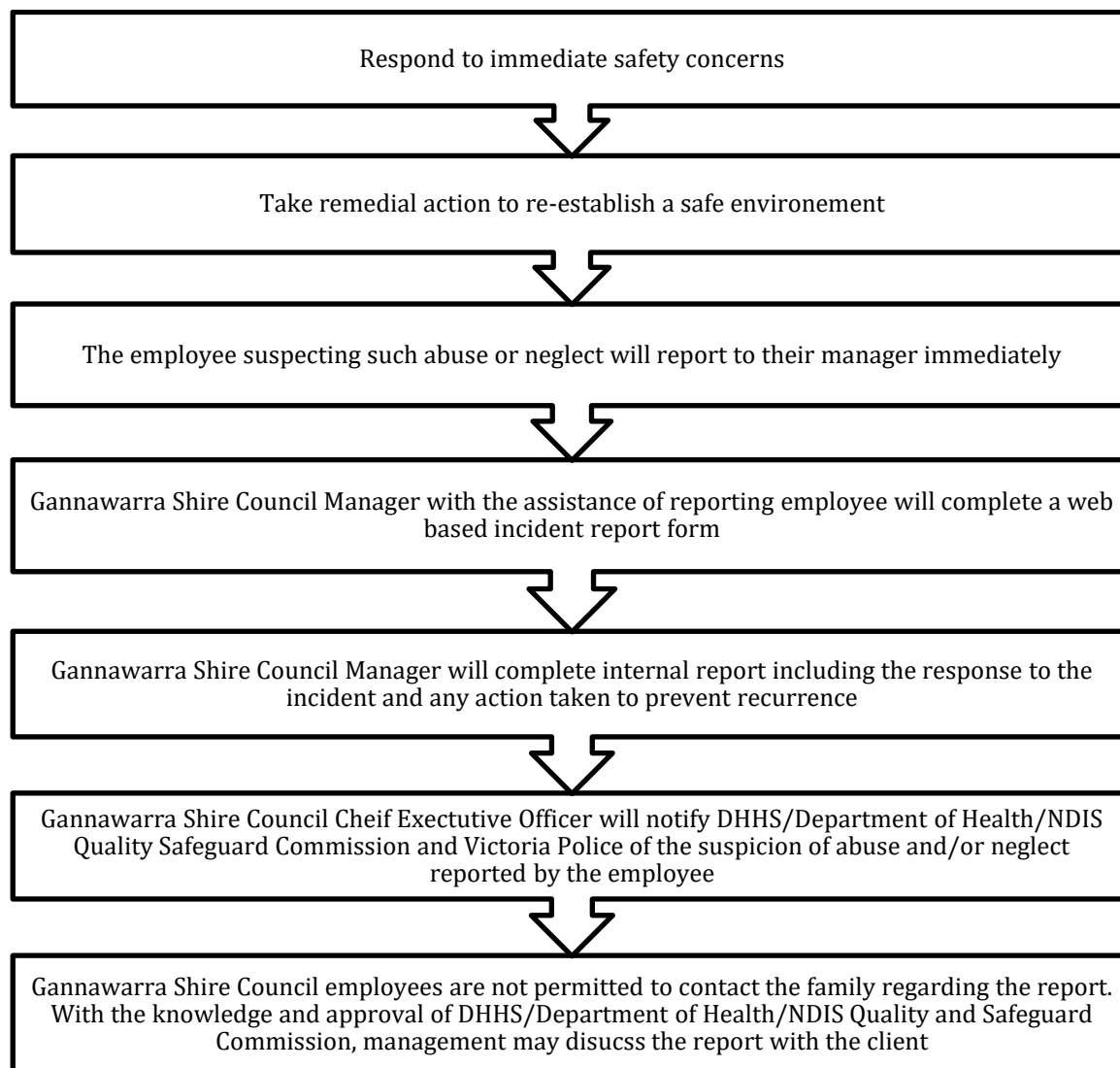


# Abuse and Neglect Procedure

## COUNCIL POLICY NO. 137

The following procedure should be used as a guide when responding to incidents:



## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

1. Staff who are present at the time of an assault should take appropriate measures to maintain their own safety, and that of other clients and staff.
2. Staff at the scene must ensure that the person/s (the victim) is protected from any further harm or contact with the person who is the source of the abuse (the offender).
3. Staff at the scene must notify the doctor or ambulance if the client receiving support, or any other person is injured.
4. Staff at the scene must immediately advise their manager, or 'on call' Community Care staff of the incident.
5. Staff at the scene, or the manager must contact Victorian Police if a person has been physically or sexually assaulted or dies as the result of an assault.

## PROTECTING EVIDENCE

1. Staff at the scene must use their best endeavours to ensure that any evidence Victoria Police may require in its investigation is not disturbed.
2. Evidence may be lost if a victim of sexual assault bathes soon after an assault. Try to delay bathing until Victoria Police arrive if the victim is not distressed by the delay.
3. If possible, preserve the victim's clothing as evidence following an assault of any type.
4. If possible, isolate the area where the incident occurred and do not allow anyone to enter the area until Victoria Police arrive.
5. Apart from ascertaining their physical condition and state of mind, avoid questioning any person about the incident to reduce contamination of their recall and confusion about the incident.

## REPORTING TO VICTORIA POLICE

- Sexual Assault: Sexual assault of a person is a serious offence and must be reported to Victoria Police.
- Physical Assault: Any other physical assault of a client must be reported to Victoria Police.
- Other Assault: A report of domestic violence, or abuse by neglect and restricted practices, and emotional, financial and systems abuse, must be reported to a manager as soon as possible and may be reported to Victoria Police.

## EXCEPTIONS

A report to Victoria Police of an assault may not be required if any of the following conditions exist:

- An incident that would usually be classed as assault is caused by a person with an intellectual disability who lacks understanding of their behaviour.
- Physical contacts occurring between clients, for example pushing or striking.
- Incidents that are appropriate for resolution using behaviour management strategies, and are reported internally.