Policy

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Author:	CPO (Professional Standards)

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Reflection

'*He is a treasure. You children are his reflection, and you too are a treasure for all of us, the most precious treasure that we have and one that we are called to guard*' (Pope Francis, 2018)

Purpose

This policy applies to all staff members and volunteers working within Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns and exists to uphold the principles set out in relevant legislative and organisational obligations. A safe, supportive, inclusive and positive environment underpins a student's capacity for learning and maximises potential for personal and social development, ultimately enhancing wellbeing and life opportunities. We acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning.

Policy

Catholic Education, Diocese of Cairns is committed to providing safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student rights, safety and wellbeing, including compliance with child protection obligations mandated by law, the United Conventions on the Rights of the Child and Church teachings.

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

'There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.' (Nelson Mandela)

We have a responsibility to ensure that our schools have the appropriate policies, procedures and an organisational culture in place to both:
• Safeguard against the risk of child abuse; and
• Respond effectively if abuse is suspected or confirmed.

Catholic Education Diocese of Cairns staff, volunteers and Catholic Church personnel are required to be committed to creating and maintaining a child safe institution that fosters positive and safe cultures, adopts strategies and acts to prevent harm to children and young people. This includes ensuring that external service providers have completed all mandatory requirements before entering a school site.

The following principles are the foundational elements from which our child safe practices and processes are based on:

• We take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;

• We implement child safety policies and procedures which support ongoing assessment and amelioration of risk;

• We value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;

• We foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;

• We respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;

• We provide guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;

• We engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;

• We ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;

• We report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;

• We share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and

• We value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Outcomes

Through implementation of this policy and supporting procedures including the Student Protection Processes and Guidelines the CEDC support students to feel and be safe through providing the care and protection necessary for their wellbeing and demonstrates:

- Committed leadership, governance and culture
- Children are safe and informed
- Partnering with families, carers and communities
- Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected
- Robust human resource management
- Effective complaints management
- Ongoing education and training
- Safe physical and online environments
- Continuous commitment to improvement
- Adherence to policies and procedures that support child safety

Enquiries

Executive Manager Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office (PSSO)

Student Protection Officers - PSSO

Related Directives, Policies and Procedures

Student Protection Processes and Guidelines

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

Code of Conduct - Staff

Code of Conduct – Parents, volunteers & visitors

Policies:

Policy 20240905 Safeguarding Children and Young People

- Student Behaviour Support Policy

Procedures

- Visibility processes for Schools

- Student Behaviour Support Procedure

- External Therapy Providers' access to Catholic Education schools, Cairns

External related policies and legislation

Catholic Diocese of Cairns Safeguarding Children (Diocesan Policy)
Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse – Final Report Volume 6: Making Institutions Child Safe 2017
Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse – Final Report Volume 13: Schools 2017
The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017
Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017
Education (General Provisions) Act 2006
Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017
Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005
Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000
Evidence Act 1977
Disability Standards for Education (2005)
Child Protection Act 1999
Criminal Code Act 1899
Moores (2018) Child Safety Toolkit: How to create a child safe organisation.
O'Leary, P, Koh, E, & Dare, A (2017), Grooming and child sexual abuse in institutional contexts, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Sydney.
McAlinden, AM (2012), 'Grooming' and the sexual abuse of children: institutional, internet and familial dimensions, Clarendon Studies in Criminology, Oxford.