

# FACT SHEET: WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Everyone has the right to live a safe life free from violence and abuse. It is against the law for someone to physically hurt, threaten, or coerce or force another into sexual contact.

If someone is in immediate danger, or if has been physically or sexually assaulted, threatened or stalked, the person can call the police on 000.

In Victoria, if someone needs protection from further violence, they can apply for an Intervention Order. The police can also apply for an Intervention Order on a person's behalf. An Intervention Order is a court order that may state the abuser must follow various conditions such as they cannot hurt or threaten the person, or cannot come near or contact the person. If the abuser does not follow the Intervention Order, they can be charged with a criminal offence.

## REPORTING FAMILY VIOLENCE

In Victoria, people in certain positions must report if a child has suffered or is at risk of physical harm or sexual abuse. These people include medical practitioners, nurses, midwives, teachers, principals, registered psychologists or anyone who has post-secondary qualifications in youth, social or welfare work who works in health, education, community or welfare services.

If a religious leader occupies one (or more) of these positions, then they are required to report the risk of physical or sexual harm to a child.

In Victoria, religious leaders are not legally required to report family violence toward adults.



### Sources:

Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria. (<http://www.dvrcv.org.au/help-advice/are-you-happy>)

Australian Institute of Family Studies.

(<https://www3.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>)

This resource has been developed as part of the CHALLENGE Family Violence project, a partnership between City of Casey, Cardinia Shire Council, City of Greater Dandenong and Monash Health. This project has been funded under the Reducing Violence against Women and their Children grants program, part of the Victorian Government's Community Crime Prevention Program - local solutions for local crime prevention issues.

