

# Reporting child sexual abuse to the police

**Child sexual abuse is illegal in Australia. You can report child sexual abuse to the police.**

## Why report child sexual abuse to the police

The police investigate crimes, including child sexual abuse, and collect evidence about the crime. This evidence can be used to prove what happened if the case goes to court. The police may use the information you give them to help keep other people safe.

Depending on your circumstances, the police may help you to apply for a restraining/protection order, or apply for one on your behalf. This can help keep you safe.

You may need to report the crime to the police to receive some types of victims support or compensation. knowmore can give you free legal advice about your compensation options. Please call us on 1800 605 762.

Depending on your circumstances, the law may require you to report child sexual abuse to the police.

## How to report child sexual abuse to the police

In an emergency, call 000.

If it is not an emergency, you can call the police on 131 444, or go to your local police station. Some police agencies allow you to report a crime online.

Some police agencies also allow you to provide information about a crime without making a formal report.

You may find it helpful to write down what you want to say before contacting the police. If you are planning to go to a police station, you may find it helpful to call the police station first and ask if they can schedule a time for you to make a police report. You can have a support person with you.

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**knowmore** free legal help  
for survivors

1800 605 762 | [knowmore.org.au](https://knowmore.org.au)

Image inspired by original artwork by Ngunawal man Dean Bell, depicting knowmore's connection to the towns, cities, missions and settlements within Australia.

knowmore acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters across Australia upon which we live and work. We pay our deep respects to Elders past and present for their ongoing leadership and advocacy.

## What happens when you report child sexual abuse to the police

The police should generally take a detailed statement from you. This involves the police asking you questions about what happened. The police may want to speak with the perpetrator or other people. The police may also ask you to help them collect evidence about what happened. Generally, the police will decide whether to investigate.

It will be up to the police and, where relevant, the Director of Public Prosecutions to decide whether to charge and prosecute someone for a criminal offence.

## Complaints about the police

If you are unhappy about how the police have treated you, you can complain. Generally, complaining to the police may be the first step. In many cases, you can also complain to an Ombudsman or a police complaints body.

There are different processes in each state and territory. Please call knowmore on 1800 605 762 for free legal advice.

\*\* Disclaimer: The information provided in this fact sheet is for information only. It must not be relied on as legal advice. You should seek legal advice about your own particular circumstances. | Last updated February 2023  
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