



# Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy

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<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about – (a) how the college will respond to harm, or allegations of harm, to students under 18 years; and (b) the appropriate conduct of the college’s staff and students to comply with accreditation requirements.	
<b>Scope:</b>	Students and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements at Townsville Christian College.	
<b>Supersedes:</b>	Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2026	
<b>Status:</b>	Approved	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Townsville Christian College Limited Board of Directors	
<b>References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulations 2020 (Qld)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Criminal Code Act 1899</u></a> (sections 229BB and 229BC)</li> <li>• Townsville Christian College Complaints Handling Policy</li> <li>• Townsville Christian College Complaints Handling Procedure</li> <li>• Townsville Christian College Child Risk Management Strategy</li> <li>• Townsville Christian College Work Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• Townsville Christian College Report of Suspected Harm Form</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	Annually	<b>Next Review Date:</b> March 2027
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Townsville Christian College Limited Board of Directors	

Version control and document history

Date	Summary of modifications made	Version
24 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor wording and reference update</li> </ul>	24 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reference, hyperlink and minor wording update</li> </ul>	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2026
4 <sup>th</sup> December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy name update from Child Protection Policy</li> <li>Minor wording and reference changes</li> </ul>	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
4 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor wording changes</li> </ul>	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
10 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of names for reporting of inappropriate behaviour</li> </ul>	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
12 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor update to Chief Executive Department and Failure to Report</li> </ul>	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
16 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated using the ISQ template November 2022 including Criminal Code Act additions</li> </ul>	16 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
1 <sup>st</sup> December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated using the ISQ template July 2021</li> </ul>	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2021
11 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addition of policy to be read and trained in conjunction with the Child Risk Management Strategy</li> </ul>	13 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated using the ISQ template September 2020</li> <li>Minor wording changes</li> </ul>	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2021

## Definitions

**Harm**, as per s 9 of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.

1. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
2. Harm can be caused by—
  - a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
  - b) sexual abuse or exploitation.
3. Harm can be caused by—
  - a) a single act, omission or circumstance; or
  - b) a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

**Child in need of protection**, as per s10 of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, is a child who—

- a) has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and
- b) does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

**Sexual abuse**, as per s364 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, in relation to a relevant person, includes sexual behaviour involving the relevant person and another person in the following circumstances—

- (a) the other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person;
- (b) the relevant person has less power than the other person;
- (c) there is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.

**Staff**, in this policy, refers to full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.

## Health and Safety

The college has written processes in place to enable it to comply with the requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (Qld).

## Responding to Reports of Harm

When the college receives any information alleging 'harm'<sup>1</sup> to a student (other than harm arising from physical or sexual abuse) it will deal with the situation compassionately and fairly so as to minimise any likely harm to the extent it reasonably can. This is set out in the college's Child Risk Management Strategy. Information relating to physical or sexual abuse is handled under obligations to report set out in this policy<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(7)*: the definition of 'harm' for this regulation is the same as in section 9 of the *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*

<sup>2</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(1)*

## Conduct of Staff and Students

All staff, contractors and volunteers must ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with students reflect proper standards of care for students. Staff, contractors and volunteers must not cause harm to students<sup>3</sup>.

## Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour

If a student considers the behaviour of a staff member to be inappropriate, the student should report the behaviour to one of our Child Protection Officers: -

- Principal; or
- Primary College Safe Person; or
- Secondary College Safe person; or
- Head of Student Services; or
- Chaplain<sup>4</sup>.

## Dealing with Report of Inappropriate Behaviour

A staff member who receives a report of inappropriate behaviour must report it to the principal. Where the principal is the subject of the report of inappropriate behaviour, the staff member must inform a member of the college's governing body<sup>5</sup>. Reports will be dealt with under the college's Complaints Handling Policy.

## Reporting Sexual Abuse<sup>6</sup>

Section 366 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* states that if a staff member becomes aware, or reasonably suspects, in the course of their employment at the college, that any of the following has been sexually abused by another person:

- a) a student under 18 years attending the college;
- b) a kindergarten aged child registered in a kindergarten learning program at the college;
- c) a person with a disability who:
  - i. under section 420(2) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is being provided with special education at the college; and
  - ii. is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the college.

then the staff member must give a written report about the abuse or suspected abuse to the principal or to a director of the college's governing body immediately.

The college's principal or the director must immediately give a copy of the report to a police officer.

If the first person who becomes aware or reasonably suspects sexual abuse is the college's principal, the principal must give a written report about the abuse, or suspected abuse to a police officer immediately and must also give a copy of the report to a director of the college's governing body immediately.

A report under this section must include the following particulars:

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<sup>3</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(1)*

<sup>4</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(2) and s.16(3)*

<sup>5</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(2)*

<sup>6</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(2)(c)*

- a) the name of the person giving the report (the *first person*);
- b) the student's name and sex;
- c) details of the basis for the first person becoming aware, or reasonably suspecting, that the student has been sexually abused by another person;
- d) details of the abuse or suspected abuse;
- e) any of the following information of which the first person is aware:
  - i. the student's age;
  - ii. the identity of the person who has abused, or is suspected to have abused, the student;
  - iii. the identity of anyone else who may have information about the abuse or suspected abuse<sup>7</sup>.

