool helps you record risk-relevant information and form a reasonable belief that a child or young person is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, family violence.</p>
Who	<p>Any school or service staff member can use this tool to record information after receiving a disclosure of family violence, or to record observations that may indicate family violence is occurring for a child or young person.</p>
When	<p>This tool helps you determine if a child or young person is experiencing family violence.</p> <p>Complete this tool if you receive a disclosure, or if you observe signs of trauma for a child or young person, family violence risk factors, or narratives (e.g. statements or stories) or behaviours that indicate an adult is using family violence.</p> <p>You must act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion or reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused. You do not have to directly witness the child abuse or know the source of the abuse.</p>
How	<p>Record disclosures and observations in this tool.</p> <p>You are <u>not</u> expected to ask the child or young person, or a member of their family, any questions.</p> <p>Do <u>not</u> ask questions of, or in front of, a person you suspect may be using family violence.</p>

NEXT STEPS – after completing tool

The information you record in this tool will help you decide next steps. See Outcomes and next steps on page 51. If you need additional support to complete this tool, consult a MARAM nominated staff member in your school or service. These staff members are identified by the school or service leader and should have qualifications, training, experience or a role aligned with wellbeing, such as wellbeing coordinators and leadership staff.

Records management

You must follow all data security and record management requirements that apply to your school or service.

Personal details

Record the personal details you know. You can consult your school or service's record management system.

Child or young person

Full name

Year level

Date of birth

Other relevant details (e.g. in out-of-home-care, services they are engaged with).

Parent or carer 1

Full name

Relationship to child or young person (e.g., parent, carer, step parent)

Contact details (phone, email)

Other relevant details (e.g., interpreter needed, employment status)

Parent or carer 2

Full name

Relationship to
child or young person
(e.g., parent, carer, step
parent)

Contact details (phone, email)

Other relevant details
(e.g., interpreter needed,
employment status)

Add additional tables as required.

Sibling(s)

Name(s)

School or service

Year level

Other relevant details

Add additional tables as required.

Disclosures and observations

1. HAVE YOU RECEIVED A DISCLOSURE THAT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON IN YOUR CARE IS EXPERIENCING, OR IS AT RISK OF EXPERIENCING, FAMILY VIOLENCE?

If no, go to question 2. If yes, summarise the disclosure here and either skip to the Outcomes and next steps section at page 51 or complete questions 2-4 first, to better support next steps.

2. Have you observed any general SIGNS OF TRAUMA for a child or young person that may indicate family violence is occurring? Tick all that are known.

- Being very passive and compliant
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Demonstrating fear of particular people and places
- Poor sleep patterns and emotional dysregulation
- Becoming fearful when other children cry or shout
- Developmental regression
- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts
- Fractured bones, especially in an infant where a fracture is unlikely to have occurred accidentally
- Wearing long-sleeved clothes on hot days in an attempt to hide bruising or other injury
- Being excessively friendly to strangers
- Being excessively clingy to certain adults
- A strong desire to please or receive validation from certain adults
- Unclear boundaries and understanding of relationships between adults and children
- Excessive sexualised behaviour or advanced sexual knowledge
- Violence or sexualised behaviour to other children

Record more information relevant to the above, and/or any additional signs of trauma.

3. HAVE YOU OBSERVED ANY FAMILY VIOLENCE RISK FACTORS? TICK ALL THAT ARE KNOWN.

Risk factors specific to child or young person

- History of professional involvement and/or statutory intervention
- Change in behaviour not explained by other causes
- Child is victim of other forms of harm from perpetrators outside the family, e.g. harassment, grooming and physical and sexual assault
- Exposure to family violence
- Sexualised behaviours towards a child by the perpetrator
- Child intervention in violence
- Behaviour indicating non-return of child (e.g. perpetrator not following custody arrangements)
- Undermining the child-parent relationship (e.g. perpetrator making negative comments to the child about the other parent)

Serious risk factors specific to adult victim survivor – these can increase the risk to the child

- Physical assault while pregnant or following new birth
- Escalation – increase in severity and/or frequency of violence
- Planning to leave or recent separation

Serious risk factors for a child or young person and/or adult victim survivor caused by perpetrator behaviours

- Controlling behaviours
- Access to weapons
- Use of weapon in most recent event
- Has ever tried to strangle or choke the victim survivor
- Has ever threatened to kill the victim survivor
- Has ever harmed or threatened to harm or kill pets or other animals
- Has ever threatened or tried to self-harm or commit suicide
- Stalking of victim survivor
- Sexual assault of victim survivor
- Obsession or jealous behaviour toward victim survivor
- Unemployed or disengaged from education
- Drug and/or alcohol misuse or abuse

Record more information relevant to the above, and/or any additional risk factors.

Form continues on next page

4. HAVE YOU OBSERVED NARRATIVES (E.G. STATEMENTS OR STORIES) OR BEHAVIOURS THAT MAY INDICATE AN ADULT IS USING FAMILY VIOLENCE? TICK ALL THAT ARE KNOWN.

Observed narratives

- Displays indicators (e.g. comments) of ownership and entitlement, in relation to children
- Threatens to report partner or ex-partner to authorities about their 'poor parenting'
- Criticises partner or ex-partner's parenting (e.g. put downs, devaluing worth)
- Makes comments or euphemisms that may indicate a person is using family violence (e.g. saying they often 'lose it' at a family member)
- Tries to get you to agree with their negative views about partner or family member throughout your interaction
- You feel intimidated, manipulated and/or controlled during your interaction

Observed behaviours

- Displays controlling behaviour (e.g. control of time, movement and activities)
- Displays indicators of jealousy and/or possessiveness (e.g. preventing the victim survivor from socialising with others)
- Displays indicators of fixation with victim survivor's actions and whereabouts (e.g. monitoring, rumination and intent focus, such as monitoring victim survivor's location via social media)

Record more information relevant to the above, and/or any additional narratives or behaviours.

Outcomes and next steps

Based on the information recorded in this tool, make a decision from the list below.

I believe there is current family violence.

I will take **all** the following actions:

- inform my school or service leadership
- notify relevant authorities if required according to the Four Critical Actions per my school or service's standard procedure (with this completed tool attached)
- provide this completed tool to a MARAM nominated staff member in my school or service, who is trained to respond appropriately
- follow my school or service's standard procedure for storing sensitive information.

I do not have enough information, but I suspect there may be family violence.

I will take **all** the following actions:

- provide this completed tool to a MARAM nominated staff member in my school or service so they can screen for family violence
- follow my school or service's standard procedure for storing sensitive information.

I do not have any current safety concerns, but I have other wellbeing concerns for the child or young person.

If you hold concerns about a child's wellbeing but have not formed a reasonable belief of abuse, you must still act.

I will take **all** the following actions:

- follow my school or service's standard procedures for addressing wellbeing concerns, which may include
 - seeking advice from or making a referral to a specialist service such as The Orange Door
 - sharing information with other ISEs under CISS if appropriate
- follow my school or service's standard procedures storing sensitive information.

I no longer have any safety or wellbeing concerns for the child or young person.

I will:

- follow my school or service's standard procedure for storing sensitive information.

Form continues on next page

THIS TOOL WAS COMPLETED BY:

Initials or code of staff member
(Do not use full name)

School or service name

School or service address

Date completed

Completed tool shared with (if applicable)

* Schools and services **must** ensure that any copies of this tool and the information in the tool are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by school and service leaders, and authorised staff.

Staff who use CISS and FVISS



Who am I?

In my role at my school or service, I use the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and Family Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), underpinned by MARAM, to support the wellbeing or safety of children and assess or manage family violence risk.

Why is this resource important to me?

This resource tells me exactly what I need to know to:

- be able to share information safely and appropriately with other prescribed services
- understand how MARAM underpins information sharing.

What is my responsibility?

I am responsible for the wellbeing and safety of the students and children in my school or service, and for developing and/or contributing to plans for students and children.

What training and support do I need?

Please refer to Staff supports and other resources on page 110.

Overview of the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) allows authorised organisations to share information to support child wellbeing or safety, to ensure that professionals 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.

The **Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines** <www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme-ministerial-guidelines> detail the legal obligations of prescribed Information Sharing Entities (ISEs). Additional resources are available at **Information sharing and MARAM reforms** <infosharing.vic.gov.au>.



Who?

Who can share and request information?

- Professionals in information sharing roles at prescribed Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) can share information under CISS if the requirements of the three-part threshold are met. ISEs are prescribed by regulation.
- ISEs are legally obliged to respond to a request from another ISE.
- ISEs may also request information and proactively share information that meets the threshold.

Who can I share information with?

- You can share information with any organisation that is a prescribed ISE. You can find more detail on the organisations and services that are prescribed ISEs at **Who can share information under the information sharing and MARAM reforms** <www.vic.gov.au/ciss-and-fviss-who-can-share-information>. You can also search for contact details of specific ISEs at the **ISE List** <www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search>.
- You can share information with a child, a person with parental responsibility for the child, or a person with whom the child is living, for the more limited purpose of managing a risk to the child's safety.

Whose information can I share?

- If the three-part threshold is met, you may share information about any person. You should seek and take into account the views of the child and/or their family members before sharing their information, whenever safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so.

Why?

Why can I share?

ISEs can share any information for the purpose of promoting the wellbeing and safety of children as long as the requirements for sharing are met.

The requirements are set out in the three-part threshold test.

Threshold part 1: Promoting child wellbeing or safety

An ISE can request or share information about any person for the purpose of promoting the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children.

Threshold part 2: Sharing to assist another ISE

The disclosing ISE must reasonably believe that sharing the information may assist the receiving ISE to carry out one or more of the following activities:

- make a decision, an assessment or a plan relating to a child or group of children
- initiate or conduct an investigation relating to a child or group of children
- provide a service for a child or group of children
- manage any risk to a child or group of children.

Threshold part 3: No excluded information

ISEs must not share any information that is excluded information.

What?

What information can I share?

- You can share confidential information about any person, including sensitive, personal and health information. For example, this may include case notes, observations, assessments, contact details, service engagement history, and any other information relevant to promoting the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children.

What information cannot be shared?

- You should not share information that does not meet the three-part threshold test. For example, you should not share irrelevant parts of a case file or health record.
- You must not share information that is restricted from sharing by another law.

When?

When can I share or request information?

- Information can be shared or requested any time that the threshold is met.
- You can proactively share information whenever, in your professional judgement, the threshold is met.
- You must share information in response to a request whenever, in your professional judgement, the threshold is met.
- You should respond to requests for information in a timely manner, including when you are declining the request.

How?

How should information be shared or requested?

- You must follow all the data security requirements that apply to your organisation.
- The Victorian Information Privacy Principles, Victorian Health Privacy Principles or Australian Privacy Principles will apply to your organisation (including data security requirements) in relation to the handling of information that is collected under CISS, depending on the type of organisation you work for.
- You must meet all record keeping requirements, see page 78 for details.

Principles

Legislative principles to guide sharing

1. Give precedence to the wellbeing and safety of a child or group of children over the right to privacy.
2. Seek to preserve and promote positive relationships between a child and the child's family members and people significant to the child.
3. Seek to maintain constructive and respectful engagement with children and their families.
4. Be respectful of and have regard to a child's social, individual and cultural identity, the child's strengths and abilities and any vulnerability relevant to the child's safety or wellbeing.
5. Promote a child's cultural safety and recognise the cultural rights and familial and community connections of children who are Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both.
6. Seek and take into account the views of the child and the child's relevant family members, if it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so.

7. Take all reasonable steps to plan for the safety of all family members believed to be at risk from family violence.
8. Only share confidential information to the extent necessary to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children, consistent with the best interests of that child or those children.
9. Work collaboratively in a manner that respects the functions and expertise of each ISE.

- e. Disclose the contents of a document, or a communication, that is of such a nature that the contents of the document, or the communication, would be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege or client legal privilege. For example, if the information is legally privileged.
- f. Disclose or enable a person to ascertain the identity of a confidential source of information in relation to the enforcement or administration of the law. For example, if that information could reveal or be used to reveal the name of a person who has confidentially provided information to police.
- g. Contravene a court order or a provision made by or under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act or any other Act that:
 - prohibits or restricts, or authorises a court or tribunal to prohibit or restrict, the publication or other disclosure of information for, or in connection with any proceeding, or
 - requires or authorises a court or tribunal to close any proceeding to the public. For example, if information is part of a closed court proceeding.
- h. Be contrary to the public interest. For example, revealing information about covert investigative techniques.

