



Catholic Education
Diocese of Cairns
*Learning with Faith
and Vision*

Policy

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Student Protection

Purpose

This policy applies to Catholic Church personnel, employees and volunteers in Catholic schools and colleges in the Diocese of Cairns.

This policy does not apply to student bullying; a separate anti-bullying policy covers that matter.

The purpose of this policy is to record our commitment to the protection, safety and wellbeing of children and young people who are students in our schools.

Policy

We are committed to the protection, safety and wellbeing of students in our schools and compliance with child protection requirements mandated by law, Convention* and Church teachings.

We recognise that our students' spiritual, psychological and physical wellbeing is paramount and recognise that every student has a fundamental right to protection from harm, risk of harm and a safe school environment.

Rationale

The love, care and healing Jesus showed for children calls us to emulate Jesus's love for children in the Church's ministry of education.

The following guiding principles apply:

- respectful relationships recognising the dignity of each person, including students, is central to the life and teachings of Jesus and the Church;
- the protection, safety and wellbeing of students is paramount;
- every student has a fundamental right to protection from harm, the risk of harm and a safe school environment;
- All members of the school community, including parents, staff and volunteers, have responsibility to protect and support the protection, safety and wellbeing of students;
- students have the right to be heard about matters and decisions that affect their lives .
- physical, psychological or sexual harm toward a student is never acceptable;
- the primary responsibility for students is within their family and while the value of family should be

respected, this should not be to the detriment of the safety and wellbeing of the student;

- h) students with special needs or vulnerabilities have the right to a safe schooling environment
- i) incidents involving suspected, likely and/or risk of harm must be swiftly managed with sensitivity, dignity, respect and in accordance with our duty of care, legislative requirements and the procedures and protocols of Catholic Education Services and the Church.

Consequences

We are committed to ensuring:

- a) the protection, safety and wellbeing of all students;
- b) upholding the rights and dignity of all students;
- c) full compliance with child protection requirements mandated by law, Convention* and Church teachings;
- d) the implementation and enforcement of our procedures and protocols about child protection;
- e) the reporting and management of student protection concerns as mandated by law relevant background checks, induction, curriculum and training about student protection
- f) our student protection policies and procedures are regularly monitored, reviewed and updated for changes in legislative and other requirements;
- g) where appropriate or required, our schools cooperate with statutory agencies involved in child protection; and
- h) the support and promotion of healing for students who are affected by harm.

*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Definitions

The following words used in this policy are defined as follows:

- a) **Child** means a person under the age of 18 years-of-age.
- b) **Staff member** –is any person who is employed by the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns (trading as Catholic Education) on a casual, fixed term or continuing basis, either pursuant to a contract of employment or appointed a role at a school pursuant to an agreement with a religious order
- c) **Harm** means any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the student’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused, but it may be caused by physical, psychological abuse or neglect or sexual abuse or exploitation.
- d) **Sexual Abuse** can be physical, verbal or emotional which involves the student in a sexual activity or sexually exploits the student in some way. Sexual Abuse (includes but is not limited to) sexual behaviour involving the student and another person in the following circumstances:
 - I. The other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the student;

- II. The student has less power than the other person;
 - III. There is significant disparity between the student and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.
- e) **Student** means any person enrolled in a Catholic school regardless of that person's age including:
- I. A pre-preparatory age child registered in a pre-preparatory learning program at the school
 - II. a child with a disability who is not compulsory school age but is being provided with special education at the school and is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the school
- f) **Volunteer** means a person who is engaged or present at the school to undertake work, but not for financial reward.

Reflection

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001

Education (General Provisions) Act 2006

Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006

Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005

Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000

Child Protection Act 1999

Evidence Act 1977

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991

Disability Standards for Education 2005

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

See also (Related Policies and Guidelines)

CES Student Protection Processes

CES Policies: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Anti-Bullying

CES Code of Conduct

Statement of Principles for working in a Catholic School

National Committee for Professional Standards (2010, January). *Towards Healing: Principles and procedures in responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia*. NSW: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia

National Committee for Professional Standards (2011, August) *Integrity in the Service of the Church*. NSW: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia

