



CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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 Agency, 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 Check (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*, it is a requirement that regulated employers and businesses develop and implement risk management strategies to identify and minimise the risk of harm to children and young people in their service environment. The Diocese of Townsville, Catholic Education (hereafter referred to as Townsville Catholic Education) is a regulated employer under the legislation, where our schools are part of the service environment.

What are the requirements of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy?

To meet our legislative obligations, the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy includes eight minimum requirements under key areas of service delivery.

These are:

Commitment

1. A statement of commitment to the principles of safe and supportive service environments;
2. A code of conduct;

Capability

3. Recruitment, selection, training and management strategies that encourage best practice and enhance the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;

Concerns

4. Policies and procedures for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm;
5. Policies and procedures for the occasions where there might be a breach of the organisation's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy;
6. A planning process for high risk activities and special events;

Consistency

7. Policies and procedures for compliance with Part 6 of the Commission's Act (which regulates the blue card system); and
8. Strategies for communication and support for all stakeholders including children and young people.

In addition to the mandatory requirements, Townsville Catholic Education (TCE) has implemented further elements to ensure the safety of students and staff within the school environment, including procedures around Weapons in Schools and Visibility Requirements.

What does the Diocese of Townsville Catholic Schools Child and Youth Risk Management Strategies look like?

Catholic Education meets these eight requirements through policies, procedures and practices across a number of key areas, including:

- Our *Student Protection Policy*,
- Our *Student Protection Processes and Guidelines*,
- Our *Code of Conduct*, and
- Our *Workplace Health & Safety Policy*.

Requirements

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

Townsville Catholic Education is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students. Our statement of commitment is contained within the Catholic Education *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 and likeness 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 wellbeing of students within the Diocese is of paramount importance. The *Student Protection Policy* guides the implementation of our student protection procedures, and we are committed to ensuring that all staff members, other employees and volunteers follow these processes.

Our Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy has been developed in compliance with our obligations under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011* to promote and protect children and young people.

2. A Code of Conduct

Townsville Catholic Education has developed codes of conduct and standards for behaviour for employees, students, volunteers (including parents) and other personnel. The *Code of Conduct for Employees* applies to all staff members and contractors, within Catholic Education, engaged on a casual, fixed term or continuing basis, either pursuant to a contract of employment or appointed to a role at the school pursuant to an agreement with a religious order.

2.1 Physical Contact with children and young people.

Staff may only make physical contact with a student if the physical contact is appropriate and reasonable for the behaviour, teaching, support, management or care of the student. The contact must also be appropriate given the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the student. Where physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the learning or teaching experience, staff must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable for the duty to be performed.

2.2 Dress Standards for Staff

The *Dress Standard Staff Guideline* outlines the broad requirements for staff dress standards that are expected to be applied at schools and Townsville Catholic Education through locally developed dress standard policies. Staff members will wear a standard of dress which reflects their professional role and their responsibilities to:

- students as role models,
- their professional public position/role,
- their catholic school community,
- considerations of modesty, and
- the role they perform in the school community taking into consideration work health and safety standards.

2.3 Managing injuries or illnesses

The *Medication administration (routine and emergency) and management of health conditions* applies to situations where a

parent/caregiver requests a school in writing to administer prescribed medication as directed by a medical practitioner and/or assist with managing a specific health condition as well as where a particular emergency first aid response is needed. The *First Aid for Schools* procedure also provides details to enable provision and maintenance of adequate first aid facilities and personnel for the effective emergency management of injured or ill employees, students and others at schools and TCE workplaces.

2.4 Transport of children and young people

The *Transporting of Students: Use of Teachers' & Parents' Cars Guideline* provides procedural guidance to schools in relation to the transporting of children as defined below:

1. The Principal/school authority do not ask teachers or parents to transport students. Such a request is not explicit and implicit.
2. Teachers or parents who volunteer to transport students are advised of the legal issues.
3. No payments are accepted by teachers or parents for transporting students.
4. Some school policies make it very clear that under no circumstances are school staff to transport students in respect of any school or school related activity.
5. Additional clarification is sought from the guideline, Parents and Principal when this is being considered as an option for transport.

2.5 Social Media Policy

The Staff: *Acceptable use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) including social media policy* provides the following guiding principles for staff:

1. Online behaviour should at all times demonstrate a Christ-centred respect for the dignity of each person.
2. Child Protection protocols and policies must always be observed.

3. Employees and student online interaction must occur only in an educational context.
4. Employees must behave in an ethical manner when interacting and using online community sites and resources.
5. An employee's personal social networking online must be congruent with the professional standards expected of a Catholic Education employee.