Excluded information

Excluded information under CISS is any information that, if shared, could be reasonably expected to do the following:

- a. Endanger a person's life or result in physical injury, including the child, their family or any other person. For example, if sharing the location of a child could be reasonably expected to pose a threat to the life or physical safety of the child or another person, this information should not be shared.
- b. Prejudice the investigation of a breach or possible breach of the law or prejudice the enforcement or proper administration of the law, including police investigations. For example, any information that could unfairly influence or reveal details of a police investigation or Commission for Children and Young People investigation.
- c. Prejudice a coronial inquest or inquiry. For example, information that could unduly influence a witness expected to give evidence before a coronial inquest.
- d. Prejudice the fair trial of a person or the impartial adjudication of a particular case. For example, if the information would unfairly influence the outcome of a proceeding.

For more information, see the **CISS Ministerial Guidelines** <www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme-ministerial-guidelines>.

Overview of Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme supports effective sharing of information to assess and manage family violence risk, through keeping perpetrators in view and accountable and promoting the safety of victim survivors of family violence.

For more comprehensive information, see the Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines available from **Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme** <www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme>.

Who?

Who can share information?

As with CISS, Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) are authorised to share information. These ISEs are prescribed by regulations.

Who can I share information with?

As with CISS, information can be shared with any organisation that is a prescribed ISE. For more details, see the online **ISE list** <www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search>.

Some ISEs are also prescribed as Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs) that can request information for a family violence assessment purpose.

Whose Information can be shared?

Information can be shared about any person, if it is relevant to assessing or managing family violence risk.

Consent is not required from any person to share information that is relevant to assessing or managing family violence risk to a child, if there is a serious risk to any person or if sharing is permitted by another law.

If none of the above apply, consent is required to share the information of an adult victim survivor, including a student over 18 years of age, or a third party.

You should seek and take into account the views of the child and/or family member before sharing their information, whenever safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so. Consent is never required to share information about a perpetrator, alleged perpetrator or adolescent using or at risk of using family violence.

Why?

Why can I share?

ISEs can share information for two purposes:

1. to establish and assess family violence risk (family violence assessment purpose)
2. to manage family violence risk, including via ongoing risk assessment.

All ISEs can share information for a management purpose. Only ISEs that are also prescribed as RAEs can request information for a family violence assessment purpose. All ISEs can share proactively with RAEs for a family violence assessment purpose.

What?

What information can be shared?

ISEs may only share information that is relevant to assessing or managing family violence risk.

What information cannot be shared?

- ISEs must not share excluded information (see Excluded information on page 60).
- ISEs cannot share information that would contravene another law that has not been specifically overridden by FVISS.
- ISEs cannot share information if the applicable consent requirements have not been met.

See the Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines for more information.

When?

When can information be shared?

If the information is not excluded and is relevant to assessing or managing family violence risk, an ISE:

- can proactively share information for a family violence management purpose with other ISEs, including RAEs
- can share information relevant to a family violence assessment purpose with RAEs
- can request information for a family violence management purpose from other ISEs, including RAEs
- must respond to information requests from other ISEs and RAEs by providing relevant information.

How?

How should information be shared or requested?

- You must follow all data security requirements that apply to your organisation.
- The Victorian Information Privacy Principles, Victorian Health Privacy Principles or Australian Privacy Principles will apply to your organisation (including data security requirements) in relation to the handling of information that is collected under CISS, depending on the type of organisation you work for.
- You must meet all record keeping requirements, see page 78 for more details.

Principles

Legislative principles to guide sharing

1. ISEs should:
 - a. work collaboratively to coordinate services in a manner that respects the functions and expertise of each ISE
 - b. give precedence to the right to be safe from family violence over the right to privacy
 - c. only collect, use or disclose a person's confidential information to the extent that the collection, use or disclosure of the information is necessary:
 - i. to assess or manage risk to the safety of a person from family violence
 - ii. to hold perpetrators of family violence accountable for their actions.
 - d. collect, use or disclose the confidential information of a person who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in a manner that:
 - i. promotes the right to self-determination and is culturally sensitive
 - ii. considers the person's familial and community connections.
 - e. have regard for and be respectful of a person's cultural, sexual and gender identity and religious faith.
2. When sharing any person's information to assess or manage risk to a child, ISEs should:
 - a. promote the agency of the child and other family members at risk of family violence by ensuring their views are taken into account (having regard for the appropriateness of doing so and the child's age and maturity)

- b. take all reasonable steps to ensure the information is shared in a way that:
 - i. plans for the safety of all family members at risk of family violence
 - ii. recognises the desirability of preserving and promoting positive relationships between those family members and the child.
- c. take into consideration the age and stage of the child, and their cultural, sexual and gender identity.

Excluded information

Excluded information under FVISS is any information that could be reasonably expected to:

- a. endanger a person's life or result in physical injury (e.g. if sharing the address of the victim survivor could alert a person known to pose a threat to their whereabouts then this information should not be shared)
- b. prejudice the investigation of a breach or possible breach of the law or the enforcement or proper administration of the law in a particular instance (e.g. if information reveals the details of a police investigation)
- c. prejudice a coronial inquest or inquiry or the fair trial of a person or the impartial adjudication of a particular case (e.g. if the information was cited as evidence in a closed session of the court)
- d. disclose the contents of a document or a communication that would be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege or client legal privilege

- e. disclose, or enable a person to ascertain, the identity of a confidential source of information in relation to the enforcement or administration of the law (e.g. where certain information is known only to a particular person, their identity as a confidential source could be ascertained if that information was shared)
- f. contravene a court order or law that prohibits or restricts, or authorises a court or tribunal to prohibit or restrict, the publication or other disclosure of information for or in connection with any proceeding
- g. contravene a court order or law that requires or authorises a court or tribunal to close any proceeding to the public (e.g. if the court closes proceedings under section 30 of the **Open Courts Act 2013** (Vic) or section 68 of the **Family Violence Protection Act 2008** (Vic) (FVPA) on the basis that an affected family member, protected person or witness may be caused distress or embarrassment, then an ISE would not be able to share information about the proceedings that took place in closed court)
- h. be contrary to the public interest (e.g. information that could reveal covert investigative techniques).

For more information, see the **FVISS Ministerial Guidelines**, available from Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme <www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme>.



Risk Assessment Entities

Under FVISS, there is a subset of specialist ISEs known as Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs) that can request and receive information for a family violence assessment purpose. Only RAEs can request information for a family violence assessment purpose.

RAEs have specialised skills and authorisation to conduct family violence risk assessment. Examples of RAEs include:

- Victoria Police
- Child Protection
- family violence services
- the Orange Door.

Figure 6: The relationship between ISEs and RAEs



Sharing for family violence risk assessment

One way in which you will be able to identify and respond to family violence is by making referrals for specialist services or professionals to complete a comprehensive family violence risk assessment. Some of these specialist services are prescribed as RAEs, such as family violence services, Child Protection and Victoria Police.

Under FVISS, ISEs such as school and service workforces can proactively share risk-relevant information with RAEs for risk assessment purposes. That is, in order to:

1. confirm whether family violence is occurring
2. enable RAEs to assess the level of risk the perpetrator poses to the victim survivor
3. correctly identify the perpetrator of family violence and victim survivors (see section 11.3 of the **MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide** <www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-foundation-knowledge-guide> for more information about misidentifying the predominant aggressor)
4. respond to a request made by an RAE for information from your school or service.

Family violence risk assessment is an ongoing process, and assessment is required at different points in time from different service perspectives. Nominated staff have a role in working collaboratively with other services to contribute to ongoing risk assessment and management.

Sharing for family violence risk management

School and early childhood workforces can proactively share information with and request information from other ISEs, including RAEs, if sharing is necessary to:

- remove, reduce or prevent family violence risk
- understand how risk is changing over time

- inform ongoing risk assessment and management through:
 - secondary consultation with, or referrals to, specialist services
 - developing and implementing safety plans
 - managing changing risk levels over time by collaborating with other services for ongoing risk assessment and management.

Example — When to use CISS or FVISS

You want to share information about Mark, a child who attends your school, with the kinder his sister Alice attends.

YOU WANT TO SHARE THAT...	BECAUSE YOU THINK IT MAY...	SHARING SCHEME
Mark's attendance has declined over the past 3 months.	Assist the kinder to provide a service or manage a risk or make an assessment in relation to Alice's wellbeing.	CISS
He occasionally mentions being hungry and frequently does not bring lunch to school.	Assist the kinder to manage risk of family violence.	FVISS
He has a cognitive delay that is known to be hereditary.	Promote an open and transparent relationship between the kinder and school.	
You hold a reasonable belief that family violence is occurring after being notified of a Family Violence Intervention Order.	Assist the kinder and school to plan for the safety of Alice and Mark.	

Responding to external requests for MARAM and information sharing records

There are many laws in Victoria governing the security of records that you create for a child or young person at your school or service. These laws have in-built protection mechanisms that prioritise the safety of victim survivors whenever there is an application seeking the release of their information. For example, the **Freedom of Information Act 1982** (Vic) has exemptions that may prevent information being released to certain alleged or confirmed perpetrators, to protect victim survivors and to ensure relevant documents are not shared with perpetrators or alleged perpetrators.

There may be a time where your school or service receives a request for information to be released externally, for example from a parent by way of Freedom of Information or subpoena during legal proceedings. These applications may include seeking access to MARAM tools and information sharing requests.

Schools and services must respond to requests for information. The department's **Requests for Information about Students Policy** <www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/requests-about-students/policy> provides advice to government schools on how to manage requests for documents, including when to release documents directly and when to advise the person to make a FOI request to the department's FOI Unit. This policy is consistent with Victorian privacy and information sharing law. Services and non-government schools should refer to their organisation's policies in relation to requests for information (including FOI requests).

Consent and seeking the views and wishes of children and relevant family members

Consent under CISS

Under CISS, you can share any person's information without their consent to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children. However, you should seek the views and wishes of the child and/or family members before sharing their information where it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so.

Sharing information to promote the wellbeing or safety of a student over the age of 18 would need to take place under other laws. Their consent may or may not be required depending on the privacy laws that apply.

Consent under FVISS

FVISS covers victim survivors of all ages. Consent is not required from any person to share information relevant to assessing or managing family violence risk to a child, young person and/or adult victim survivor. However, you should seek the views of the child, young person and/or adult victim survivor or a family member who is not a perpetrator where it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so.

Where a student over the age of 18 is experiencing family violence, and no child is at risk, consent is required from the student and any third parties to share their information unless sharing is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare.

In situations where an adolescent is using family violence against an adult family member, you should seek consent of the adult victim survivor and any third parties to share their information unless there is a serious threat or the information relates to assessing or managing a risk to a child.

For further information about consent, please see the Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines and the Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines.

Seeking and taking into account the views of the child and family members

Even when consent is not required, you should seek and take into account the views of the child, young person and/or any relevant family members who do not pose a risk before sharing information under CISS or FVISS if it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so. This is a key principle of CISS and FVISS.

There are several reasons to seek and consider the views of a child, young person or family member before sharing their information:

- working collaboratively helps develop and maintain trusting, positive relationships with the child, young person and their family, and improve and maintain service engagement
- people feel more empowered when they are included in the process and aware of and in agreement with the actions taking place
- obtaining the views of the children, including a child victim survivor, is an integral part of assessing and managing risk to the child and other family members
- children and families are often best placed to provide insight into safer, more effective ways of sharing information.

You should also inform the child or parent that their information has been shared, unless it would be unsafe, unreasonable or inappropriate to do so. Keeping them informed is best practice and helps to promote positive engagement.

The child or parent must also be supported with safety planning and other necessary services.

When seeking the views and wishes of the child, young person and their family, the discussion should explain:

- the requirements that need to be met before information can be shared
- who information can be shared with
- their consent is not required for you to share information if you believe that sharing would promote the wellbeing or safety of a child
- the benefits of information sharing, and how information may be used to promote child wellbeing or safety.

It is important to support and encourage the expression of any concerns, doubts or anxieties. You should respond sensitively, with due consideration of the circumstances children and families may be facing.

