

Royal Childrens Hospital	POLICY: Crisis Care On Call Response– SEXUAL ASSAULT	Policy No:
		Issue Date: 08/06/12
Gatehouse Centre		Review Date: 08/06/13
(for the Assessment & Treatment of Child Abuse)		Page 1 of 2

1. Policy Statement

The Gatehouse at the Royal Children’s Hospital is a Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) that provides crisis care services and counselling to children and young people who have been sexually abused, to children displaying problematic sexualised behaviours, to young people up to 15 years who have been sexually abusive to others and counselling for children and young people who have suffered extreme forms of physical and emotional abuse.

Gatehouse takes a child centred, family focused approach, assessments and interventions involve parents, carers, siblings and the broad social system of the child and young person.

Gatehouse recognises the imperative of providing children, young people and their families with a 24 hour emergency care response immediately following a sexual assault or the disclosure of sexual abuse.

An Emergency Crisis Care response is a multi-disciplinary response and can involve Gatehouse, Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service (VFPMS) Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit (SOCIT), DHS Child Protection.

A crisis care response to a child or young person following sexual abuse can include a medical examination, including forensic evidence collection, a crisis psycho-social assessment, psychological first aid and support to children, young people and their families and carers, a risk assessment and safety plan and taking of the victim’s statement for further criminal investigation.

2. Definition of Terms

- **Children and Young People:** males and females up to 17 years
- **VFPMS:** Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service
- **DHS:** Department of Human Services, Child Protection
- **Police:** SOCIT

3. Responsibility

The Gatehouse Centre clinical team member is responsible for:

- The assessment of the child’s immediate psychological well-being and the reduction of initial post-trauma distress.
- Assessing the capacity of the family/carers/ wider system to support the child’s well-being.
- Assessing and ensuring the safety and protection of the child/children when they leave the Gatehouse, including notification to DHS where indicated.
- The development (in collaboration with the care team present) of a broader response in terms of police intervention and criminal charges, child protection intervention and follow-up counselling and family support.

Royal Childrens Hospital	POLICY: ONCALL CLINICAL TEAM RESPONSE – SEXUAL ASSAULT	Policy No:
		Issue Date: 08/06/12
Gatehouse Centre (for the Assessment & Treatment of Child Abuse)		Review Date: 08/06/13
		Page 2 of 2

- Making the appropriate referrals, including to Gatehouse or other CASA counselling or to family support agency.
 - The hand-over of information regarding the intervention and any outstanding tasks to Gatehouse Duty/Intake staff the following morning, including ongoing counselling.
 - Follow up with the family in the following days to ensure the child/young person's well-being.
 - Equipping the family to support the child (and themselves) in the face of emerging trauma related symptoms.
-
- VFPMS: Medical examination
 - DHS Child Protection: a Risk Assessment and Safety Plan
 - Police SOCIT: the Criminal Investigation

4. Criteria

Any child or young person who presents at RCH Emergency Department alleging Sexual Assault will be assessed in person by a Gatehouse clinician.

The Gatehouse Clinician will consult with the VFPMS on-call paediatric forensic doctor, who will decide whether an after-hours forensic medical examination is indicated.

Any child or young person who is attending the RCH for a forensic medical examination can also be provided with psychosocial assessment and care by a Gatehouse Clinician.

The Gatehouse Crisis Care clinician is available after normal business hours by phone to any professional or member of the public seeking consultation in regards to child sexual abuse.

Police, DHS, RCH or VFPMS can contact the Gatehouse Crisis Care Clinician to activate a crisis response.

5. Other Relevant References:

- RCH & DHS Protocol re Vulnerable Children and young person
- Police Code of Practice re, sexual assault
- CASA Standards of Practice Manual
- RCH: Policies and Procedures
- Gatehouse: Policy and Procedures Manual