



**Diocese of Toowoomba
Catholic Schools**

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

**UNDER THE WORKING WITH
CHILDREN (RISK MANAGEMENT
AND SCREENING) ACT 2000**



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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 Department of Justice and Attorney General, Blue Card Services, which aims to create safe and supportive service environments for children and young people.

Under the provisions of the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, and the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011, regulated employers and businesses are required to develop and implement risk management strategies to identify and minimize the risk of harm to children and young people in their service environment. Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) is a regulated employer under the legislation, where our schools are part of our service environment. Therefore, a risk management strategy for system schools within TCS is required, and is to be reviewed every twelve months. All schools within TCS are required to follow and meet the requirements of this strategy.

What does the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy contain?

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

Commitment

1. A statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm, and
2. A code of conduct for interacting with children.

Capability

3. Written procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff and volunteers.

Concerns

4. Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
5. A plan for managing breaches of your risk management strategy, and
6. Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events.

Consistency

7. Policies and procedures for managing compliance with the blue card system, and
8. Strategies for communication and support.

What does the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy look like?

TCS meets these eight requirements through our policies, procedures and practices across a number of key areas, including for example:

- Our Student Protection Processes and Guidelines
- Our Code of Conduct
- Our Health, Safety & Environmental Management System

The following identifies how the requirements of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy are met through our policies, procedures and practices, with due regard for the individual needs of each school:

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

Our statement of commitment is contained within the *Catholic Schools Board 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 TCS is of paramount importance. The student protection policy guides the implementation of our student protection procedures, and we are committed to ensuring that all employees and volunteers follow these processes.

2. A Code of Conduct

The *Code of Conduct* applies to all students and employees within TCS, engaged on a relief, casual, fixed term or continuing basis, and is continually reviewed. The *Personal and Work Related Use of Social Media Guidelines* set out expectations regarding conduct on social media.

The conduct of volunteers is set out under the *Volunteer Code of Conduct*, and for visiting service providers in the *Code of Conduct for Visiting Service Providers*.

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 TCS are detailed in the Employment Procedures document to ensure a comprehensive and consistent practice is adopted when employing new staff. All applicants are required to complete a Suitability Declaration in relation to their suitability to work with children. Volunteers are also required to declare their suitability to work with children as a component of the Volunteer Student Protection Declaration Form. A resource is also available for Principals in recruiting and selecting appropriate Volunteers.

a. Teaching staff

All teachers employed within TCS 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 the Catholic Schools Office. Principals are in-serviced with the process and procedures should there be concerns about staff conduct. The *Student Protection Processes and Guidelines* outlines the process by which the Queensland College of Teachers is advised of any investigations involving a registered teacher.

b. Non-Teaching Staff and Volunteers:

All non-teaching staff and volunteers have been issued with a Blue Card by Blue Card Services, in accordance with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) 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 the TCSO 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 PSBA as proof of their application. In addition, all volunteers require a Blue Card prior to commencing any volunteer duties.

c. New Employees:

Staff Screening Procedures and Guidelines are employed in the selection and recruitment of all new employees in schools. This ensures that teaching staff have been registered with the Queensland College of Teachers and non-teaching staff have been issued with 'suitability notices' (Blue Card) by Blue Card Services. Reference checks for all applicants are also to be checked by the chair of the selection panel and written referee statements are required for all new teaching staff. These referee checks address specific student protection questions and the applicant's suitability to work with children.

d. Induction

All new staff members are provided with induction upon commencement of duties. For school staff, this process is undertaken through the guidance of the Principal and includes local information in the context of the school. For TCSO staff, an induction process guides the induction of new staff.

Specific *Student Protection Induction* and *Code of Conduct Induction* courses are available to staff members, the completion of which is a requirement for all new staff, including relief teachers.

Volunteers and Visiting Service Providers are also required to complete an induction process as part of their orientation to the school or Catholic Schools Office.

Information around these induction processes, including requirements for student teachers, is detailed in the document *Student Protection & Code of Conduct Induction Requirements*.

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

All schools are required to follow the Student Protection Processes and Guidelines in relation to reporting sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse of students, harm to students and inappropriate behaviour by employees. These procedures contain the mandatory reporting forms used to report abuse and harm to student to the relevant state authorities.

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 Processes and Guidelines, including in-services conducted by the TCSO.



A minimum of two School Student Protection Contacts (SSPCs) are nominated in each school as staff members to whom students can raise any concern. These SSPCs receive additional mandatory training on an annual basis and are a resource to school staff for support and guidance.

In addition, the Catholic Schools Office employs two Student Protection Officers, whose role is to provide support for schools in implementing student protection responsibilities and to create and maintain safe school environments for students.

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 the induction process.

Visiting Service Providers are required to follow the processes outlined in the Student Protection Information for Visiting Service Providers document, which is again provided to all visiting service providers as part of the 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 any employee within TCS 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 requirements of the *Code of Conduct* and *Student Protection Processes and Guidelines* are outlined in the respective documents.

For other elements of the risk management strategy, the process involved is detailed in the Process for Managing Breaches of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy document.

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

It is a requirement that a planning process is in place from a child protection perspective in relation to high risk activities and special events. Such processes are a key element of ensuring the safety and well-being of students. Where possible, there is alignment between high risk activity planning from both a Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) and child protection perspective.

The TCS HSE management system has online planning processes for excursions, camps and events that encompass child protection requirements.

Risk management processes for Curriculum activities, also capture key child protection requirements.

Where a school identifies a risk to students that does not form part of the HSE management system, the student protection planning process for high risk activities can be used to document the key risks and how these will be managed.