Where any doubts exist, staff should seek clear direction from their Principal or their line manager.

2.6 Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries define effective and appropriate interaction between staff and students. Boundaries exist to protect both the staff member and the student.

Boundary violations are responded to under the processes defined in the *Student Protection Processes and Guidelines* and managed in alignment with the *Managing Employee Misconduct and Investigation* procedures. In some situations, this will include a report to the Queensland Police Service and/or a notification to the relevant professional or regulatory body (i.e. Queensland College of Teachers).

2.7 Organisational Standards

In addition to the *Code of Conduct*, Townsville Catholic Education has in place the following relevant policies:

- i. *Workplace Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Policy,*
- ii. *Equal Opportunity Policy,*
- iii. *Student Protection Policy.*

2.8 Physical Restraint of a student

All staff have a clear understanding of how to respond to emergency situations or critical incidents involving student behaviour. Staff may make legitimate use of physical intervention if all non-physical interventions have been exhausted and a student is:

- Physically assaulting another student or staff member; or
- Posing an immediate danger to him/herself or to others; and the
- Action is reasonable given the circumstance.

This consistency ensures that appropriate actions are taken to ensure that both students and staff are kept safe, compliant with both lawful obligations and the context of pastoral care in Catholic school communities.

2.9 Smoking

Under the provisions of the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act*, Townsville Catholic Education has a total ban on smoking on all Catholic school premises. The ban extends to a five metre buffer around the perimeter of schools, including all structures such as bus shelters. The five metre buffer does not include residential and business premises that share a boundary with the school.

The ban applies to all persons entering Catholic Education premises including all employees, school students, family members, visitors, contractors and employees of any other organization. The ban applies at all times during and after school hours, on weekends and during school holidays.

It applies to all smoking products including electronic cigarettes. Smoking is also not permitted in any Townsville Catholic Education workplace or vehicle. In addition to complying with the law, the ban is consistent with our commitment to provide employees, students and all those visiting Catholic Education premises with a healthier physical environment.

2.10 Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol consumption is prohibited in schools and on school-related activities such as camps or excursions. The *Alcohol – use in schools and on school-related activities Policy* provides the following guidance:

- The consumption of alcohol by school staff and parents/volunteers who are acting in an official capacity as student supervisors is not permitted during

school hours, while students are present on site, or while staff/parents and students are engaged in off-campus, school-related activities.

2.11 General Safety

2.11.1 Sunsmart Safety

All schools have a *Sunsmart Safety Policy*. Catholic schools accept that they have a responsibility to their students and have put into action all necessary procedures to afford students with protection through Sun Smart/Sun Safety practices.

2.11.2 School Student Supervision

All Catholic schools have school supervision plans as part of a commitment to maintain a safe and caring learning environment for students' consistent with the values and teaching of a Catholic school.

Supervision plans provide:

- formal guidelines and specification;
- a clear assessment of risks; and
- define situations which give rise to a school-student relationship.

Assistance is provided to schools via the TCE *School Student Supervision guideline* document.

2.11.3 School Camps and Excursions Guidelines

All Catholic schools adhere to the *Excursions and School Camps Guidelines* document and duty of care obligations including legal compliance in the planning, approval and management of school camps and excursions.

2.12 Student Behaviour

2.12.1 Student Positive Behaviour Support Plan

All schools will develop a Student Positive Behaviour Support Plan that reflects the shared values, expectations and ethos of the Catholic school communities. This will occur in consultation with all groups in the school community and implement a plan for a whole

school approach to support student behaviour in the school environment.

The Student Behaviour Support Plan must include a student code of behaviour, guided by the *Student Positive Behaviour Support Policy* and *Guiding Principles for school-based student behaviour/relationships support*.

This will be supported by the Student Behaviour Support System (SBSS) which supports schools to track the behaviour of students and uses data based decision making to proactively support student behaviour.

2.13 Parents and Volunteers

2.13.1 Code of Conduct for Parents & Volunteers

The *Code of Conduct for Parents and Volunteers* applies to all parents, volunteers and visitors who interact within our schools and Catholic Education Services in the Diocese of Townsville. It also applies to all parents, volunteers and visitors who are present at school and school sponsored meetings/functions within and outside of school hours. As parents, volunteers and visitors there is an expectation of support for the Vision and Mission of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Townsville.

The Volunteers – schools and CES guideline also provides advice to schools in managing volunteer programs, including guidance on induction and training content.

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 Townsville Catholic Education ensure a comprehensive practice is adopted when employing staff.