### **Reporting Likely Sexual Abuse <sup>8</sup>**

Section 366A of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* states that if a staff member reasonably suspects in the course of their employment at the college, that any of the following is likely to be sexually abused by another person:

- a) a student under 18 years attending the college;
- b) a kindergarten aged child registered in a kindergarten learning program at the college;
- c) a person with a disability who:
  - i. under section 420(2) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is being provided with special education at the college; and
  - ii. is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the college.

then the staff member must give a written report about the suspicion to the principal or to a director of the college's governing body immediately.

The college's principal or the director must immediately give a copy of the report to a police officer.

If the first person who reasonably suspects likely sexual abuse is the college's principal, the principal must give a written report about the suspicion to a police officer immediately and must also give a copy of the report to a director of the college's governing body immediately.

A report under this section must include the following particulars:

- a) the name of the person giving the report (the *first person*);
- b) the student's name and sex;
- c) details of the basis for the first person reasonably suspecting that the student is likely to be sexually abused by another person;
- d) any of the following information of which the first person is aware:
  - i. the student's age;
  - ii. the identity of the person who is suspected to be likely to sexually abuse the student;
  - iii. the identity of anyone else who may have information about suspected likelihood of abuse<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.68*

<sup>8</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(2)(c)*

<sup>9</sup> *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.69*

## **Reporting Physical and Sexual Abuse** <sup>10</sup>

Under Section 13E (3) of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, if a doctor, a registered nurse, a teacher or an early childhood education and care professional forms a 'reportable suspicion' about a child "in the course of their engagement in their profession", they must make a written report.

A **reportable suspicion** about a child is a reasonable suspicion that the child:

- a) has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and
- b) may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

The doctor, nurse, teacher or early childhood education and care professional must give a written report to the Chief Executive of the department responsible for Child Safety. The doctor, nurse, teacher or early childhood education and care professional must also give a copy of the report to the principal or to a director of the college's governing body immediately.

A report under this section must include the following particulars:

- a) the basis on which the person has formed the reportable suspicion<sup>11</sup>;
- b) the child's name, age and sex descriptor;
- c) details of how to contact the child;
- d) details of the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates;
- e) particulars of the identity of the person suspected of causing the child to have suffered, suffer, or be at risk of suffering, the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates;
- f) particulars of the identity of any other person who may be able to give information about the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates<sup>12</sup>.

North Queensland Child Safety Regional Intake Service – Phone: 1300 706 147 (business hours)

Child Safety After Hours Service Centre – Phone: 1800 177 135 (Queenslanders only)

## **Responsibilities under Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld)**

The *Criminal Code Act 1899* includes two offences that pertain to the failure to report a child sexual offence and the failure to protect a child against a child sexual offence. A child sexual offence is an offence of a sexual nature by an adult against a child under 16 years or a person with an impairment of the mind.

### **Failure to Report**<sup>13</sup>

Under section 229BC of the Code, failure to make a report, as soon as reasonably practicable after the belief is, or ought reasonably to have been formed without a reasonable excuse, is a criminal offence. This offence applies to all adults inclusive of students 18 years or older, as well as parents/guardians and volunteers at the college. A reasonable excuse not to make a report under the *Criminal Code Act 1899* includes that a report has already been made under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (reporting sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse) and the *Child Protection Act 1999* (reporting significant harm or risk of significant harm) as per this policy.

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<sup>10</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16 (2)(d)*

<sup>11</sup> *Child Protection Act 1999 s.13G (2)(a)*

<sup>12</sup> See *Child Protection Regulation 2023 (Qld) s.4 "Information to be included in reports"*

<sup>13</sup> *Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld) s.229BC*

## **Failure to Protect<sup>14</sup>**

Under section 229BB of the Code, all adults in positions of power or responsibility within institutions to reduce or remove the risk of child sexual offences being committed must take reasonable steps to protect children in their care from a child sexual offence. A failure to protect is an offence.

## **Awareness**

The college will inform staff, students and parents of its processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students in staff inductions, staff meetings, enrolment interviews, classroom signage (posters) and are available on request from the Administration Centre. The policy is also available on our website, WHS Management System and administration drive.<sup>15</sup>

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Child Risk Management Strategy.

## **Accessibility of Processes**

Processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students will be available on request from the administration office<sup>16</sup>.

## **Training**

The college will train its staff in processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students on their induction and will refresh training annually<sup>17</sup> or on review.

This policy must be trained in conjunction with the Child Risk Management Strategy.

## **Implementing the Processes**

The college will ensure it is implementing processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students by auditing compliance with the processes annually<sup>18</sup>.

## **Complaints Procedure**

Suggestions of non-compliance with the college's processes may be submitted as complaints under the Townsville Christian College Complaints Handling Procedure<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> *Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld) s.229BB*

<sup>15</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(a)*

<sup>16</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(b)*

<sup>17</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(c)*

<sup>18</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(d)*

<sup>19</sup> *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(5) and s.16(6)*