



De La Salle Brothers Australia New Zealand Pakistan and Papua New Guinea (ANZPPNG) Disclosure of Abuse or Harm Policy

Issue date: 13 June 2014
Review date: 23 November 2016

1.0 Introduction

Children, young people and vulnerable adults have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured and safeguarded by all. As such we are committed to ensuring that all children and young people are afforded the highest levels of care and protection.

The De La Salle Institute ensures that all their works fully comply with all relevant Government Legislation and requirements of the Catholic Church. In the absence of either having procedures established, this policy forms the practice of the Institute.

2.0 Policy Purpose

This policy informs procedures by which the management of and response to allegations of serious breaches of professional behaviour are undertaken.

The policy:

- informs how those making allegations and those against whom allegations are made are supported and dealt with during the conduct of an investigation;
- provides a framework for the conduct of investigation including roles and responsibilities; and
- Informs and guides internal and external reporting.

This policy applies to all persons working in the mission across the District.

3.0 Receiving Complaints

All complaints or matters of concern will be dealt with compassionately and promptly. It is recognised that complaints may come via third parties, including legal representatives, Child Safety Officers, or the Police.

Complaints or matters of concern should be directed to the Professional Standards Officer in the first instance. The Professional Standards Officer is responsible for advising the Brother Visitor and for reporting to the relevant authorities, including the Police if it is suspected that the matter relates to any possible criminal behaviour.

The Professional Standards Office takes responsibility for maintaining a register of Statutory Bodies that relate to the works of the District.

4.0 Responding

In matters that are directly reported by the complainant key details will be obtained i.e. name, address, date of birth, contact details, particulars of the allegation and who it is against.

As much as reasonably possible the matters will be treated as confidential, respecting the rights of all individuals involved for privacy.

If the complaint relates to sexual abuse, other criminal behaviour and/or child protection issues individuals are to be informed that the matter will be referred to the relevant authorities including where possible, the employer, and the police or any other statutory child protection authority. Where there is an existing Catholic Church protocol in place i.e. State Office for Professional Standards of the Catholic Church in Australia then those protocols must be adhered to.

External specialist support i.e. counselling is to be made available to individuals, and in the case of children, the child and his/her family.

5.0 Risk Assessment

An internal risk assessment will be completed as a priority and will be reviewed by the Consultative Committee at the next scheduled meeting.

Actions as a result of the risk analysis are to be implemented as soon as possible, including the undertaking of an independent investigation.

Where the allegation relates to sexual abuse, other serious issues of professional misconduct and/or child protection issues, action will be taken to immediately stand down the individual from Ministry. Specialist support is to be provided to the subject of the complaint.

6.0 Investigation

The De La Salle Institute is committed to ensuring that all investigations are undertaken transparently and honestly.

All complaints or matters of concern will be independently investigated, unless the matter is being investigated by the Police, State Child Protection Agency or Professional Standards Office of the Catholic Church. Where a Police or State Child Protection Agency investigation is underway, no other investigation will commence until that process is completed and/or clearance is given to proceed from such authorities. Full co-operation with investigation processes will be extended at all times.

Investigations will be undertaken in accordance with confidentiality and information-sharing protocols and in a manner which maintains full compliance with relevant Privacy Standards. Independent investigators will be engaged by the Professional Standards Officer and all relevant information is to be disclosed to the Investigator. The investigation report is to be provided to the Professional Standards Officer who will in turn table it for review by the Consultative Committee.

Following review by the Consultative Committee a finding will be submitted for independent judicial review. The Professional Standards Officer will present the report of the Independent Legal Review Panel to the Consultative Committee.

The Professional Standards Officer will be the point of contact for all parties and is responsible for keeping the Brother Visitor informed.

7.0 Outcomes

At the completion of the judicial review process a full report will be completed by the Professional Standards Officer and presented to the Consultative Committee and Brother Visitor. The Brother Visitor as the Church Authority is required to observe the protocols as set out in Towards Healing.

8.0 Contact

Professional Standards Officer, De La Salle Brothers
PO Box 3485, Bankstown NSW 2200
Telephone: 02 9795 6400

9.0 Associated Documents

- Towards Healing
- Investigation Procedure
- Risk Assessment Framework
- Consultative Committee Charter
- Complaint or Matter of Concern Form

Status

This policy is approved by the Brother Visitor and is to be considered a mandatory document for all Lasallian Works in the District. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Date: 01.02.2017

Signed: 