Discussing these concerns may help to inform the assessment of any risks to children's wellbeing and safety and help to avoid unintended outcomes of information sharing. You should be aware of your own preconceptions and biases when engaging with children and families navigating barriers to wellbeing and safety.

For example, you should promote cultural safety, and demonstrate awareness of the accumulation of trauma across generations of Aboriginal communities as a result of colonisation and the dispossession of land and children.

The department has developed resources to help schools, services and other organisations discuss the child information sharing scheme with families and communities, including resources for Aboriginal families. You can view them at **Child Information Sharing Scheme** <www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme>.

You should not seek the views and wishes of a child, young person or family member in the following circumstances:

- **If it is unsafe.** For example, if it is likely to jeopardise a child's wellbeing or safety or place another person at risk of harm. Or if timeliness is an issue, such as when there is an immediate risk. Or if you are assessing or managing risk to another person
- **If it is unreasonable.** For example, if the child or their relevant family member does not have a service relationship with the ISE. Or if you are unable to make contact with them
- **If it is inappropriate.** For example, if a young person is living independently and their family members no longer have access to their personal information.

- be respectful of and have regard to a child's social, individual and cultural identity, the child's strengths and abilities and any vulnerability relevant to the child's safety or wellbeing
- promote the cultural safety and recognise the cultural rights and familial and community connections of children who are Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both
- seek to maintain constructive and respectful engagement with children and their families.

Working with diverse communities and at-risk groups to support wellbeing and safety

You need to consider the barriers to wellbeing and safety that some groups experience due to structural inequality and discrimination. Diverse communities and 'at-risk groups' are broadly defined to include:

Other factors to consider when sharing information under CISS

When sharing information to promote child wellbeing and safety, you should:

- consider the child's best interests
- promote the immediate and ongoing safety of all family members at risk of family violence in line with MARAM, noting safety includes responding to needs and circumstances that promote stabilisation and recovery from family violence
- engage specialist services as required, and promote collaborative practice around children and families
- give precedence to the wellbeing and safety of a child or group of children over the right to privacy
- preserve and promote positive relationships between a child and the child's family members and persons of significance to the child

- diverse cultural, linguistic and faith communities (also collectively called CALD communities)
- people living with a disability
- people experiencing mental health issues
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and questioning (LGBTIQA+) people
- women in or exiting prison
- people who work in the sex industry
- people living in regional, remote and rural communities
- older people (aged 65 years, or 45 years for Aboriginal people)
- children (0–4 years of age are most at risk)
- young people (12–25 years of age).

It will be helpful for you to consider both the individual circumstances of the child and parent or carer, and their specific family and community contexts. This will improve your ability to engage with children and families.

When sharing information about **people with disabilities**, you should consider:

- asking what supports they need to ensure they understand the information you provide and can respond with an informed opinion. Avoid making assumptions about what supports they may require
- asking if they would like to seek the support of a trusted person or advocate to ensure they understand the reason for information sharing.

When sharing information about **CALD communities, including refugees**, you should consider:

- there may be language and literacy considerations. This requires sensitivity around ways of communication. For example, you may need an interpreter
- there may be complex family and community dynamics to consider, as well as complex migration experiences
- when sharing information about people from a refugee background, there is often an added layer of trauma.

When sharing information about **LGBTIQA+ communities**, you should consider:

- the impact sharing information about sexuality, sex or gender identity may have on safety in the family or community
- that services may discriminate against, further abuse, or exclude individuals because of sexuality, or gender identity
- that sexuality, sex and gender identity may not be recognised by services, or that individuals' needs will not be understood
- that homophobia, biphobia or transphobia by family members is recognised as family violence.

For more information, see the **MARAM Foundation Knowledge Guide** <www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-foundation-knowledge-guide>.

Complaints

If you are concerned that information might have been shared in a way that is not permitted, you have the right to provide feedback and make a complaint.

To make a complaint in the first instance, speak to the organisation who shared the information. All organisations should have procedures in place for dealing with complaints.

If you are not satisfied that the matter has been resolved, a complaint may be made to:

- The Office of the Victorian Information Commission (OVIC) if the complaint relates to personal information or the Health Complaints Commissioner (HCC) if the complaint relates to health information under Victorian Law
- The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) under Commonwealth Law.

Tools for staff who use CISS and FVISS

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EXAMPLE 1

Requesting information in early childhood

This example covers:

- sharing without consent
- collaboration between Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) and Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs)
- seeking and considering views and wishes.

Background

- Maggie is 3 years old and lives with her mother, Sam. She attends a long day care (LDC) Service 5 days a week and is usually a bright, happy child. Ayesha is the LDC service team leader.
- Over a 2 week period, Ayesha notices that Maggie has missed 5 days at the service. Ayesha contacts Sam who tells her that Maggie is often awake at night crying, and that Maggie doesn't want to go to day care in the mornings. Sam thinks Maggie is worried about not being with her. While Sam is happy to talk about Maggie's changed behaviours, she shares very little about their personal circumstances or family situation. She does, however, reveal that her MCH nurse, Kim, was very helpful when she suffered post-natal depression after Maggie's birth.
- Several of Maggie's educators also observe that Maggie's behaviour has changed. When Sam leaves the service in the morning, Maggie becomes tearful and withdrawn. They have also observed that Sam is noticeably more irritable than usual and is not as well-groomed as she usually is.

Applying information sharing

- Ayesha tells Sam (the mother) that she'd like to contact her MCH nurse to have a discussion around how the LDC might better support Maggie's wellbeing. Sam becomes teary and says that she can tell Ayesha what she needs to know. Ayesha decides not to continue the conversation with Sam as she doesn't want her to withdraw Maggie from the LDC, which may increase Maggie's distress.
- Using the family violence screening tool, Ayesha records observable signs of trauma that may indicate family violence, as this is relevant information she may need to share.
- Knowing MCH is a prescribed ISE and being concerned about Maggie's wellbeing, Ayesha calls the MCH service despite Sam's views. Ayesha advises the MCH nurse about Sam's views about her information being shared. The MCH nurse shares that there is a history of family violence, so they will need to share information under FVISS. They will also need to check the status of Sam and Maggie's family violence safety plans with Sam's family violence service (which is an RAE under FVISS) before taking further action as a family violence risk assessment may need to be completed by an RAE.

- The MCH nurse offers to follow up with Sam's family violence service as she has spoken with them previously in relation to the situation, and Maggie also has an appointment coming up. The family violence service (RAE) advises they are not aware of any changes, but they will check in with Sam. They soon get back in touch with the MCH nurse and Ayesha to inform them that Maggie's father has moved back into the family home despite an intervention order being in place, so the police have been notified.
- They also inform Ayesha and the MCH nurse that the family violence service has not informed Sam (the mother) that her information has been shared at this time, due to the risk of escalation if Maggie's father (the perpetrator) were to find out the services were sharing information about him, Sam and Maggie. The 3 services agree to stay in touch to better support Maggie and Sam.
- Ayesha continues to build a stronger relationship with Sam to build her trust and work with her to promote Maggie's wellbeing and better manage her behaviour. Ayesha talks to Sam about ways to support Maggie at the Service, including developing a "social story" with Maggie about her interests at day care, having set routines and times for drop-off and pick-up, and bringing in self-soothing items from home that Maggie can use while she is at the LDC.
- Ayesha plans to inform Sam that information sharing has occurred between the services when she is confident that it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so. She plans to seek advice on this from Sam's family violence service.

Which information sharing scheme applies?

- Ayesha requests information from the MCH nurse under CISS to help her better understand the situation and inform her support for Maggie.
- As the MCH service's information includes a history of family violence, there may be current family violence risk to Maggie and Sam.
- Where children are involved and family violence may be present, you will need to apply CISS (to promote child wellbeing or safety) and FVISS (to assess and manage family violence risk) in line with the purposes of each scheme. Under both schemes, information must be shared in line with MARAM.

Is consent required to share information under CISS or FVISS?

- Consent is not required from any person to share relevant information to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children (under the age of 18), or to share information that is relevant to assessing or managing family violence risk to a child.
- However, you should seek and take into account the views of the child and/or family member (who is not a perpetrator) before sharing their information, wherever safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so.



EXAMPLE 2

Proactively sharing information in a school setting

This example covers:

- proactively sharing information
- meeting thresholds
- considering views and wishes
- recording information.

Background

- For the past 4 months Jack and his family have been working with Klara, a mental health worker at the local community health centre, to understand and manage Jack's behavioural issues.
- Klara has no concerns about family violence or any other safety issues.
- Jack is also a student at Parks Primary School. Klara would like to request and share information with Jack's teacher, to help them both support Jack's behavioural progress and emotional regulation. Klara knows that schools have ISE status under CISS.

Applying information sharing

- Klara talks with Jack and his family about proactively sharing information about Jack with his school and her reasons for doing so. Jack's parents express some privacy concerns that Klara documents, and she lets them know that she has decided to share the information in the interest of Jack's wellbeing.
- Klara contacts the school and speaks with the office manager who is the school's initial point of contact for information sharing. She tells Klara she will pass on her details to Simeon, the student wellbeing officer who is authorised to share information and has undertaken training.

- Simeon confirms the community health service is an ISE and calls Klara and talks through what she proposes to share. They also discuss Jack and his family's views about sharing his information.
- Simeon determines the threshold for sharing has been met and documents the request, noting the views and wishes of Jack and his family. He then discusses the request with Jack and his family before deciding to share the information to promote Jack's wellbeing.
- Klara shares Jack's behaviour management strategy with Sue, Jack's teacher, who also shares her observations with Klara about Jack's behaviour and progress at school.
- Both document the information they have exchanged and ensure that it is stored securely. They agree to stay in touch as required.

What needs to be recorded when information is shared under CISS and FVISS?

If the school proactively shares information, then, by regulation, they must record:

- the confidential information shared
- the date it was shared
- the ISE the information was shared with
- whether the views and wishes of the child or a family member were sought and obtained, and, if not, the reason why
- whether the child or family member was informed that information was/would be shared
- copies of any of the following documents that are relevant to the sharing of information.

The following information should be recorded as best practice:

- how the three-part threshold test was met
- what the views of the child and/or relevant family member were about sharing
- if the child and/or parent was not notified that their information was or would be shared and the reason why.



EXAMPLE 3

Supporting a colleague disclosing family violence

Background

Jiyu receives a disclosure from her colleague, Amelia, while in the lunchroom.

Amelia tells Jiyu that there has been an escalation in threats of physical violence and legal action from her partner following their recent separation.

Amelia has a primary school-aged child.

Amelia tells Jiyu that her former partner verbally threatened her, and pushed and shoved her in front of her child 2 years ago.

Considerations in responding to family violence

- Amelia has disclosed family violence. Jiyu identifies the following risk factors:
 - harm or threats to harm victim or family members
 - recent separation
 - escalation
 - physical harm
 - child exposure to family violence.
- While disclosures from colleagues do not fall under MARAM responsibilities, it is important to engage respectfully, sensitive and safely. Jiyu can validate Amelia's experience, convey key messages and provide support options.
- If the disclosure reveals that Amelia is in immediate danger, Jiyu should call the police on 000 and advise leadership.
- If the disclosure does not reveal immediate danger, Jiyu can support Amelia to access support like a specialist family violence service or Child Protection.



Can I share information under CISS?

IS MY ORGANISATION A PRESCRIBED INFORMATION SHARING ENTITY (ISE)?

Check the online ISE list



Am I authorised by my organisation to share information under CISS?



Is the organisation I am sharing with a prescribed ISE?

Tip: Check the online ISE list



Identify roles authorised to share under CISS in your organisation

1

AM I SHARING THE INFORMATION TO PROMOTE THE WELLBEING OR SAFETY OF A CHILD OR GROUP OF CHILDREN?

Consider the CISS legislative principles and use professional judgement and existing child best interests and developmental frameworks when determining whether information sharing promotes child wellbeing or safety. See the legislative principles on page 56 and the CISS Ministerial Guidelines for further guidance.



Go to 2:

Do I reasonably believe that sharing the information may assist the other organisation to carry out one or more of the following activities?

You **cannot** share the information under CISS*

2

DO I REASONABLY BELIEVE THAT SHARING THE INFORMATION MAY ASSIST THE OTHER ORGANISATION TO CARRY OUT ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES?

Make a decision, an assessment or a plan relating to a child or children? Initiate or conduct an investigation relating to a child or children? Provide a service relating to a child or children? Manage any risk to a child or children?



