



DANDENONG RANGES STEINER SCHOOL

Definition of Child Abuse and Family Violence in Victoria

Child Abuse

Child abuse is defined in section 3 of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) as including:

- any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or a grooming offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic);
- the infliction of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- the serious neglect of a child.

A child is defined by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) as a person who is under the age of 18 years.

For more information about sexual offences that constitute child abuse, refer to [Sexual Offences](#).

Family Violence

Whilst the term “family violence” does not form part of the legislative definition of “child abuse”, the impact of family violence on a child is commonly referred to as a form of child abuse.

In Victoria section 5 of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic) defines “family violence” as behaviour by a person towards a family member that is:

- physically or sexually abusive;
- emotionally or psychologically abusive;
- economically abusive;
- threatening;
- coercive; or
- in any other way controlling or dominating of the family member and causes them to feel fear for their own, or other family members’ safety or wellbeing.

Behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness, or be exposed to the effects of such behaviour also falls within the definition of “family violence”.