

The Queensland child protection system is changing to better support families to keep their children safe by strengthening prevention and early intervention services. Vulnerable families and children now have access to a greater range of high-quality services at the right time to help them to stay safe and stay together.

Following the report and 121 recommendations made by the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, the Queensland Government has committed to building a new child and family support system over the next 10 years that will have a greater focus on supporting families to provide a safe and secure home for their children.

To support these changes, amendments have been made to child protection and education sector legislation. Because of regular contact with students and families, school staff play a vital role in:

- identifying and responding to suspected child abuse and neglect; and
- helping families to access support services.

Anglican Schools have a responsibility placed upon them by Gospel values. They are bound by Christian, legal and professional obligations to provide spiritual and educational opportunities within a safe and protective environment; and when matters of concern arise, having in place policy and procedures for reporting inappropriate behaviour, harm or sexual abuse.

Creating a safe environment for our school students is a responsibility that the Anglican Church takes very seriously. Student Protection policy and procedures are in place to support the implementation of legislative requirements.

Your school has delegated the role of Student Protection Officer to a number of teaching and non-teaching staff.

Current legislation requires that all school employees will report suspicions of sexual abuse and likely sexual abuse of a student by any person to a police officer.

From the 19 January 2015, legislative changes will require all teachers, doctors, registered nurses and police officers to report to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services suspicions of significant harm caused to a child by

physical or sexual abuse if there may not be a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

Other forms of significant harm (psychological, emotional and neglect) will also be reported by way of policy directive to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services if there may not be a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

As part of the *Stronger Families* reform program, community-based intake and referral services, known as Family and Child Connect (FaCC) and Intensive Family Support (IFS) are being established in a three stage roll-out across Queensland during 2015 – 2016.



Changes to legislation require schools to consider if a referral to an appropriate service provider can offer help and support to the child or the child's family to stop the child becoming a child in need of protection.

These changes allow for school staff to share information about concerns for a child's physical, psychological and emotional well-being with other staff and with appropriate community-based support services e.g. FaCC when required with or without consent.

FaCC services provides information and advice to people seeking assistance for children and families where there are concerns about their wellbeing. Families can initiate contact with a FaCC for support if required.

You will receive further information from your school principal advising details of your school's Student Protection Officers and reporting processes.

For further information: Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/protecting-children/resources-and-publications>