You **cannot** share the information under CISS*

3

IS ANY OF THE INFORMATION I WANT TO SHARE EXCLUDED INFORMATION OR WOULD SHARING CONTRAVENE ANOTHER LAW?

Excluded information cannot be shared, see page 57 for a complete list. See the CISS Ministerial Guidelines for a list of laws that continue to restrict sharing of certain information. ISEs are not required to conduct investigations to determine that information is not excluded information before sharing it. Rather, if they are aware that information falls within an excluded category then they are not permitted to share that information. ISEs also cannot share information known to be restricted under another law.



4

HAVE I SOUGHT AND TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF THE CHILD AND/OR RELEVANT FAMILY MEMBERS?

ISEs should seek and take into account the views of a child or relevant family members whenever it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so.⁴



You **cannot** share the information under CISS*

*I CAN'T SHARE INFORMATION UNDER CISS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

There is a range of information sharing mechanisms outside CISS. Organisations and services should share information and collaborate as permitted by law. Child safety reporting and information sharing obligations continue to apply, including: mandatory reporting obligations, reporting to Child Protection if there is a significant risk of harm, and information sharing with Child Protection.

You **can** share the information under CISS

⁴ If it is not safe, reasonable and appropriate, ISEs can still share information under CISS.

Can I share information under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)?

IS MY ORGANISATION A PRESCRIBED INFORMATION SHARING ENTITY (ISE)?

Check the online ISE list



Am I authorised by my organisation to share information under FVISS?



Is the organisation I am sharing with a prescribed ISE?

Tip: Check the online ISE list



You **cannot** share the information under FVISS*

You **cannot** share the information under FVISS*

1

AM I SHARING INFORMATION FOR A:

Family violence assessment purpose

OR

Family violence management purpose



Is the organisation I am sharing information with a Risk Assessment Entity (RAE)?



Go to 2

You **cannot** share the information under FVISS*

Do you have a reasonable belief that this information is necessary to manage a risk of family violence?



You **cannot** share the information under FVISS*

2

AM I SHARING INFORMATION TO ASSESS OR MANAGE RISK TO A:

Child victim survivor (under 18) or adult victim survivor (where there is risk to a child)?

OR

YES

Consent is not required from any person prior to sharing their relevant information.

However, if safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so, obtain the views of the child, and/or other family members at risk of family violence, or a relevant third party, prior to sharing their information.

Go to 3

Adult victim survivor (where there is no risk to a child)?

YES

OR

YES

Am I sharing perpetrator or alleged perpetrator information?

YES

Consent is not required to share information

Go to 3

Am I sharing adult victim survivor or third party information?

YES

3

IS THE INFORMATION I WANT TO SHARE NOT EXCLUDED INFORMATION (I.E. IT IS PERMITTED TO BE SHARED), AND WOULD SHARING NOT CONTRAVENE ANOTHER LAW?

Excluded information cannot be shared, see page 60 for a complete list. ISEs are not required to conduct investigations to determine that information is not excluded information before sharing it. Rather, if they are aware that information falls within an excluded category then they are not permitted to share that information. ISEs also cannot share information known to be restricted under another law (see the FVISS Ministerial Guidelines).

YES

You **can** share the information using FVISS

NO

You **cannot** share the excluded information under FVISS*

Is it necessary to share information to lessen or prevent a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare?

YES

Consent is not required to share information

Go to 3

NO

Has the adult victim survivor or third party provided consent to share their information?

YES

Go to 3

NO

You **cannot** share the information under FVISS*

***I can't share information under FVISS. What should I do?** There is a range of information sharing mechanisms outside FVISS. Organisations and services should share information and collaborate as permitted by law. Child safety reporting and information sharing obligations continue to apply, including mandatory reporting obligations, reporting to Child Protection if there is a significant risk of harm, and information sharing with Child Protection.

Record keeping checklist

IF YOU ARE SHARING INFORMATION

Prompting question	Response
Are you sharing information with an ISE?	<p>CISS (ISE ONLY)</p> <p>Yes, it has been confirmed.</p> <p>FVISS (ISE OR RAE)</p> <p>Yes, it has been confirmed.</p>
Who are you sharing information about?	<p>CISS</p> <p>A child A relevant family member of that child Any other person, to promote the child's wellbeing or safety</p> <p>FVISS</p> <p>A perpetrator An alleged perpetrator An adolescent using, or at risk of using, family violence An adult victim survivor A child victim survivor A third party</p>
Which scheme are you sharing under?	<p>CISS</p> <p>FVISS</p> <p>Both CISS and FVISS</p>
Have the requirements for sharing been met?	<p>CISS</p> <p>To promote safety or wellbeing To inform an action Not excluded information</p> <p>FVISS</p> <p>To assess or protect from risk Applicable consent requirements met Not excluded information</p>

Form continues on next page

Have you recorded the details of the information shared?	<p>Who it was about The date The ISE it was shared with Any risk assessments or safety plans that have been prepared for a person at risk of family violence</p> <p>NB: You do not need to record any other information when sharing about perpetrators or alleged perpetrators</p>
Did you seek their views about sharing their information?	<p>CISS AND FVISS</p> <p>Yes. Briefly detail as per the templates for responding or sharing under CISS or FVISS.</p> <p>No.</p>
Did you seek consent before sharing their information?	<p>FVISS</p> <p>Did you seek the consent of adult victim survivors of family violence where no children are at risk?</p>
Was the information shared?	<p>By you</p> <p>By the other ISE</p> <p>If no: Record the reason why if the request was refused</p>

COMPLAINTS

Prompting question	Response
Do you have a complaint about another ISE?	<p>Date received Nature of the complaint Action taken for resolution Time taken for resolution</p>
Does an individual have a complaint about conduct by an ISE under the Schemes?	<p>Action taken to prevent the issue from occurring Further action if required</p>

An organisation must be an ISE to request, share or receive information under CISS. If you are unsure about the ISE status of an organisation, visit the **ISE List** <www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search>.

* Schools and services **must** ensure that any copies of this checklist and the information in the checklist are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by school and service leaders, and authorised staff.

Template for responding to a request under CISS

This template can be used by Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) to respond to a request for information.

RESPONDING TO A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Has the request been made by an ISE?

Yes

No (cannot share under CISS)

REQUESTING INFORMATION ABOUT

ISE REQUESTING INFORMATION

Date of birth:

Date:

Name:

ISE name:

Address:

Contact person:

Brief details:

Position title:

Email:

Phone:

SHARING REQUIREMENTS (MUST MEET ALL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INFORMATION TO BE SHARED)

The information will promote a child's wellbeing or safety

Sharing may assist in the carrying out of a professional activity

The information is not excluded information

SEEKING AND TAKING VIEWS INTO ACCOUNT

Were the views of the child or family member sought?

Yes. Briefly detail whose views were sought and what the views were.

No. Briefly detail why.

OUTCOME

Will the requested information be shared?

Yes

No. Provide further details on why you have refused the request (use the email template on page 85 to decline a request).

Partially. Provide further details on information being partially shared.

An organisation must be an ISE to request, share or receive information under CISS. If you are unsure about the ISE status of an organisation, visit the **ISE List** www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search.

* Schools and services **must** ensure that any copies of this template and the information in the template are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by school and service leaders, and authorised staff.

Template for sharing information under CISS

This template can be used by ISEs to request information or proactively share information.

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT	ISE
Name:	Date:
Date of birth:	ISE name:
Address:	Contact person:
Child	Position title:
Family member of child	Email:
Third party	Phone:

PURPOSE OF SHARING (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

- To promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children
- To make a decision, assessment, or plan relating to a child or group of children
- To initiate or conduct an investigation relating to a child or group of children
- To provide a service relating to a child or group of children
- To manage risk to a child or group of children

SEEKING AND TAKING VIEWS INTO ACCOUNT

Were the views of the child/family member sought?

Yes. Briefly detail whose views were sought and what the views were:	No. Briefly detail why.
--	-------------------------

EXCLUDED INFORMATION

Is the information excluded information?	Yes. You must review your request and revise your submission to remove excluded information before proceeding
	No

An organisation must be an ISE to request, share or receive information under CISS. If you are unsure about the ISE status of an organisation, visit the **ISE List** <www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search>.

* Schools and services **must** ensure that any copies of this template and the information in the template are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by school and service leaders, and authorised staff.

Template for responding to a request under FVISS

This template can be used by ISEs to respond to a request for information from ISEs or RAEs.

RESPONDING TO A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Has the request been made by an ISE or RAE?

Yes

No (you cannot use FVISS to share information)

ISE OR RAE REQUESTING INFORMATION	REQUESTING INFORMATION ABOUT
Date:	Name:
ISE name:	Date of birth:
Contact person:	Address:
Position title:	Brief background to the request:
Email:	
Phone:	

SHARING REQUIREMENTS (MUST MEET ALL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INFORMATION TO BE SHARED)

Information sharing is for the purpose of family violence assessment or management

The applicable consent requirements are met

The information is not excluded information

Sharing information does not contravene another law

SEEKING AND TAKING VIEWS INTO ACCOUNT

Were the views of the child/family member (non-perpetrator) sought?

Yes. Briefly detail whose views were sought and what the views were.

No. Briefly detail why.

OUTCOME

Will the requested information be shared?	Yes
No. Provide further details on why you have refused the request.	Partially. Provide further details on information being partially shared.

An organisation must be an ISE or RAE to request, share or receive information under FVISS. If you are unsure about the ISE status of an organisation, visit the **ISE List** <www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search>.

* Schools and services **must** ensure that any copies of this template and the information in the template are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by school and service leaders, and authorised staff.

Template for sharing information under FVISS

This template can be used by ISEs or RAEs to request information or proactively share information.

ISE SHARING INFORMATION

Date:	Position title:
ISE name:	Email:
Contact person:	Phone:

REQUESTING/SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT

Name:	Date of birth:
Address:	
Child victim survivor	Third party
Adult victim survivor	Perpetrator
Adolescent using or at risk of using family violence	Alleged perpetrator

PURPOSE OF SHARING

Family violence assessment purpose	Family violence management purpose
------------------------------------	------------------------------------

SEEKING AND TAKING VIEWS INTO ACCOUNT

Were the views of the child or family member (non-perpetrator) sought?

Yes. Briefly detail whose views were sought and what the views were.	No. Briefly detail why.
--	-------------------------

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Are you sharing confidential information about an adult victim survivor or third party?	Yes
	No

If yes, was consent obtained to share information about the adult victim survivor or third party?

Yes, written, verbal or implied. ISEs are encouraged to obtain express written or verbal consent where it is reasonable, safe and appropriate to do so.	No. There is a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare.
	No. The disclosure is relevant to assessing or managing family violence risk to a child victim survivor (under 18 years).

EXCLUDED INFORMATION

Is the information excluded information?

Yes. You must review your request and revise your submission to remove excluded information before proceeding.	No
--	----

An organisation must be an ISE or RAE to request, share or receive information under FVISS. If you are unsure about the ISE status of an organisation, visit the **ISE List** <www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search>.

* Schools and services **must** ensure that any copies of this template and the information in the template are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by school and service leaders, and authorised staff.

Template for recording complaints made under CISS and/or FVISS



RECORDING COMPLAINTS

Date the complaint was made:

Date the complaint was received:

DETAILS OF THE PERSON WHO RECEIVED THE COMPLAINT

Name:

Organisation:

Position title:

Email:

Phone:

DETAILS OF THE PERSON WHO MADE THE COMPLAINT

Name:

Organisation:

Position title:

Email:

Phone:

The complainant is a (tick all that apply):

- Information Sharing Entity (ISE) including Risk Assessment Entity (RAE)
- Third party
- Child or family member

- Victim survivor of family violence
- Perpetrator or alleged perpetrator
- Adolescent using or at risk of using family violence

COMPLAINT DETAILS

ACTIONS TAKEN

Provide a summary of the complaint:

Detail actions taken to address the complaint:

OUTCOME

Has the complaint been resolved?

Yes

No. Briefly detail what action was taken.

Is there necessary action that has been taken to prevent, or lessen, the risk of further similar complaints?

No

Yes. Briefly detail what action has been taken.

How much time did it take to resolve the complaint?

