

- ~ Partnership with parents/caregivers is recognised as an essential element of student protection within school communities
- ~ Relations with relevant government and non-government agencies to enhance the protection and support of students will be maintained and developed
- ~ The role of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission in coordinating student protection matters across Queensland is supported.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is achieved within Brisbane Catholic Education and to relevant external bodies through

- ~ Good governance, effective record keeping and respect for privacy and confidentiality
- ~ Demonstrated compliance by schools to the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board in accordance with legislation
- ~ Rigorous review processes, including school cyclical review and system-level evaluation and case review as applicable.



Archdiocese of Brisbane
Catholic Education Council

Student Protection POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2011

GLOSSARY

Harm has been defined in Section 3 of the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001 as follows:

- (1) "Harm", caused to a student under 18 years, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the student's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.
- (2) It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
- (3) Harm can be caused by –
 - (a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
 - (b) sexual abuse or exploitation.

REFERENCES

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. (2009, August). *Integrity in the Service of the Church*. (Resource document draft for trial). NSW: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia.

Student Learning and Support Services Taskforce of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. (2003). *National Safe Schools Framework*. Canberra: MCEETYA. (Under review: 2010)

LEGISLATION

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001 and Regulation 2001 (Qld).

Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 and Regulation 2006 (Qld).

Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 (Qld).

Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 (Qld).

Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld).

Policy Statement FOR BRISBANE CATHOLIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS



Catholic
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STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

Our 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.

FOREWORD

The Student Protection Policy demonstrates the Brisbane Archdiocese's commitment to the protection of students attending Catholic Schools. It is written as a response to our belief that students learn about their dignity as a child of God at every level of the Catholic school. Such dignity is undermined when a person is abused or harmed in any way.

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching; that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.

(The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium #9)

Catholic education aims to live and share the Gospel message and to provide an education that supports the holistic development of all children and young people. Catholic education recognises that in order to offer opportunities for all students to develop to their full potential it is imperative that there is a need to provide a safe and secure learning environment, confident that they are protected from harm or threat of harm.

Catholic Education is committed to environments that are welcoming, nurturing and stimulating where educators give witness to Catholic beliefs, values and attitudes. By the very nature of this ethos, Catholic schools place the highest priority on the safety of students in their care. Catholic schools see student protection as moving beyond compliance with regulations to prevention and to being proactive by creating a culture where communities have the commitment and knowledge to identify risks of harm and respond appropriately.

I ask that our Catholic school communities embrace the Student Protection Policy, as well as fostering resilience in students in order to protect them from harm. I have no doubt that the policy will promote the dignity of the human person among all who engage in the educational partnership of Christ's Mission of the Archdiocese.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev John Bathersby DD
ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE
August 2011

INTRODUCTION

This policy document expresses the church's commitment to the care and protection of children and young people. Additionally it provides a framework for Catholic schools within which they must operate to fulfil their legislative student protection responsibilities.

This policy extends beyond legislative imperatives by reflecting the Catholic ethos and by demonstrating Gospel values in action.

RATIONALE

Jesus insisted on the primacy of love: love of God and love of each other. No one was excluded from his love and by word and deed he showed a special preference for people who were poor, powerless and vulnerable, those often relegated to the margins of society. He especially loved children 'for of such are the Kingdom of heaven' (Mt 19:14). All people, like Jesus himself, are called especially to love and care for children, protecting them from anyone who would harm or abuse them.

It is recognised that students are harmed, or could be at risk of harm, from many sources, including self harm. Appropriate and responsive interventions by schools can provide hope to, and foster resilience in students who may be at risk by protecting them from harm and supporting their healing.

Student protection is integral to learning and teaching. Safety, security and nurture are fundamental human rights and needs. These rights and needs underpin students' capacity for learning and maximise potential for personal development ultimately enhancing their wellbeing and life opportunities.

CONSEQUENCES

The intended outcome of this policy is that children and young people in our schools feel safe and are safe.

This requires that all those who exercise power are aware of their obligation to act with integrity in the interests of others.

COMPLIANCE

Measures to ensure compliance with State and Commonwealth legislative requirements and church expectations will include:

Ongoing development, monitoring and review of:

- ~ School culture and ethos that promotes and encourages the reporting of potential harm and abuse
- ~ Reporting processes that empower students to report concerns
- ~ Student Protection processes including the reporting of harm and abuse of children and young people in our schools
- ~ Participation of all employees in regular mandatory professional learning
- ~ Ensuring the implementation, of strategies enacted to minimise risk of harm to students.

BUILDING CAPACITY

- ~ Building a culture in all schools to ensure that student protection is the responsibility of every person and is an integral aspect of student well being
- ~ Providing learning programs for students to develop awareness and skills that lead to their empowerment and an ability to identify risk, act protectively and seek assistance
- ~ Providing additional professional learning for principals, other relevant specialist staff and those who are designated as school Student Protection Contacts.

SPECIALIST SUPPORT/RESOURCES

Specialist personnel and support resources will be provided to assist schools.

LIAISON/PARTNERSHIPS

Liaising with external agencies and partnering within the Catholic Education community will occur as part of whole community student protection strategies: