



St Thomas of Villanova Parish School Mareeba

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

Under the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian requirements

What is the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy?

The Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy forms part of the Blue Card prevention and monitoring system administered by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (the Commission), which aims to create safe and supportive service environments for children and young people.

Under the provisions of the [Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000](#), and the [Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulation 2001](#), the Commission requires regulated employers and businesses to develop and implement risk management strategies to identify and minimise the risk of harm to children and young people in their service environment. The Diocese of Cairns, Catholic Education is a regulated employer under the legislation, where our school is part of the service environment.

What are the requirements of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy?

To meet our legislative obligations, the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy includes eight minimum requirements under key areas of service delivery. These are:

Commitment

- A statement of commitment to the principles of safe and supportive service environments (mandatory requirement 1), and
- A code of conduct (mandatory requirement 2)

Capability

- Recruitment, selection, training and management strategies that encourage best practice and enhance the safety and well-being of children and young people (mandatory requirement 3)

Concerns

- Policies and procedures for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm (mandatory requirement 4)
- Policies and procedures for the occasions where there might be a breach of the organisation's child and youth risk management strategy (mandatory requirement 5), and
- A planning process for high risk activities and special events (mandatory requirement 7)

Consistency

- Policies and procedures for compliance with Part 6 of the Commission's Act (which regulates the blue card system) [mandatory requirement 6]; and
- Strategies for communication and support for all stakeholders including children and young people (mandatory requirement 8)

St Thomas of Villanova Parish School Child and Youth Risk Management

Catholic Education meets these eight requirements through policies, procedures and practices across a number of key areas, including:

- Our Student Protection Policy and [Student Protection Reporting Processes](#)
- Our [Code of Conduct](#)
- Our [Workplace Health and Safety Policy](#)

Catholic Education has implemented further requirements to ensure the safety of students and staff within the school environment, including procedures around Weapons in Schools and Visibility Requirements.

Requirements

1. A statement of commitment to the principles of safe and supportive service environments

Our statement of commitment is contained within the Catholic Education **Student Protection Policy** which governs the operation of our student protection procedures across the Diocese. This response is, in the first instance, inspired by the belief that every child and youth is made in the image of God and must be protected and treated with respect. Parents are the primary educators of their children, and this policy is an expression of our partnership with parents in providing for the safety and protection of all children.

The well-being of students within the Diocese is of paramount importance. The Student Protection Policy guides the implementation of our student protection procedures, and we are committed to ensuring that all staff members, other employees and volunteers follow these processes.

2. A Code of Conduct

The [Code of Conduct](#) applies to all staff members, volunteers and contractors within Catholic Education, engaged on a casual, fixed term or continuing basis, either pursuant to a contract of employment or appointed to a role at the school pursuant to an agreement with a religious order.

3. Recruitment, selection, training and management strategies that encourage best practice and enhance the safety and wellbeing of children and young people

Recruitment processes within Catholic Education are detailed in the Recruitment and Selection Guidelines for Principals and Managers document to ensure a comprehensive and consistent practice is adopted when employing new staff.

Employment Screening procedures include:

- Mandatory accreditation documentation;
- Referee Checks (specific student protection questions and suitability to work with children);
- Signed declaration:
 - I. Acceptance of the [Statement of Principles](#) and the [Code of Conduct](#)
 - II. Acceptance of the [Employment Collection Notice](#)

Additionally

3.1 Teaching staff

All teachers employed in the Diocese of Cairns are registered with the [Queensland College of Teachers](#). Original certificates of registration and qualifications are sighted upon employment and copies are stored in the school and in the teacher's personnel file at Catholic Education Services. Principals are in-serviced with the process and procedures should there be concerns about staff conduct. The [Student Protection Reporting Processes](#) outlines the process by which the Queensland College of Teachers is advised of any investigations involving a registered teacher.

3.2 Non-Teaching Staff

All non-teaching staff and volunteers have been issued with a [Blue Card](#) by the Commission, in accordance with the [Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000](#), unless an exemption applies. The school maintains a [Register](#) of all non-teaching staff and volunteers' Blue Card details, including number and renewal date. Details of non-teaching employees' Blue Cards are also kept at Catholic Education Services within Employee Services on a register and in each relevant individual's personnel file. New non-teaching employees must have *applied* for a Blue Card prior to the commencement of work and may present the receipt received from the Commission as proof of their application.

