

Volunteer Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

The contribution of volunteers is highly valued by Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS), enhancing the safe, productive and positive environment for our students. This Code of Conduct seeks to affirm the standards of behaviour that are expected of our volunteers, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our school communities.

2. Applicability

This Code of Conduct applies to all volunteers engaging in volunteer duties within TCS, including activities in schools and with the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO).

3. Principles

It is expected that volunteers abide by the following principles

- the safety and wellbeing of students is met at all times
- volunteers will engage in respectful and supportive relationships with students, families, staff members and other volunteers and visiting service providers
- the privacy and confidentiality of students, families, staff members and other volunteers and visiting service providers is respected at all times
- volunteers are committed to the educational, religious and social values of TCS
- volunteers will carry out all duties in a conscientious and ethical manner.

The safety and wellbeing of our students is everyone's responsibility.

4. Standards of behaviour

It is expected that volunteers will behave in a manner that is consistent with the principles outlined in this Code of Conduct. Volunteers must also

- participate in an induction program prior to commencing volunteer duties that will cover a number of areas, including student protection
- consider safety as a priority in all volunteer activities by following all school and/or TCSO safety procedures eg volunteers must be aware of evacuation processes within schools
- work only within the limitations of the volunteer role acknowledging the requirement to seek guidance from, and report any issues to the school and/or TCSO
- follow the instruction of staff members to ensure that correct procedures are implemented within schools/at TCSO
- avoid being alone with students, with particular acknowledgment that volunteers do not supervise students, as this is the responsibility of school staff members
- report all concerns to an appropriate staff member, such as the principal or a School Student Protection Contact eg a suspicion of illegal activity should be reported immediately
- exercise due care and diligence in the performance of volunteering work at the school by treating all students, staff, volunteers, visiting service providers and members of the school community with dignity and respect
- declare any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest to the principal, when in a school or relevant Executive Leadership Team member when at the TCSO.

5. Volunteers must not

- smoke, vape or use tobacco products whilst volunteering or on any TCS grounds
- possess, consume, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs whilst volunteering within schools or at TCSO
- supply tobacco products, alcohol or illegal drugs to students
- engage in any behaviour that may cause harm to a student
- engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards a student.

Examples of inappropriate behaviour include, however, are not limited to

- swearing at, or in front of, students
- pushing, shoving or grabbing a student
- using threats or instilling fear in a student
- using sarcasm towards or demeaning a student
- showing favouritism towards specific students, including giving gifts or showing special favours
- any and all forms of sexual behaviour, including sexual jokes or innuendo.

6. Communication

Volunteers must use appropriate communication skills with students in order to maintain a safe and supportive environment. Such communication includes

- listening to and supporting students
- being aware of physical boundaries and personal space, including your own body language
- being visible when interacting with students, ensuring the presence of other staff members or volunteers
- being clear, calm and positive in verbal interactions with students and families
- avoiding any discriminatory, offensive or inappropriate language when interacting with staff, students and families.

7. What should I do if I have a concern about a student or the behaviour of a staff member or other volunteer or visiting service provider?

Student Protection and Code of Conduct

All staff members within TCS are required to follow the TCS Student Protection Processes and Guidelines in relation to the reporting of abuse and harm to students, and inappropriate behaviour by staff members, volunteers or visiting service providers towards students. In addition, all staff members are required to act in accordance with the Toowoomba Catholic Schools [Code of Conduct](#).

If a volunteer has a concern regarding a student, or the behaviour of a staff member or other volunteer or visiting service provider, then this must be raised immediately with the school principal or School Student Protection Contact. If in doubt, a volunteer should always report the concern. More detailed information can be found in the [Student Protection – Information for Volunteers](#) document.

If the school principal, the School Student Protection Contact or any other staff member receives information from a volunteer about abuse, harm or inappropriate behaviour to a student, that person is required to follow the appropriate student protection process to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student.

8. Breaches of the Volunteer Code of Conduct

Any allegations of breaches of this Code of Conduct are treated seriously by TCS and will be investigated accordingly with due regard to the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice. Any allegation of abuse, harm or inappropriate behaviour toward students will be dealt with according to the [TCS Student Protection Processes and Guidelines](#). If necessary, the appropriate authorities will be notified.

9. How can I access more information about student safety and wellbeing?

Student protection is a high priority for TCS. Information regarding the policies and procedures that schools are required to follow can be found on the TCS website.

Alternatively, volunteers can seek further information from school administration or by contacting the TCSO Student Protection team on 0409 306 827.

10. How can I access information about declaring a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest?

Information regarding the policies and procedures for declaring a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest can be found on the TCS website.

Alternatively, volunteers can seek further information from school administration or by contacting the TCSO.

11. How can I access support?

Volunteers are highly regarded by TCS. To access any support or guidance, please do not hesitate to approach the administration teams at the school or the TCSO.

12. Declaration form

As a volunteer engaged with a Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic School or working within the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office, it is a requirement that you are aware of the student protection processes to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and your responsibility in declaring any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest.

Please read the student protection information for volunteers document and complete the volunteer declaration form.