Employment screening procedures include:

- i. Obtaining copies of mandatory accreditation documentation;
- ii. Referee checks (specific student protection questions and suitability to work with children);
- iii. Structured interviews;
- iv. Signed declarations:

- Acceptance of the *Statement of Principles* and the *Code of Conduct*
- Acceptance of the *Employment Collection Notice*

3.0 Staff

3.1 Teaching Staff

All teachers employed in the Diocese of Townsville 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 Townsville Catholic Education. Principals are in-serviced with the process and procedures should there be concerns about staff conduct. The Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigations Unit (also known as Professional Standards) also adhere to notification processes required by the *Education (QLD College of Teacher) Act 2005*, where allegations or complaints occur resulting in an investigation of harm or possible harm to a student.

3.2 Non-Teaching Staff

All non-teaching staff 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 Catholic Education Services within Human Resources Administration 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 commission as proof of their application.

3.3 Volunteers

All volunteers are required to possess a current blue card prior to the commencement of work, unless they are parents of a child attending the school or 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 Catholic Education Services on a register and within the staff members' relevant personnel file.

3.4 Induction

All new staff members are provided with an induction upon commencement of duties. For school staff, this process is undertaken through the guidance of the Principal or delegate via Employee Induction – Guidelines for Principals and the Townsville Catholic Education Induction and Compliance online modules.

For Catholic education staff a structured framework guides the induction of staff.

It is a requirement that all staff members complete mandatory Student Protection Online Training as soon as practical after being appointed to a teaching or non-teaching position. This is available to all staff once their employment has been confirmed.

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:

- Suspected/likely sexual abuse of a student to Queensland Police Service;
- Reportable suspicion to Child Safety Services (physical or sexual abuse);
- Reasonable suspicion to Child Safety (neglect or emotional abuse); and
- Inappropriate behaviour by a staff member, other employee or volunteer towards a student/s.

These procedures meet the legislative requirements of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006*, *Child Protection Act 1999*, *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017* and the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017*.

All staff receive regular training and professional development in relation to the student protection policy and procedure, including:

- Online Mandatory Student Protection Induction Training; and
- Annual staff in-service facilitated by individual school sites.

5. Policies and procedure 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 a staff member within Catholic Education that fails to comply with any part of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy. Allegations of breaches of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy are managed under the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice, guided by the organisation *Grievance Procedure*.

Breaches of the Strategy are managed under Employee Misconduct processes in alignment with the management of breaches of the *Code of Conduct and Student Protection Processes and Procedures* documents.

6. Policies and procedure for compliance with Chapter 8 (Blue Card Compliance)

As per the requirements with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*, employee blue cards are monitored through the Blue Card Registers at school level, and through Townsville Catholic Education. Monitoring of blue card status is ongoing, with communication between Townsville Catholic Education and Diocesan schools to ensure the appropriate renewal and application processes are followed. Further information regarding blue card requirements and processes can be obtained from the Queensland Government Blue Card Services website.

6.1 Identification of who requires a blue card or exemption card

It is important to recognise that blue card screening requirements do not apply to every environment a child may be present. The blue card system is structured so that organisations providing services which are essential to children's development and wellbeing, such as child care, education, sport, and cultural activities are captured. Further information in relation to who requires a blue card be sourced from the Blue Card Service website.

6.2 Contact Person

There is at least one designated contact person per school who is responsible for:

- i. Managing blue cards and exemption cards;
- ii. Listed as the contact person in the Blue Card application form;
- iii. The person who Blue Card Services will send notifications to: and
- iv. The only person Blue Card Services can discuss a staff member or volunteers blue card status with unless additional authorization is provided.

6.3 Managing blue card applications

All applicants are informed that by signing the application form they are consenting to the screening process.

The school ensures that the authorised contact person has certified and sighted documents to confirm an employee's identity as prescribed under the Act. Applications are carefully checked to ensure all sections have been appropriately completed and are aware that while paid employees can commence employment after an application form has been submitted, volunteers and trainee students must not commence regulated employment until they hold a valid blue card and positive notice.

We explicitly ward potential staff (paid employees, volunteers and students) that it is

an offence for a 'disqualified person' to sign a blue card application form or a renewal form.

6.4 Managing existing blue card holders

If a person joins a school and already has a blue card, there are processes in place to:

- i. Verify the validity of the blue card; AND
- ii. If the person holds a paid blue card, lodge an *Authorisation to confirm a valid card/application form* with Blue Card Services. This will ensure that our school receives important notifications in relation to the blue card holder, including that the card has been cancelled or suspended.
- iii. If the person holds a volunteer blue card and will be undertaking paid employment in our school, a *Volunteer to paid transfer form* needs to be lodged with Blue Card Services. This will transfer their card from volunteer to paid status and will ensure that we receive important notifications in relation to the blue card holder, including that the card has been cancelled or suspended.
- iv. If a person ceases working with us we lodge an *Applicant/cardholder no longer with organization (for organisations) form* to advise Blue Card Services immediately.