An organisation must be an ISE or RAE to request, share or receive information under FVISS. If you are unsure about the ISE status of an organisation, visit the **ISE List** <www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search>.

* Schools and services **must** ensure that any copies of this template and the information in the template are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by school and service leaders, and authorised staff.

Email template for declining a request under CISS and/or FVISS



When declining to share information under the Schemes, you should start a dialogue with the requesting ISE so they understand what can be shared if any of the requirements are not met.

To: <insert email>

From: <insert email>

Subject: Declining request to disclose confidential information under the <Child Information Sharing Scheme and/or Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme>

Dear <insert name of requester>

I have received your request from <insert name of requesting ISE> to share confidential information under the <Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and/or Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)> about:

- Surname: <insert surname of the individual the request was concerning>
- Given name(s): <insert given name/s of the individual the request was concerning>
- Date of birth: <insert the date of birth of the individual the request was concerning>
- Address: <insert the address of the individual the request was concerning>

You requested that <insert name of responding ISE> share confidential information <select appropriate response>:

for the purpose of promoting the wellbeing or safety of a child or a group of children under CISS
for a family violence assessment purpose under FVISS
for a family violence protection purpose under FVISS

I am declining your request to share confidential information under <CISS and/or FVISS> as:

CISS – Child wellbeing or safety

The request did not meet the requirements for sharing under CISS

FVISS – Assessment or management purpose

The request did not meet the requirements for sharing under FVISS

CISS/FVISS – Relevant information

Our organisation does not hold the information you requested

Provide further details on why you have refused the request. For example:

- the information is excluded information under CISS and/or FVISS
- the organisation is not a prescribed ISE under CISS and/or FVISS
- the request did not meet the threshold test under CISS

I trust you will accept <insert name of responding ISE's> decision. However, if you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact <insert responding ISE's Contact Officer Name> on <insert responding ISE's Contact Officer's phone> during business hours.

Yours sincerely

<insert signature block>

* Schools and services **must** ensure that any copies of this template and the information in the template are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by school and service leaders, and authorised staff.

MARAM nominated staff



Who am I?

I have been identified by my school or service leader to be a MARAM nominated staff member (called nominated staff in this guide). I have qualifications, training, experience or a role aligned with wellbeing, such as wellbeing coordinators and leadership staff.

Why is this resource important to me?

Children or young people experiencing wellbeing or safety issues are directed to me for support.

What is my responsibility?

I am responsible for screening for family violence and making basic safety plans, and I support children or young people experiencing wellbeing or safety issues, including by making referrals and using FVISS and CISS to share information.

What training and support do I need?

I have completed training in information sharing and family violence reforms (Information Sharing for Education Workforces Webinar, Education Professionals eLearn or Education Leaders eLearn) and I will enrol in further MARAM training to help me fulfil my responsibilities outlined in this guide and use the recommended tools.

For more information and to register for training visit: **Training for the information sharing and MARAM reforms** <www.vic.gov.au/training-for-information-sharing-and-maram>

What are my responsibilities?

Nominated staff members in schools and services

The safety of victim survivors (children, young people and adults), and visibility and accountability of perpetrators requires a collaborative and coordinated approach across the service system.

As a nominated staff member, you are in the best position to provide ongoing support to children and young people within your school or service, but it is not any one teacher or team member's sole responsibility to support victim survivors of family violence. Specialist services coordinate risk assessment and management. Using CISS and FVISS along with MARAM means that you can collaborate with specialist services to identify and respond to family violence while contributing to ongoing risk assessment and management.

As a nominated staff member, you **hold** the following responsibilities under MARAM:

- **Responsibility 1:** Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement (all staff hold this responsibility)
- **Responsibility 2:** Identification of family violence
- **Responsibility 5:** Seek consultation for comprehensive risk assessment, risk management and referrals
- **Responsibility 6:** Contribute to information sharing with other services (as authorised by legislation)
- **Responsibility 9:** Contribute to coordinated risk management
- **Responsibility 10:** Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management.

This means your responsibilities include:

- responding to disclosures of family violence
- screening for family violence (see the recommended Family Violence Screening Tool on page 95.)
- planning for safety (see the recommended Family violence basic safety plan page 103)
- following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused. You must act if you form a suspicion or reasonable belief even if you are unsure and have not directly observed abuse.
- making and responding to FVISS and CISS requests (see Staff who use CISS and FVISS on page 54.)
- collaborating with other services to provide ongoing support to the child, young person or their family
- keeping appropriate records
- working with other staff who suspect a child or young person is experiencing family violence, or who have received a disclosure from a student.

How does MARAM align with PROTECT in schools and services?

Following the Four Critical Actions will help you to meet your MARAM responsibilities. The table on page 22 outlines this. If the situation is not an emergency requiring response (Critical Action 1), schools and services must still consider Critical Actions 2, 3 and 4.

Remember - Mandatory reporting obligations continue to apply to individuals who are required to report under the **Children, Youth and Families Act 2005**. By itself, making a mandatory report does not acquit your school or service's obligations under MARAM. The guidance in this resource supports staff decision-making before and after making a mandatory report.

For more information on the **Four Critical Actions** see:

- **Report child abuse in schools**
[<www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools>](http://www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools)
- **Report child abuse in early childhood**
[<www.vic.gov.au/child-protection-early-childhood-protect/report-child-abuse-early-childhood>](http://www.vic.gov.au/child-protection-early-childhood-protect/report-child-abuse-early-childhood)

Nominated staff hold the same responsibilities as all staff as per the actions and responsibilities on page 22 of the All staff section. In addition, nominated staff hold the following additional responsibilities.

PROTECT Critical Action	Actions and responsibilities for nominated staff	MARAM Responsibility
2. Report to authorities or refer to specialist services	Nominated staff can use the Family Violence Screening Tool on page 95 to ask screening questions, determine actions required to support victim survivors and record changes in circumstances.	1, 2, 5 and 6
3. Contact parents or carers	Nominated staff have been authorised by your leadership to share information under CISS and FVISS. This includes seeking the views and wishes of children and their families about information sharing.	1, 5 and 6
4. Provide ongoing support	<p>Nominated staff can complete the Family Violence Basic Safety Plan on page 103 for a child or young person (or adult victim survivor if safe, reasonable and appropriate) after forming a reasonable belief that they are experiencing family violence. You may contribute to the plan to keep the child or young person safe, such as by being one of their staff contacts.</p> <p>Nominated staff can also refer the child, young person or their family to specialist family violence services. Schools and services can share information with other ISEs at any time to ensure the ongoing safety and wellbeing of the child or young person and their family.</p>	1, 5, 6, 9 and 10

How do I screen for family violence?

This section supports you to meet your obligations under the following MARAM responsibilities:

Responsibility 1: Respectful, sensitive and safe engagement

Responsibility 2: Identification of family violence

Use the Family Violence Screening Tool (on page 95) if you:

- receive a disclosure of family violence
- observe signs of trauma that may indicate a child or young person is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, family violence, family violence risk factors, narratives (e.g. statements or stories) or behaviours that indicate an adult is using family violence
- have completed or received a completed Family Violence Identification Tool and/ or Family Violence Screening Tool from a colleague

If you have received a Family Violence Identification Tool (on page 45) from another staff member, refer to the relevant information in the tool to support your engagement with the victim survivor. You can ask screening questions directly of a child or young person and/or adult victim survivor – if safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so.

The Family Violence Screening Tool is intended to be used as a living document, as family violence is defined by a pattern of behaviour, meaning it is likely to require ongoing support. Your school or service is in a unique position to record and collate new observations that may otherwise go unnoticed.

You may use CISS or FVISS to share the Family Violence Screening Tool when referring the victim survivor to a specialist family violence service, which will provide comprehensive risk assessment and management.

What are protective factors and why do I need to record these as nominated staff?

Protective factors are strengths or factors that increase a child or young person's (or adult's) safety from family violence.

Protective factors can include a person's involvement with school community, community involvement (sports etc), protective family members, independence (employment, finances, vehicle), or having 'eyes-on,' that is professionals who see the person experiencing family violence, such as teachers, childcare workers, community welfare workers, or community health workers.

Nominated staff can use the 'Record more information relevant to the above...' section of the Family Violence Screening Tool to record protective factors.

Misidentification of the predominant aggressor

It may be difficult to determine who the 'predominant aggressor' or perpetrator is in a family violence situation, particularly if more than one person is using violence.

It is not your role to identify the predominant aggressor when identifying and responding to family violence, including when completing the tools in this resource. The information you record in the tools will support specialist services to correctly identify the predominant aggressor, and tailor their response accordingly, to avoid misidentification.

Misidentification may occur when the predominant aggressor:

- falsely accuses a victim survivor of using violence or misrepresents the victim survivor's self-defence as evidence of violence
- tries to convince service providers that they are the victim, or use a range of behaviours to avoid or deflect their responsibility for using family violence
- cites substance abuse by the victim survivor as evidence to support their claim that the victim survivor is the perpetrator
- undermines a victim survivor's presentation or behaviour as resulting from mental illness or misrepresents a victim survivor's disability as drunkenness or being drug affected.

Some victim survivors may be misidentified as perpetrators due to:

- their use of self-defence or violent resistance during an incident or series of incidents of family violence, or for actions taken to defend another family member
- misinterpretation of their presentation or behaviour. This can be due to direct misrepresentation by the predominant aggressor, or due to bias on behalf of professionals and services, such as gender norms and stereotyped expectations of women's behaviour. Women's behaviour is often misinterpreted in relation to:
 - their response to the impact of violence on them (such as trauma responses)
 - having mental health issues
 - the influence of alcohol or other drugs
 - perceived or actual aggression toward police or at initiation of police contact.
- barriers to communication with the police or a service provider due to trauma responses, injury or from pre-existing communication barriers.

Certain cohorts are at greater risk of being misidentified as perpetrators – in particular, Aboriginal women, migrant and refugee women, women with disabilities, criminalised women and LGBTIQA+ people.

Collecting parent or carer information using the tools in this resource supports the mandatory reporting or referral process, including helping Child Protection to identify the correct children in their systems.

How do I plan for safety?

This section supports you to meet your obligations under the following MARAM responsibilities: **Responsibility 9:** Contribute to coordinated risk management.

You can develop a safety plan using the Family Violence Basic Safety Plan template on page 103 after completing a Family Violence Screening Tool on page 95 that identifies current family violence and if the child, young person and/or adult victim survivor parent or carer is open to receiving support.

The Basic Safety Plan consists of strategies victim survivors use to keep themselves safe. It should be tailored to their circumstances and consider their safety and wellbeing needs. Victim survivors should be included in the development of their own safety plan wherever possible, including reflecting their views and wishes.

If you are developing a safety plan for a child or young person and you cannot seek their views or input, you can develop one on their behalf by talking with their parent or caregiver who is not using violence.

You may use CISS or FVISS to share the Basic Safety Plan when referring the victim survivor to a specialist family violence service, which will provide comprehensive risk assessment and management. **Specialist family violence services are responsible for comprehensive safety planning. The school or service's primary and ongoing responsibility is for the child or young person's safety at the school or service.**

Safety plans should be kept at the school or service. **For safety reasons, do NOT provide copies to the child or young person, or the adult victim survivor.** This can increase risk if the person using violence accesses it.



How do I provide ongoing support?

This section supports you to meet your obligations under the following MARAM responsibilities:

Responsibility 5: Secondary consultation and referral, including for family violence assessment and management response

Responsibility 6: Contribute to information sharing with other services (as authorised by legislation)

Responsibility 9: Contribute to coordinated risk management

Responsibility 10: Collaborate for ongoing risk assessment and risk management

Family violence risk assessment and management is an ongoing process. As you provide ongoing support to a child or young person, you should continue to assess the safety of the child or young person and work with other services to keep them safe. Specialist services often triage reports and referrals, prioritising higher risk cases. **Reporting and referral does not mean the risk has ceased.** You should provide ongoing support and monitor if risk changes or escalates, requiring further support.

You are not expected to take on the role of police or child protection in determining whether family violence has occurred. You are not expected to provide ongoing support and advocacy to parents or carers.

You must act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion or reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused. You do not have to directly witness the child abuse or know the source of the abuse.

