



**Diocese of Toowoomba
Catholic Schools**

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

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



Belief in a better world



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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 2020](#), 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 [Work Health and Safety 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 [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 Policy](#) 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. Confirmation of registration and qualifications is undertaken at employment. 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 who provide services to children, 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. Details are monitored via the online Blue Card Portal. The school maintains a register of all volunteers' Blue Card details, including number and renewal date and is responsible for updating the online Blue Card portal. Details of non-teaching employees' Blue Cards are also kept at the TCSO in each relevant individual's personnel file. All non-teaching employees who provide services to children and volunteers require a Blue Card prior to commencing duties.

c. New Employees:

[Screening Procedures](#) 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.

The completion of mandatory Student Protection and Code of Conduct training courses is required of all staff and relief teachers, and includes induction information for new staff or those returning to roles after a period of absence.

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 about staff, visiting service provider and volunteer training can be found in the [Mandatory training procedure](#).

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](#), the [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulation 2017](#) and the [Child Protection Act 1999](#).

All staff receive training and professional development in relation to the [Student Protection Processes and Guidelines](#).



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 a Student Protection Officer, 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, breaches are dealt with under the TCS [Investigation Guideline](#) and [Disciplinary Action Procedure](#).

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 Work Health and Safety (WHS) and child protection perspective.

The TCS [WHS 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 [WHS 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 (Working with children checks and authorities)

Employee Blue Cards are monitored via the online Blue Card Portal. 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 Screening Procedures.

This strategy will be reviewed annually and the date of the review will be recorded on the Annual Internal Audit schedule.

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 publicly available [Student Protection Processes and Guidelines](#) on the Toowoomba Catholic Schools 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 [Resolution of complaints procedure](#). This document is available at www.twb.catholic.edu.au.

Additional Requirements

The Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO) has implemented further requirements through our [Visibility 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 procedure](#) as detailed in the [WHS Management System](#), including the visibility audit timeframes, to ensure that risks are identified and managed accordingly.

10. Weapons in Schools

The philosophy underpinning Catholic Education is one that promotes peace and safety in our school environments. Therefore, the bringing to school of any weapon, including knives, is strictly prohibited.

Each school's Student Behaviour Support Plan details how concerns involving weapons or other dangerous items are managed.

11. 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 WHS risk management processes. The focus of this strategy is around managing risks as part of the Blue Card System – broader WHS 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 Officer at the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office.

Remember

Student Protection is everybody's business.





Diocese of Toowoomba **Catholic Schools**

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