6.5 Managing changes in Police Information

Staff and volunteers understand their obligation to advise the school if there is a change in their police information. Staff and volunteers are not required to disclose the specific nature of the change, only that a change has occurred, and we have processes in place to ensure that a *Change of Police Information notification* is submitted to Blue Card Services.

6.6 Managing high-risk individuals

Processes are in place for managing notifications from Blue Card Services in relation to high-risk individuals, for example:

- An employee receives a negative notice or is a known disqualified person, or
- An employee has their blue card or exemption card cancelled or suspended, or
- An employee has their blue card application withdrawn, or
- A notification in relation to a serious change in criminal history is received from Blue Care Services.

6.7 Employee Register

As part of our Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, our schools have established and maintain an employee register which is a written record of paid employees and volunteers involved in child-related activities within the school environment. It includes:

- Whether the person requires a blue card/exemption card (if not, why not – e.g. an exemption applies under the Act).
- The type of application/blue card (e.g. paid or volunteer) or exemption card.
- Whether the person applied and/or the date of issue of the positive notice and blue card/exemption card.
- The blue card/exemption card number and the expiry date of the blue card; and
- The renewal date.

Any employees or volunteers that enter a Catholic school with a blue card, will have their card verified with Blue Card Services.

If an employee has had a card cancelled or suspended or receives a negative notice after a change in Police information we ensure the employee does not continue to undertake child-related work within our organisation (work that is regulated by the Act).

6.8 General

6.8.1 Additional Records

All Catholic schools and Townsville Catholic Education ensure that appropriate and confidential records in relation to the following are maintained:

- Whether a negative notice has been issued
- Any change in status to a blue card/exemption card or exemption card (such as a change in police information or the cancellation of suspension of a blue card/exemption card)
- Where there is a change in police information, the date Blue Card Services was informed of the change.
- Where an employee leaves the school the date Blue Card Services was informed, and
- Any change to the employee's/volunteer's personal information, including the date they informed Blue Card Services.

6.8.2 Annual Review of CYRMS

An annual review of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy is also undertaken by Townsville Catholic Education including the consideration of:

- Whether policies and/or procedures were followed in responding to child protection matters;
- Whether any incidents occurred relating to children and young people;
- The actual process used to manage incidents;
- A review after an incident where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm or a breach of the strategy has occurred;
- The effectiveness of the policies and procedures in preventing or minimising harm to children and young people and;
- The content and frequency of training in relation to the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy.

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

optimal communication and awareness.

6.1 Curriculum Activity

Activities are planned using the Diocesan Learning Profile. Risk assessments for these activities are conducted utilizing the Workplace Health and Safety risk assessment. The Principal is responsible for the completion and implementation of these risk assessments. All Principals are mandated to complete Curriculum Activity Risk Assessments for high risk activities, and are encouraged to require them to be completed for medium risk activities.

6.2 Overseas Excursions

All Catholic schools adhere to defined guidelines and duty of care obligations including legal compliance in the planning, approval and management of overseas excursions. This acknowledges the additional responsibility and level of care that must be undertaken when students are taken by their school on overseas excursions and activities.

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

The Diocese of Townsville utilises many mechanisms to ensure awareness of staff, students and families around Student Protection Reporting Processes and the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, including:

- School Safe Person posters within schools;
- Provision of a publicly available student protection policy and processes document on the Townsville Catholic Education website and individual schools' websites;
- Training and professional development for staff, including but not limited to Student Protection Mandatory Induction, Student Protection Annual Training, and Code of Conduct. These resources and strategies are continually implemented and reviewed to ensure

8. Visibility Requirements

Catholic Education is committed to safe and accountable environments for staff and students, with visibility in the school environment a high priority. Schools are required to ensure that visibility risks are identified and managed accordingly, these include but are not limited to:

- Ensuring all doors have glass inserts or there is visibility provided via another means (i.e. Windows);
- Identifying areas in playgrounds where there is lack of visibility into all classrooms.

9. Weapons in Schools

The Weapons in Schools Policy details that under NO circumstances are weapons (including knives) to be brought to school by students. Students who fail to adhere to this will be dealt with under the individual schools' guidelines for *Student Management – Detention, Suspension and Exclusion* and in accordance with any legislated or organisational requirements within the *Student Protection Processes and Guidelines* document.

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 within this document with the assistance of Townsville Catholic Education, including:

- Ensuring that all relevant policies and procedures are followed, for example and 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.

Should you have any questions regarding the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, please contact:

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