3.3 Volunteers

In addition, all volunteers require a Blue Card *prior* to the commencement of work, unless they are parents. In which case, and in the absence of a blue card, they must sign a Volunteer Suitability Declaration form which is to be kept on file at the school. Volunteers are also required to attend volunteer induction training and annual training every year after.

3.4 Induction

All new staff members are provided with an induction upon commencement of duties. For school staff, this process is undertaken through the guidance of the Principal or delegate via the Employee Induction – Guidelines for Principals and the Employee Induction Checklist Booklet.

For Catholic Education staff, a structured framework guides the induction of new staff. It is a requirement that all new staff members attend Mandatory Student Protection Induction Training as soon as practical after being appointed to a teaching or non-teaching position. Catholic Education Services provides this training monthly for all new staff members.

4. Policies and procedures for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm

All schools are required to follow the *Student Protection Reporting Processes* in relation to reporting:

- Suspected/likely sexual abuse of a student
- Suspected/likely and risk of harm of a student
- Inappropriate behaviour by a staff member, other employee or volunteer towards a student/s.

These procedures meet the legislative requirements of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* and the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001*.

All staff receive regular training and professional development in relation to the student protection policy and procedure, including:

- Mandatory Student Protection Induction Training
- Annual staff in-service facilitated by individual school sites and available on-line

Volunteers are required to follow the processes outlined in the Student Protection Information for Volunteers document, which is provided to all volunteers as part of their induction process.

5. Policies and procedures for the occasions where there might be a breach of the organisation's child and youth risk management strategy

For the purposes of this strategy, a breach is any action or inaction by a staff member within Catholic Education that fails to comply with any part of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy. Allegations of breaches of the Child and Youth Management Strategy are managed under the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.

Breaches of the Strategy are managed under Employee Misconduct processes in alignment with management of breaches of the *Code of Conduct* and *Student Protection Reporting Processes*.

6. Policies and procedures for compliance with Part 6 of the Commission's Act (Blue Card Compliance)

As per the requirements with the *Commission for Child and Young People and Child Guardian Act*, Employee Blue Cards are monitored through the Blue Card Registers at the school level, and through the Blue Card Register maintained through Catholic Education Services. Monitoring of Blue Card status is ongoing, with communication between Catholic Education Services and Diocesan schools to ensure the appropriate renewal and application processes are followed.

7. A Planning Process for High Risk Activities and Special Events

Foreseen high risk activities conducted within Diocesan schools are broadly arranged into the following types and respective control measures:

7.1 Curriculum Activity

Curriculum activities are planned using the Diocesan Learning Profile. Risk assessments for these activities are conducted utilising the Department of Education and Training – [Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment](#). The Principal is responsible for the completion and implementation of these risk assessments. All Principals are mandated to complete Curriculum Activity Risk Assessments for high risk activities, and are encouraged to require them to be completed for medium risk activities.

8. Strategies for communication and support for all stakeholders including children and young people

The Diocese of Cairns utilises a number of mechanisms to ensure awareness for staff, students and families around student protection and the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, including:

- School Student Protection Contacts posters within schools
- Provision of a publically available student protection policy and student protection reporting processes on the [Catholic Education Services](#) website
- Student Protection Brochures for Families
- Training and Professional Development for staff, including but not limited to Student Protection Mandatory Induction, Student Protection Annual Training, and the Code of Conduct. These resources and strategies are continually implemented and reviewed to ensure optimal communication and awareness.

9. Visibility Requirements

Catholic Education is committed to safe and accountable environments for staff and students, with visibility in the school environment a high priority. Schools are required to ensure that visibility risks are identified and managed accordingly, these include but are not limited to:

- Ensuring all doors have glass inserts or there is visibility provided via another means (i.e. windows);
- Identifying areas in playgrounds where there is lack of visibility;
- Ensuring visibility into all classrooms.

10. Weapons in Schools

The Executive Director of Catholic Education Services has directed Principals to make it known in their school communities that, under NO circumstances are weapons (including knives) to be brought to school by students. Students who fail to adhere to this will be dealt with under Catholic Education's Student Management – Detention, Suspension and Exclusion procedural document and in accordance with any legislated or organisational requirements within the [Student Protection Reporting Processes](#).

This position is guided by the Student Protection Policy which states all Catholic schools are committed to being safe and nurturing communities of care where the rights and dignity of all children and young people are upheld and protected.

We aim to have a culture within all schools which acknowledges that student protection is the responsibility of every person and is an integral aspect of student wellbeing.