Schools and services contribute to coordinated risk management by:

- participating in or establishing a multidisciplinary support team to coordinate ongoing support for children and their families where necessary. This team could be internal, comprised of staff working with the child and family, or have external services participate such as Maternal Child Health, The Orange Door or Victoria Police
- notifying other services if you identify any changes in risk or if a planned risk management strategy is not implemented or fails
- maintaining visibility of the perpetrator by sharing relevant information about the perpetrator with specialist family violence services for risk assessment and management purposes
- being open with the child, young person or victim survivor that you are working with other services to support them whenever it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so. This will support a person-centred approach so that they feel supported to share their views.

Key Message

Providing ongoing support allows you to continue to monitor for changes affecting the child or young person's safety. If circumstances change or new information emerges, you should proactively share information using FVISS with services providing support to the child or young person or their family.

For more information:

- schools should see: **Action 4 - Providing Ongoing Support** <www.schools.vic.gov.au/action-4-providing-ongoing-support>
- services can refer to **Report child abuse in early childhood** <www.vic.gov.au/child-protection-early-childhood-protect/report-child-abuse-early-childhood>

How do I keep records?

Records management

You must follow all data security and record management requirements that apply to your school or service.

Schools and services should keep appropriate records relating to referrals, information sharing and coordinated risk management. This may include:

- the services you are collaborating with
- information shared and received from other services
- records of consent or views to information sharing and referrals
- actions required of your school or service (for example, using the screening tool and basic safety plan)
- the child and family being informed of any updates.

Due to the nature of family violence records, schools and services must ensure that the records are kept securely. For example, if you have a hard copy file, you should make sure it is kept in a locked cabinet. If you have an electronic record, you need to make sure it is password protected and only staff members who need the information have access. Only school and service leaders and nominated staff should have access to completed Family Violence Screening Tools and Basic Safety Plans. Schools and services should ensure that these records are not destroyed as they may be needed at a later time (e.g. as evidence in future court proceedings).

Please see the record keeping template for staff who use CISS and FVISS on page 78.

For further information, refer to **Records Management — School Records**

[<www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/records-management/policy>](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/records-management/policy) (for Victorian government schools).



Tools for MARAM nominated staff

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Family violence screening tool

INSTRUCTIONS – before completing tool

Why	<p>Your school or service is prescribed under the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM). This means your school or service is required to ensure its policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools align with MARAM.</p> <p>The Four Critical Actions set out the actions schools and services must take when responding to an incident, disclosure, or suspicion or reasonable belief of child abuse, including exposure to family violence. Following the Four Critical Actions helps your school or service to meet MARAM obligations.</p> <p>For more information, see Report child abuse in schools <www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools> or Report child abuse in early childhood <www.vic.gov.au/child-protection-early-childhood-protect/report-child-abuse-early-childhood>.</p> <p>This tool helps you to ask screening questions and decide whether you believe that a child or young person is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, family violence.</p>
Who	<p>MARAM nominated staff can use this tool. These staff members are identified by the school or service leader and should have qualifications, training, experience or a role aligned with wellbeing, such as wellbeing coordinators and leadership staff.</p>
When	<p>Complete this tool if you receive a completed Family Violence Identification Tool from a staff member, if you receive a disclosure, or if you observe signs of trauma for a child or young person, family violence risk factors, or narratives (e.g. statements or stories) or behaviours that indicate an adult is using family violence.</p> <p>You must act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion or reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused. You do not have to directly witness the child abuse or know the source of the abuse.</p>
How	<p>Organise a conversation with the child or young person (or adult victim survivor if safe, reasonable and appropriate, noting your primary responsibility is always to the child or young person).</p> <p>Record disclosures and observations in this tool.</p> <p>Do <u>not</u> ask questions of, or in front of, a person you suspect may be using family violence.</p>

NEXT STEPS – after completing tool

The information you record in this tool will help you decide next steps. See Outcomes and next steps section on page 101.

If circumstances change and there is new risk-relevant information, you can copy and paste the screening conversation and decision statement sections of this tool to the bottom of this document and complete again. This ensures you do not repeat any work, all risk-relevant information is in one document, and authorities have historic and current information.

Personal details

Record personal details (if they are not already recorded in a completed Family Violence Identification Tool attached to this tool). You can consult your school or service's record management system.

Child or young person

Full name

Year level

Date of birth

Other relevant details
(e.g. in out-of-home
care, services they are
engaged with)

Parent or carer 1

Full name

Relationship to child or
young person (parent,
carer, step parent)

Contact details (phone,
email)

Other relevant details
(e.g. interpreter needed,
employment status)

Parent or carer 2

Full name

Relationship to child or young person (parent, carer, step parent)

Contact details (phone, email)

Other relevant details (e.g. interpreter needed, employment status)

Add additional tables as required.

Sibling(s)

Name(s)

School or service

Year level

Other relevant details

Add additional tables as required.

Sibling(s)

Name(s)

School or service

Year level

Other relevant details

Add additional tables as required.

Screening conversation

1. HAVE YOU RECEIVED A COMPLETED FAMILY VIOLENCE IDENTIFICATION TOOL FROM A STAFF MEMBER THAT REQUIRES YOU TO SCREEN FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Yes

No, I have received a disclosure or identified signs that family violence may be occurring.

If 'Yes', go to number 2 and start screening.

If 'No', summarise the information here before moving to number 2.

2. ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS of the child or young person (or adult victim survivor, if safe, reasonable and appropriate, noting your primary responsibility is always to the child or young person).

These questions are a guide for your screening conversation. The child or young person may address multiple questions in a single response, which means you would not need to ask all questions. Consider the age and developmental stage of the child or young person when asking these questions.

QUESTION	YES	NO	RECORD MORE INFORMATION, INCLUDING WHEN:
Has anyone in your family, or a current or former partner, made you feel scared or worried?			
Have they made you feel stupid, or like you do not matter?			
Have they physically hurt you or anyone else or pets in any way (e.g. hit, slap, kick or otherwise hurt)?			
Have they threatened to harm you or anyone else in any way?			
Do you have any immediate concerns about your safety, or the safety of someone else in your family?			
Do you feel safe today?			
Would you call someone you trust or the police if you felt unsafe or in danger?			

3. Has the screening conversation with the child or young person (or adult victim survivor) identified any of the following family violence RISK FACTORS?

RISK FACTORS SPECIFIC TO CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

- History of professional involvement and/or statutory intervention
- Change in behaviour not explained by other causes
- Child is victim of other forms of harm from perpetrators outside the family e.g. harassment, grooming and physical and sexual assault
- Exposure to family violence
- Sexualised behaviours towards a child by the perpetrator
- Child intervention in violence
- Behaviour indicating non-return of child (e.g. perpetrator not following custody arrangements)
- Undermining the child-parent relationship (e.g. perpetrator making negative comments to the child about the other parent)

SERIOUS RISK FACTORS SPECIFIC TO ADULT VICTIM SURVIVOR – THESE CAN INCREASE THE RISK TO THE CHILD

- Physical assault while pregnant or following new birth
- Escalation – increase in severity and/or frequency of violence
- Planning to leave or recent separation

SERIOUS RISK FACTORS FOR A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON AND/OR ADULT VICTIM SURVIVOR CAUSED BY PERPETRATOR

- Controlling behaviours
- Access to weapons
- Use of weapon in most recent event
- Has ever tried to strangle or choke the victim survivor
- Has ever threatened to kill the victim survivor
- Has ever harmed or threatened to harm or kill pets or other animals
- Has ever threatened or tried to self-harm or commit suicide
- Stalking of victim survivor
- Sexual assault of victim survivor
- Obsession or jealous behaviour toward victim survivor
- Unemployed or disengaged from education
- Drug and/or alcohol misuse/abuse

Record more information relevant to the above, and/or any additional risk factors at page 28.

Form continues on next page

4. Has the screening conversation with the child or young person (or adult victim survivor) identified any of the following NARRATIVES (e.g. statements or stories) or BEHAVIOURS that may indicate an adult is using family violence?

NARRATIVES THAT MAY INDICATE AN ADULT IS USING FAMILY VIOLENCE

- Displays indicators (i.e. comments) of ownership and entitlement, in relation to children
- Threatens to report partner or ex-partner to authorities about their 'poor parenting'
- Criticises partner or ex-partner's parenting (e.g. put downs, devaluing worth)
- Makes comments or euphemisms that may indicate a person is using family violence (e.g. saying they often 'lose it' at a family member)
- Tries to get you to agree with their negative views about partner or family member throughout your interaction
- You feel intimidated, manipulated and/or controlled during your interaction

BEHAVIOURS THAT MAY INDICATE AN ADULT IS USING FAMILY VIOLENCE

- Displays controlling behaviour (e.g. control of time, movement and activities)
- Displays indicators of jealousy and/or possessiveness (e.g. preventing the victim survivor from socialising with others)
- Displays indicators of fixation with victim survivor's actions and whereabouts (e.g. monitoring, rumination and intent focus, such as monitoring victim survivor's location via social media)

Record more information relevant to the above, and/or additional narratives or behaviours at page 36.

Outcomes and next steps

Based on the information recorded in this tool (and the Family Violence Identification Tool, if completed), make a decision from the list below.

I believe there is current family violence.

I will take **all** the following actions:

- inform my school or service leadership
- notify relevant authorities if required according to the Four Critical Actions, per my school or service's standard procedure (attaching this completed tool and the Family Violence Identification Tool if completed)
- develop a basic safety plan for the child or young person
- provide ongoing support in line with the Four Critical Actions and MARAM
- follow my school or service's standard procedure for storing sensitive information.

I do not believe there is current family violence, but I believe the child or young person is experiencing another form of abuse.

I will take **all** the following actions:

- inform my school or service leadership
- notify relevant authorities if required according to the Four Critical Actions, per my school or service's standard procedure (attaching this completed tool and the Family Violence Identification Tool, if completed)
- provide ongoing support in line with the Four Critical Actions
- follow my school or service's standard procedure for storing sensitive information.

I do not believe the child or young person is experiencing family violence or any other form of abuse, but I have other wellbeing concerns.

If you hold concerns about a child's wellbeing but have not formed a reasonable belief of abuse, you must still act.

I will take **all** the following actions:

- follow my school or service's standard procedures for addressing wellbeing concerns, which may include
 - sharing information with other ISEs under CISS if appropriate
 - seeking advice from or making a referral to a specialist service such as The Orange Door
- follow my school or service's standard procedures storing sensitive information.

I no longer have any safety or wellbeing concerns for the child or young person.

I will take **all** the following actions:

- follow my school or service's standard procedure for storing sensitive information.

Form continues on next page

THIS TOOL WAS COMPLETED BY:

Initials or code of staff member
(Do not use full name)

School or service name

School or service address

Date of screening conversation

Date completed

Completed tool shared with (if applicable)

* Schools and services **must** ensure that any copies of this tool and the information in the tool are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by school and service leaders, and authorised staff.

Family violence basic safety plan



INSTRUCTIONS – BEFORE COMPLETING PLAN

Why	<p>Your school or service is prescribed under the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM). This means your school or service is required to ensure its policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools align with MARAM.</p> <p>Staff of schools and services have a non-delegable duty of care obligation, which requires them to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to students. This plan focuses on the child or young person's safety at your school/service. This plan includes a one-off discussion on safety at home, which helps the child or young person to consider measures they may take to support their safety at home.</p> <p>The Four Critical Actions set out the actions schools and services must take when responding to a suspicion, incident, disclosure or reasonable belief of child abuse, including exposure to family violence.</p> <p>Following the Four Critical Actions helps your school or service to meet MARAM obligations.</p> <p>For more information, see Report child abuse in schools <www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools> or Report child abuse in early childhood <www.vic.gov.au/child-protection-early-childhood-protect/report-child-abuse-early-childhood>.</p>
Who	<p>MARAM nominated staff can use this tool. These staff members are identified by the school or service leader and should have qualifications, training, experience or a role aligned with wellbeing, such as wellbeing coordinators and leadership staff.</p>
When	<p>You may have completed or received a completed Family Violence Identification Tool and/or Family Violence Screening Tool from a colleague. If you believe there is current family violence and have followed the Four Critical Actions, including notifying relevant authorities, you should develop a basic safety plan for the child or young person.</p> <p>You must act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion or a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. You do not have to directly witness the child abuse or know the source of the abuse.</p> <p>If there is a Family Violence Intervention Order (FVIO) or a parenting order in place, the school or service should review the department's Intervention Order policy at <www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/intervention-orders/policy> and seek legal advice to determine its responsibilities to the child or young person. Principals of Victorian Government Schools can contact the Department of Education's Legal Division. This may include completing an Individual Safety Plan for Intervention Orders and having a one-off discussion on safety at home. If you are unsure if there is a FVIO or parenting order in place, you can request information from Victoria Police under FVISS or CISS.</p>
How	<p>Organise a conversation with the child or young person (or adult victim survivor if safe, reasonable and appropriate, noting your primary responsibility is always to the child or young person). This may be done at the same time as the screening conversation.</p> <p>Record agreed plans in this tool, but do <u>not</u> provide a copy to the child, young person or adult victim survivor as this can increase risk if the person using violence accesses it.</p>

NEXT STEPS – after completing plan

Next steps are outlined in the Outcome and next steps section.