7. Policies and procedures for compliance with Chapter 8 of the Act (Blue Card Compliance)

As per section 3.2 Employee Blue Cards are monitored through the Blue Card Registers at the school level, and through the Blue Card Register maintained through the TCSO. Monitoring of Blue Card status is ongoing, with communication between the TCSO and system schools to ensure the appropriate renewal and application processes are followed. These processes are detailed in the Staff Screening Procedures and Guidelines.

This strategy will be reviewed annually and the date of the review will be recorded on the Annual Internal Audit schedule. The annual internal audit schedule is completed each year at the time of the Annual School Visit by the school's Senior Education Officer. Parents/guardians and staff will be notified of any changes to the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy as a result of the review.

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

TCS 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 Processes and Guidelines on the Catholic Education Office website
- Publishing this Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy on the Toowoomba Catholic Schools website
- Student protection information for students, including the implementation of the Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum
- The *Working Together* brochure for parents and caregivers
- The *Student Protection – The Blue Card System and Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy* brochure

Training and Professional Development for employees, including student protection, professional boundaries and the Code of Conduct. These resources and strategies are continually implemented and reviewed to ensure optimal communication and awareness.

TCS is committed to achieving high standards in our school communities, and values all feedback. In the event a complaint arises with regard to the application of our student protection processes, complaints can be made under the mechanisms detailed in the Procedures for Resolving Complaints.

Additional Requirements:

The Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO) has implemented further requirements through our Visibility Audit Policy and Procedure, to ensure the safety and visibility of students and staff within the school environment, and procedures around Weapons in Schools.

9. Visibility Audit Processes

TCS is committed to safe and accountable environments for students and employees, with *visibility* in the school environment as a high priority. Schools are required to follow visibility processes as detailed in the HSE Management System, including the visibility audit timeframes, to ensure that risks are identified and managed accordingly.

10. Weapons in Schools

The Executive Director of the TCSO has directed Principals to make it known in their school communities that, under NO circumstances are knives to be brought to school by students. The philosophy underpinning Catholic Education is one that promotes peace and safety in our school environments. Therefore, the bringing to school of any weapon is strictly prohibited.

This position is guided by the *Catholic Schools Board Health and Well-being Policy*, which states that Catholic Schools will promote a safe and supportive environment in which members of the school community may acquire skills and knowledge to make decisions which optimize the health and well-being of themselves and others.

Our *Weapons Guidelines* clarify how schools manage processes when there is a suspicion that a weapon has been brought onto school grounds.

What are the implementation responsibilities for schools?

In order to comply with the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, schools are required to follow and implement the requirements as detailed above, including:

- Ensuring that all relevant policies and procedures are followed, for example the Student Protection Processes and Guidelines
- Ensuring that all school staff receive training and guidance in applicable areas
- Ensuring that risk management plans are developed and implemented for all high risk activities
- The implementation checklist details the requirements that schools must meet at all stages of the school year.

Please note that the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy does not supersede or replace existing HSE risk management processes. The focus of this strategy is around managing risks as part of the Blue Card System – broader HSE strategies are still required in schools as a component of overarching risk management requirements.

Should you have any questions regarding the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, please contact the Student Protection Officers at the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office.

Remember:

Student protection is everybody's business



Vision statement

To offer life long Catholic education so that each person may know and come to be identified more fully with the living Spirit of Christ. This Spirit, working through the faith community, calls all involved in Catholic education to...

...act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

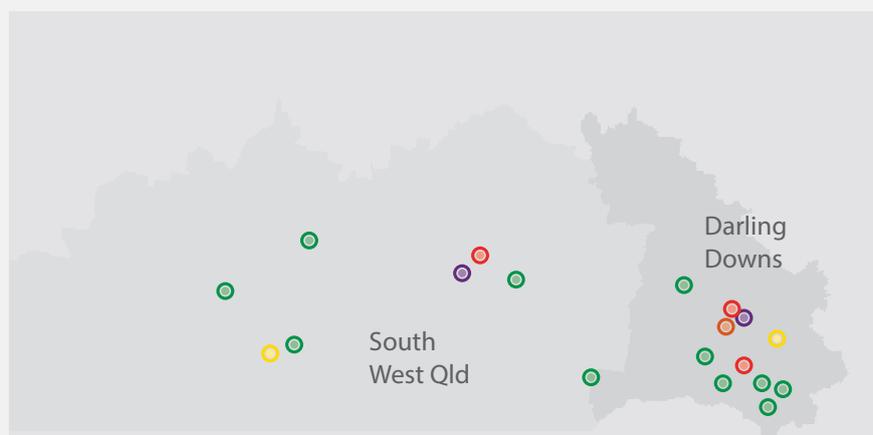
Toowoomba schools

- Holy Name Primary School
- Mater Dei Primary School
- Mary MacKillop Catholic School
- Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School
- Sacred Heart Primary School
- St Anthony's Primary School
- St Saviour's Primary School
- St Thomas More's Primary School
- St Joseph's College
- St Mary's College
- St Saviour's College
- Youth and Community Learning Centre

Regional schools

- Allora | St Patrick's Primary School
- Charleville | St Mary's Primary School
- Chinchilla | St Joseph's Primary School
- Clifton | St Francis de Sales Primary School
- Cunnamulla | Sacred Heart Parish School
- Dalby | Our Lady of the Southern Cross College
- Goondiwindi | St Mary's Primary School
- Inglewood | St Maria Goretti Primary School
- Millmerran | St Joseph's Primary School
- Mitchell | St Patrick's Primary School
- Oakey | St Monica's Primary School

- Pittsworth | St Stephen's Catholic School
- Quilpie | St Finbarr's Primary School
- Roma | St John's School
- St George | St Patrick's Primary School
- Stanthorpe | St Joseph's School
- Warwick | St Mary's Primary School
- Warwick | Assumption College
- Tara | St Joseph's Primary School



Jan 2017



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