



STUDENT PROTECTION

Our commitment

One of the most important concerns of any community should be the health, safety and wellbeing of its children and young people. Children and young people should grow up free of violence and exploitation. They should be able to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially in conditions of freedom and dignity.

The Catholic Church affirms that:

“The Catholic School sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. 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 New Millennium’

(Congregation for Catholic Education, 1999) n.9.

The Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Schools Student Protection Processes and Guidelines highlights our commitment to the protection of children and young people while upholding their right to a safe and secure environment.

Student protection is everybody's
responsibility

Our obligations

Our Catholic Schools have a number of specific child protection reporting responsibilities detailed in our Student Protection Processes and Guidelines.

Teachers are mandated to submit a report to Child Safety Services where they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse, and may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm. In order meet the safety needs of all of our students, we have broadened this reporting requirement to apply to all of our school staff members, and to all forms of abuse.

School staff members are mandated to report a reasonable suspicion that a student under 18 has been, or is likely to be, sexually abused by another person. These reports are made to the Principal or to the Director of the Governing Body, who must immediately forward the report to Police.

School staff members are required to report a reasonable suspicion that a staff member or volunteer has behaved inappropriately towards a student. These reports are made through the Principal to the Catholic Schools Office.

In addition, there are specific processes for schools to respond to other forms of harm to a student, including responding to self-harm or harm between students.

What is harm to a student?

Harm, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.

Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation. Harm can be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.



School Student Protection Contacts

All of our schools have a minimum of two School Student Protection Contacts. These are nominated staff members to whom students can raise concerns of abuse, harm or inappropriate behaviour. School Student Protection Contacts receive additional training and are clearly identified at each school.

All school staff receive regular training and information to enable them to respond to student protection concerns.

Keeping our students safe

Our schools work in a number of ways to maintain student safety, including:

- Implementing the *Student Protection Processes and Guidelines* reporting requirements
- Maintaining the knowledge of our staff members and volunteers around their student protection responsibilities
- Promoting clear standards of behaviour through our *Code of Conduct*
- Following the requirements of Blue Card Services in relation to the Blue Card System and implementing the *Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy*
- Education sessions for students around protective behaviours
- Parent information nights and information through the school newsletters

What do I do if I have a concern of harm or abuse?

As a parent or care-provider, you are able to report any concerns of harm or abuse directly to the Police, and to Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services if the concern is that there may not be a parent able and willing to protect the child. If you have any questions about school student protection processes or concerns around a situation at a school, please contact the School Principal in the first instance.