Personal details

Record personal details (if they are not already recorded in a completed Family Violence Identification Tool attached to this tool). You can consult your school or service's record management system.

CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

Full name

Year level

Date of birth

Other relevant details
(e.g. in out-of-home-care,
services they are engaged
with)

ADULT VICTIM SURVIVOR (IF APPLICABLE)

Full name

Date of birth

Relationship to child
or young person

Contact details
(phone, email)

Other relevant details
(e.g. interpreter needed,
employment status)

Part 1: Safety at school or service

Discuss the following basic safety plan elements with the child or young person (or adult victim survivor if safe, reasonable and appropriate, noting your primary responsibility and duty of care is always to the child or young person).

Each safety plan is unique and based on the needs of the child or young person, and you should be guided by them on what is important and safe for them. You may not need to complete all sections. You may need to revisit the safety plan if new information or risks are presented.

Insert details as prompted between the '<' and '>' characters.

STAFF CONTACT

The following staff members are aware of and ready to enact this plan: <Insert staff names>.

<Insert child or young person's name> has nominated the following staff member as their contact to assist with this plan: <Insert staff contact name>.

If <insert staff contact name> is not at the school or service, <insert child or young person's name> will report to <insert a secondary staff contact name> for assistance.

CODE WORD OR PHRASE

<Insert child or young person's name> will use the following code word or phrase with one of the staff members aware of this plan to indicate lack of safety: <Insert code word or phrase>.

If the code word or phrase is used, school or service staff will act by <insert agreed action>.

ENTRY AND DROP-OFF ARRANGEMENTS

Arrangements could include the following (modify and delete as appropriate):

- <Insert child or young person's name> will enter the school or service via <insert location> by <insert time>.
- <Insert child or young person's name> will meet their staff contact, who will walk them to their classroom.
- If <insert child or young person's name> has not arrived by <insert time>, <insert staff contact name> will <insert agreed action>.
- Reception staff will be notified of these entry and drop-off arrangements, and will notify <insert staff contact name> if there are concerns for the safety or wellbeing of <insert child or young person's name>. Reception staff can call 000 if there is immediate danger.

EXIT AND PICK-UP ARRANGEMENTS

Arrangements could include the following (modify and delete as appropriate):

- <Insert child or young person's name> will leave the school or service via <insert location>, and will be picked up at <insert location> by <insert parent or carer name>.
- If <insert child or young person's name> has not been collected by <insert time>, <insert staff contact name> will <insert agreed action>.
- Reception staff will be notified of these exit and pick-up arrangements, and will notify <insert staff contact name> if there are concerns for the safety or wellbeing of <insert child or young person's name>. Reception staff can call 000 if there is immediate danger.

Form continues on next page

BREAK TIMES (E.G. RECESS AND LUNCH TIME)

For example:

- Yard duty teachers will be instructed to take particular note of **<insert child or young person's name>**.
- Yard duty teachers will monitor entrances and exits to school and school boundaries, and alert school leadership if **<insert name of person believed to be using violence>** is present.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES ARRANGEMENTS (E.G. CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS)

<Insert staff contact name> will make arrangements for each school or service event or activity to ensure **<insert child or young person's name>** is appropriately supervised. These arrangements will be communicated to **<insert parent or carer name>** and other relevant staff before the event or activity.

CONSIDER THIS SECTION IF ADOLESCENT FAMILY VIOLENCE IS IDENTIFIED (E.G. AGAINST A SIBLING OR INTIMATE PARTNER)

Consider arrangements for in-school or service classes or sessions, including movement between them, activities and shared spaces. For example:

- **<Insert child or young person's name>** and **<insert other child or young person's name>** do not share classes.
- For **<insert class or session>**, **<insert child or young person's name>** and **<insert other child or young person's name>** will be seated apart and follow the direction of **<insert staff contact name>**.
- **<Insert staff contact name>** is aware of this plan and will monitor the situation and take necessary steps to ensure as much distance as possible is maintained between the children or young people.
- **<Insert child or young person's name>** will access **<insert class or session>** via **<insert path>**.
- **<Insert child or young person's name>** will attend **<insert activity>** and sit **<insert arrangement>**.
- **<Insert child or young person's name>** can attend **<insert shared space>** exclusively on **<insert days>** between **<insert times>**.

Part 2: Safety at home

Safety planning for the home is a once-off conversation. You are not expected to provide advice to support the safety of the child or young person at home. The following is a list of prompting questions to support the child or young person to plan for their safety.

Discuss as many of the following basic safety plan elements as is appropriate. It may be as simple as ensuring they know to call 000 in an emergency.

If discussing safety planning at home with an adult victim survivor (if safe, reasonable and appropriate, noting your primary responsibility is always to the child or young person) you should tell them that:

- the school or service can make a referral to specialist services that provide comprehensive risk assessment and management, including comprehensive safety planning
- the school or service will work with specialist services to support the child or young person's wellbeing and safety at the school or service.

CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU USUALLY DO TO KEEP YOURSELF SAFE AT HOME?

WHO WOULD YOU CONTACT IF YOU FELT UNSAFE AT HOME? (E.G. FRIEND, FAMILY MEMBER, NEIGHBOUR)

WOULD YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE CALLING THE POLICE (000) IN AN EMERGENCY?

Yes

No

If no, is there someone close by you can contact who can call the police?
For example, could you text someone you trust a code word or phrase if you are in trouble?

Form continues on next page

Consider the age and developmental stage of the child or young person before asking the following questions.

IF YOU NEED TO LEAVE HOME TO FIND SAFETY:

WHAT WOULD YOU TAKE? (E.G. PHONE, CASH, DEBIT OR CREDIT CARD, KEYS, MEDICATION, LAPTOP, MYKI CARD, CLOTHES)

WHEN WOULD YOU LEAVE? (E.G. SCHOOL OR SERVICE DROP-OFF, REGULAR APPOINTMENTS)

WHERE WOULD YOU GO? (E.G. HOUSE OF A FRIEND, FAMILY MEMBER)

HOW WOULD YOU GET THERE? (E.G. CAR, BICYCLE, WALK, PUBLIC TRANSPORT, TAXI OR UBER)

If the person using violence has access to your devices or online accounts, they may be able to track you. If it is safe to do so, check your privacy settings and disable your location.

Outcome and next steps

Insert details as prompted between the '<' and '>' characters.

<INSERT SCHOOL OR SERVICE NAME> AGREES TO TAKING ALL THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF <INSERT CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON'S NAME> AT THE SCHOOL OR SERVICE, BEGINNING <INSERT START DATE>:

- Share this safety plan with relevant authorities if appropriate under FVISS, per my school or service's standard procedure (with the Family Violence Identification Tool and Family Violence Screening Tool attached, if completed).
- Enact this plan immediately and for as long as the child or young person requires.
- Inform relevant school or service leadership and staff of this plan and provide them with access to it. This may include the staff contact, secondary staff contact and reception staff.
- Ensure this plan is accessible for <insert child or young person's name> to view at the school or service at any time. Do **NOT** provide a copy to the child, young person or adult victim survivor as this can increase risk if the person using violence accesses it.
- Provide ongoing support, including wellbeing support, in line with the Four Critical Actions.
- Set a date to review the basic safety plan to ensure it is still relevant and reflects the changing circumstances for the child or young person and their family. Reviewing this plan does not mean establishing new safety strategies; rather, it is about being responsive to changing risk and safety needs for the child or young person. Update this plan whenever there is new risk-relevant information about the child or young person.
- Follow the school or service's standard procedure for storing sensitive information.

THIS TOOL WAS COMPLETED BY:

Initials or code of staff member
(Do not use full name)

School or service name

School or service address

Date of planning conversation

Date completed

Date to be reviewed

This safety plan will be reviewed on:

Completed tool shared with (if applicable)

* Schools and services **must** ensure that any copies of this tool and the information in the tool are stored in a secure location that can only be accessed by school and service leaders, and authorised staff.

Staff supports and other resources

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Where can I find further resources and support?

Key information and contacts for the Reforms

Ministerial guidelines, practice guides and resources

For further information, please see:

- **Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines** at <www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme-ministerial-guidelines>
- **Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines** at <www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing>
- **MARAM practice guides and resources** at <www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>

Training (online via webinar and eLearn)

The Department of Education offers a range of free online training on the information sharing and family violence reforms. For more information, see **Training for the information sharing and MARAM reforms** <www.vic.gov.au/training-for-information-sharing-and-maram>.

Customised briefings or support for your service, school or organisation

Contact childinfosharing@education.vic.gov.au to request a targeted briefing/workshop for your service or school

Where can I go to access support?

Department Employee Wellbeing Support Services

For more information:

- **Employee Assist**, which provides support and counseling for various personal and work-related issues
- **Manager Assist**, which provides dedicated coaching support to people managers.

See: **Employee Wellbeing Support Services** <www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/occupational-health-safety-wellbeing-management/guidance/employee-wellbeing-support-services>

Workplace Contact Officer Network

A point of contact for staff experiencing harassment, discrimination, bullying, victimisation or family violence.

See: **Workplace Contact Officer Network** <www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/workplace-contact-officer-wco-network/overview>.

Respectful Relationships

The Respectful Relationships initiative supports schools and services to promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours. The workforce also supports schools and services to implement respectful relationships education and strengthen referral and response to family violence.

For more information, see **Respectful Relationships** <www.vic.gov.au/respectful-relationships>

Professional development (Department workforces)

- department family violence module for managers and principals on [eduPay](#) (login required).

What should I do to take care of myself?

You will best placed to support others when you practise regular self-care. It is important to prioritise self-care so that you can engage in this work over time without burning out or suffering negative impacts to your health and wellbeing.

Respectful Relationships has a coping styles and strategies resource that can support your wellbeing:

- Energetic activity: activities that lift your mood like exercise, dance, active play
- Self-calming activity: activities you find relaxing like quiet time out for yourself, drawing
- Social activity: connecting with others and maintaining your relationships, asking for help
- Shifting attention: activities that take your mind elsewhere, like reading, watching television, playing games
- Getting organised: plan something to look forward to, tidying, organising an activity.

Department policies and strategies

Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy

This policy outlines how Victorian government schools request and share information under the Schemes. It also includes detailed guidance for schools to guide information sharing activities.

For more information, see: <www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/information-sharing-schemes/policy>

Child Safe Standards Policy

This policy supports schools to create and maintain a child safe organisation and protect students from all forms of abuse.

For more information, see: <www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy>

Family Violence Support Policy

This policy outlines the range of supports for students, families and staff affected by family violence.

For more information, see: <www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/family-violence-support/policy>

Family Violence – Information for Employees Policy

This policy outlines support available for employees who experience family violence, or who may be supporting a person experiencing family violence.

For more information, see **Family Violence – Information for Employees policy** <www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/family-violence-information-employees/overview>.

Safe and Well in Education Strategy

The **Safe and Well in Education Strategy** (2019–2024) provides a systematic and sustainable approach to enhancing health, safety and wellbeing outcomes for all of its employees.

You may download a copy of the Safe and Well in Education Strategy from **Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management in Schools** www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/occupational-health-safety-wellbeing-management/policy.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

The department is committed to creating an environment where employees are safe and well and have the opportunity to flourish.

For more information, see: www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/health-safety-wellbeing/policy

Freedom of Information Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure schools act in accordance with Freedom of Information (FOI) requirements.

For more information, see: www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/freedom-of-information/policy

Mental Health and Wellbeing Procedure and Guide

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Procedure and Guide provide support and advice that will result in better health and safety outcomes for employees.

