



Vulnerable Children

Purpose

To govern the delivery of services to vulnerable babies, children and young people at risk of harm by abuse or neglect; and to their families.

Scope

All RCH staff

Policy

The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) is committed to providing best practice care to children who are vulnerable to child abuse and neglect and to their families. This will occur by ensuring:

- All patient management decisions are made in accordance with the best interests of the child.
- Staff are trained in identification and management of vulnerable and abused children.
- Early evaluation of children's vulnerability to harm from child abuse and neglect
- Early consultation with the Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service (professionals who have specific expertise in forensic paediatric medicine).
- All injured babies, children and young people will be evaluated to determine, when possible, the cause and extent of their injuries.
- Good communication and effective working relationships between the professionals involved, supported by appropriate documentation.
- When child abuse is considered, children will have an evaluation of their psychosocial circumstances.
- RCH staff will adhere to legislative requirements under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005. In particular, staff are alerted to their obligations in relation to mandatory notification to Child Protection and in relation to information sharing with statutory intervenors (Child Protection workers and members of Victoria Police).
- A coordinated response of all relevant RCH departments, and clear and accessible procedures and guidelines to inform decision making and facilitate referral are available.

Notification to Child Protection and Child FIRST must be in accordance with the Children Youth and Families Act 2005. Other (non-mandated) professionals are encouraged to notify Child Protection when the professional believes that a child is in

Document number RCH0465

Category [Vulnerable Children](#)

Document type [Policy](#)

Revision 1 ([view history](#))

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Date authorised 05-Mar-2013

Next review date 04-Mar-2016

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need of protection and to notify Child FIRST when there are concerns about a child's wellbeing.

Authorisation by

Executive Director - Medical Services

Disciplinary action may be taken against employees who breach this policy.

Related procedures

[Vulnerable Children procedures](#)

Related policies

- [Care Planning and Implementation](#)
- [Risk Management](#)

Related legislation

- [Children Youth and Families Act 2005](#)

References

1. [Vulnerable babies, children and young people at risk of harm; Best practice framework for acute health services](#) (2006) Department of Human Services, Victorian Government, Australia.

Further information

[Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service](#)

[Gatehouse Centre](#)

[Department of Social Work](#)

Vision

This policy and associated procedures are integral to the RCH achieving its vision of being a '**GREAT children's hospital, leading the way.**'

Values

- **Unity**
We work as a team and in partnership with our communities.
- **Respect**
We respect the rights of all and treat people the way we would like them to treat us.
- **Integrity**
We believe that how we work is as important as the work we do.
- **Excellence**
We are committed to achieving our goals and improving outcomes.

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