For more information, see: www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/mental-health-and-wellbeing-employees/procedure

Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter

The department's approach to employee mental health and wellbeing is led by its support of the Whole of Victorian Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter.

For more information, see: www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/mental-health-and-wellbeing-employees/procedure/1-overview-mental-health-and-wellbeing-charter

Respectful Workplaces

The Respectful Workplaces portal contains eLearning modules, policies and procedures, resources and additional support to help you understand what a respectful workplace looks like and how you can help create a workplace that is healthy, safe, inclusive and free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

For further information, see: www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/respectful-workplaces/overview

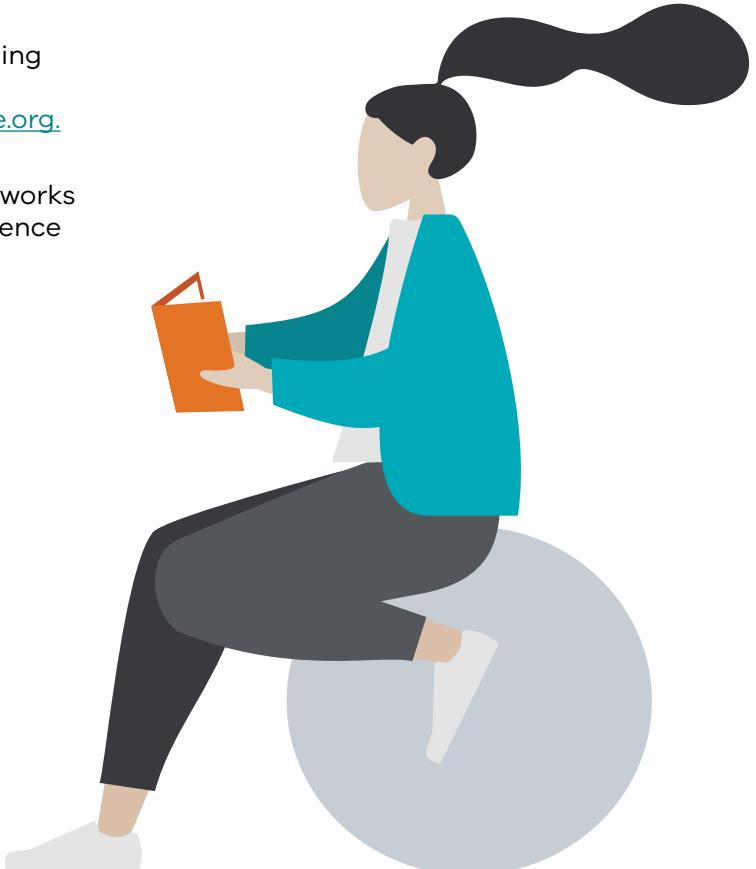
External family violence support

For support contact:

- Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre provides 24-hour statewide family violence support 1800 015 188 <www.safesteps.org.au>
- 1800 RESPECT provides 24-hour sexual assault and family violence information, counselling and support 1800 737 732 <www.1800respect.org.au>
- The Orange Door supports families experiencing family violence and families who need extra support with the care of children <www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au>
- Kids Helpline provides 24-hour counselling for children and young people aged 5 to 25 1800 551 800 <kidshelpline.com.au>
- What's ok at home is a website for children and young people aged 10 to 17 to understand what family violence is, why it happens, where to get help and how to help others <woah.org.au>
- headspace provides access to counselling services for Victorian government secondary school students <headspace.org.au/headspace-centres>
- No to Violence (Men's Referral Service) works with and helps men who use family violence 1300 766 491 <ntv.org.au>.

Support for members of diverse communities includes:

- Djirra offers phone and face-to-face legal, emotional and cultural support from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday, for Aboriginal people experiencing family violence 1800 105 303 <djirra.org.au>
- InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence offers specialist family violence support from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday, for migrant and refugee women 1800 755 988 <intouch.org.au>
- Rainbow Door is a free service by text, phone and email from 10 am to 5 pm daily, for LGBTIQA+ people and allies 1800 729 367 <www.rainbowdoor.org.au>
- WIRE (Women's Information and Referral Exchange) offers free support, referrals and information by phone, web chat and email, from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday, for all Victorian women, non-binary and gender-diverse people 1300 134 130 <www.wire.org.au>.



Resources for families and communities

The department has developed online resources to help you explain the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) to the families, carers, children and young people in your school or service.

The resources include webpages with flyers and factsheets that you can download and print to support your conversations with the community. Developed after consulting with parents and carers, the resources aim to answer questions about CISS.

The webpages, flyers and factsheets include resources designed for First Nations peoples. You can also refer to videos from prominent educators, which explain how CISS is supporting child wellbeing and safety.

You can find all the resources on the **Child Information Sharing Scheme** homepage [<https://www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme>](https://www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme).



Glossary — terms and abbreviations

Aboriginal family violence

Aboriginal communities define family violence more broadly to include a range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses. Family violence against Aboriginal people may occur in families and intimate relationships. It encompasses violence from people outside the Aboriginal community who are in intimate relationships with Aboriginal people, and violence in extended families, kinship networks and community violence. See 'What constitutes family violence?' in Pillar 1: Shared understanding of family violence in the **Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework Part C: Pillars** <www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-multi-agency-risk-assessment-and-management-framework/part-c-pillars>.

Adolescent who uses family violence

A young person (aged 10-18 years old) who chooses to use coercive and controlling techniques and violence against family members, including intimate partners. Adolescents who use family violence often coexist as victims of family violence and therapeutic responses should be explored.

Alleged perpetrator

The term most commonly used in Victoria to describe a person where there is not sufficient information for an Information Sharing Entity (ISE) to form a reasonable belief that the person poses a risk of family violence.

Information about alleged perpetrators can only be shared with Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs) for a family violence assessment purpose (see the reference to **Perpetrator**).

CCYP

Commission for Children and Young People

Child Link

Child Link is a digital tool that displays information about a child to authorised key professionals who have responsibility for child wellbeing and safety. Child Link shows limited but critical information, such as a

child's participation in key early childhood and education services. It is a key enabler of the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS).

For more information, see **Child Link** <www.vic.gov.au/child-link>.

Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), established under Part 6A of the **Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005** (Vic). CISS enables information to be shared by organisations and services prescribed as ISEs to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children under the age of 18 years.

Child Safe Standards

Victoria adopted Child Safe Standards in 2016 to protect children and young people from harm and abuse. New standards have been in place since 2022.

For more information, see **Child Safe Standards for education providers** <www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-education-providers>.

Collusion

Refers to ways that an individual, agency or system might reinforce, excuse, minimise or deny a perpetrator's use of violence towards family members. Collusion can take many forms (verbal and non-verbal), it can be conscious or unconscious and it includes any action that has the effect of reinforcing the perpetrator's violence-supportive narratives.

Confidential information

For the purposes of the Schemes, the term 'confidential information' includes:

- health information and identifiers for the purposes of the **Health Records Act 2001** (Vic)
- personal information for the purposes of the **Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014** (Vic), including sensitive information (such as a criminal record), and unique identifiers
- personal information for the purposes of the **Privacy Act 1988** (Cth), including sensitive information.

Coordinated risk management

Coordinated risk management is when multiple professionals and organisations act together to assess risk and plan to mitigate family violence risks for victim survivors, including children, young people and families.

The department

Department of Education

DFFH

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

Disclosure

In the context of the Schemes, this is defined as sharing confidential information for the purpose of promoting the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children.

In the context of family violence, this is defined as when someone tells another person about violence that they have experienced, perpetrated or witnessed.

Evidence-based risk factors

Evidence-based factors are associated with the likelihood of family violence occurring or the severity of the risk of family violence.

Family

For the purposes of the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), the definition of a family member under the **Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)** is broad. It includes relationships with a former or current intimate partner, genetic or kinship family member, or a family-like relationship, for example, an unpaid carer.

Family violence

Family violence is defined in the **Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)** as:

- behaviour by a person towards a family member that:
 - is physically or sexually abusive
 - is emotionally or psychologically abusive
 - is financially abusive
 - is threatening or coercive
 - in any other way, controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or that of another person.
- behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness or otherwise be exposed to the effects of any behaviour referred to above.

Aboriginal community definitions of family violence include extended family, kinship networks, elder abuse and exclusion or isolation from Aboriginal culture and/or community by non-Aboriginal perpetrators.

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), which is established under Part 5A of the **Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)**. FVISS enables relevant information to be shared between certain prescribed entities, namely Risk Assessment Entities (RAEs) and Information Sharing Entities (ISEs), to assess and manage family violence risk, including risks to child, adolescent and adult victim survivors.

Family Violence Intervention Order (FVIO)

Family Violence Intervention Orders are made between family members, usually by the Magistrates' Court or the Children's Court, and seek to protect one or more family members ('protected persons') from the behaviour of another family member ('respondent').

Four Critical Actions

Follow the Four Critical Actions when responding to an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. For more information, see:

- **Report child abuse in schools:** <www.schools.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse-schools>
- **Report child abuse in early childhood:** <www.vic.gov.au/child-protection-early-childhood-protect/report-child-abuse-early-childhood>.

Information Sharing Entity (ISE)

An Information Sharing Entity (ISE), which is a prescribed organisation or service (or part of an organisation or service) that is authorised to share confidential information with other prescribed organisations or services to:

- promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children – under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)
- assess and manage family violence risk – under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS).

A list of prescribed organisations can be found online at **Information Sharing Entity list search** <www.vic.gov.au/ise-list-search>.

Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms (the Reforms)

The collective term used in the Department for the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM).

Information Sharing Schemes (the Schemes)

The collective term used in the Department for the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS).

Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorisations – such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, religion, class, socioeconomic status, ability or age – which create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage for either an individual or group. Family violence can be experienced differently by individuals based on how different parts of their identities interact with each other. This can also affect how individuals access and experience the family violence service system if they seek support.

MARAM or MARAM Framework

The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM), established under Part 11 of the **Family Violence Protection Act 2008** (Vic).

MARAM is a risk assessment and management tool which sets out a shared understanding of family violence practice across the Victorian service system. It is used collectively across all government and non-government services to ensure consistency of intervention for children and families.

MARAM practice guides and resources can be found online at <www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>.

MARAM organisation (prescribed organisation)

An organisation prescribed by regulation under Part 11 of the **Family Violence Protection Act 2008** (Vic) to commence alignment of their policies, procedures, practice guidance and tools to the MARAM Framework.

Perpetrator

The term most commonly used in Victoria to describe a person if it is reasonably believed that there is a risk they may commit family violence. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities may prefer to use the term 'person who uses family violence' over perpetrator. It is not an appropriate term to use to describe adolescents who use family violence.

Prescribed organisation or person

An organisation that has been determined under the Schemes, either as an Information Sharing Entity (ISE) or Risk Assessment Entity (RAE) as relevant. The organisation will be prescribed as an ISE or an RAE, which means they will be authorised to share information and required to respond to requests for information from other ISEs or RAEs as relevant.

The Reforms

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), Family Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and Family Violence Multi-Agency Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) are collectively called the Reforms in this publication.

RAE

An Information Sharing Entity (ISE) also prescribed to be a Risk Assessment Entity (RAE) under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS). RAEs can request and receive information from any ISE for a family violence assessment or protection purpose, in response to a request or through proactive sharing from another ISE. Examples of RAEs include Victoria Police, Child Protection, family violence services and the Orange Door.

Services

Services include long day care, kindergarten and before and after school hours care services.

Schools

Schools include government, Catholic and independent schools.

System bodies

System bodies include Catholic and independent system bodies that assist, manage, or govern schools in Victoria.

Statutory bodies

Statutory bodies include the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, and Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

Third party

Any person other than the child or the child's family members when using the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or the victim survivor or perpetrator when using the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS). Third parties include friends, neighbours, colleagues or workmates whose confidential information may be relevant to promoting the wellbeing or safety of the child or group of children (CISS) or is relevant to assessing or managing risk of family violence (FVISS).

Victim survivor

A person about whom it is reasonably believed that there is a risk the person may be subjected to family violence. This includes adults or children who have disclosed family violence or who have been identified as affected by family violence. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities may prefer to use the term 'person experiencing family violence' over victim survivor.

VEYLD

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, see <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-early-years-learning-development-framework-veyldf>.

Notes



