



ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL STANTHORPE

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

Under the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian requirements

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 Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (the Commission), which aims to create safe and supportive service environments for children and young people.

Under the provisions of the [Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000](#), and the [Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulation 2001](#), the Commission requires regulated employers and businesses to 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 Toowoomba, Catholic Education Office is a regulated employer under the legislation, where our schools are part of our service environment. Therefore a risk management strategy for schools within the Toowoomba Diocese is required, and is to be reviewed every 12 months. All schools within the Toowoomba Diocese 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

- A statement of commitment to the principles of safe and supportive service environments (mandatory requirement 1), and
- A code of conduct (mandatory requirement 2)

Capability

- Recruitment, selection, training and management strategies that encourage best practice and enhance the safety and well-being of children and young people (mandatory requirement 3)

Concerns

- Policies and procedures for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm (mandatory requirement 4)
- Policies and procedures for the occasions where there might be a breach of the organisation's child and youth risk management strategy (mandatory requirement 5), and
- A planning process for high risk activities and special events (mandatory requirement 7)

Consistency

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

What does the Toowoomba Diocese Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy look like?

St Joseph's School meets these eight requirements through our policies, procedures and practices across a number of key areas, including for example:

- Our Student Protection Policy and Procedure
- Our Code of Conduct
- Our Workplace Health and Safety processes

St Joseph's School has implemented further requirements through our *Visibility Audit Policy and Procedure*, to ensure the safety and visibility of students and staff within the school environment, and procedures around *Weapons in Schools*.

The following identifies how these requirements are met through our policies, procedures and practices:

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

Our statement of commitment is contained within the Catholic Education Board *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 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 employees and volunteers follow these processes.

2. A Code of Conduct

The *Code of Conduct* applies to all students and employees within Toowoomba Catholic Education, engaged on a relief, casual, fixed term or continuing basis, and has been reviewed in 2012 following initial implementation.

The conduct of volunteers is managed under the *Volunteer Code of Conduct*, the requirements for which form part of the volunteer induction processes at schools.

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 Toowoomba Catholic Education are detailed in the *Employment Procedures* 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.

3.1 Teaching staff

All teachers employed at St Joseph's School 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 the Catholic Education Office. School personnel are in-serviced with the process and procedures should there be concerns about staff conduct. The *Student Protection Policy and Procedure* outlines the process by which the Queensland College of Teachers is advised of any investigations involving a registered teacher.

3.2 Non-Teaching Staff and Volunteers:

All non-teaching staff and volunteers have been issued with a *Blue Card* by the Commission, in accordance with the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian 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 the CEO 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. In addition, all volunteers require a Blue Card *prior* to the commencement of work.

3.3 New Employees:

[Staff Screening Procedures and Guidelines](#) 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 the Commission. 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.

3.4 Induction

All new staff members are provided with induction upon commencement of duties. For St Joseph's School staff, this process is undertaken through the guidance of the Principal and includes local information in the context of the school.

A specific [student protection induction package](#) exists regarding the student protection requirements for staff members, which is a requirement for all new staff.

4. Policies and procedures for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm

All schools are required to follow the [Student Protection Policy and Procedure](#) 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* and the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001*.

All staff receive regular training and professional development in relation to the student protection policy and procedure, including the biennial staff in-service conducted by the Catholic Education Office.

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.

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 Toowoomba 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 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 Policy and Procedure* are outlined in the respective documents.

For other elements of the risk management strategy, the process involved is detailed in the [Process for Managing Breaches of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy](#) document.

6. Policies and procedures for compliance with Part 6 of the Commission's Act (Blue Card Compliance)

As per section 3.2 Employee Blue Cards are monitored through the Blue Card Registers at the school level, and through the Blue Card Register maintained at the School and through the Catholic Education Office. Monitoring of Blue Card status is ongoing, with communication between the Catholic Education Office and St Joseph's School to ensure the appropriate renewal and application processes are followed. These processes are detailed in the [Staff Screening Procedures and Guidelines](#).

This strategy will be reviewed annually and the date of the review will be recorded on the Annual Internal Audit schedule. The annual internal audit schedule is completed each year at the time of the Annual School Visit by the school's Senior Education Officer. Parents/guardians and staff will be notified of any changes to the *Student Protection Risk Management Strategy* as a result of the audit.

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

Foreseen high risk activities conducted within St Joseph's School are broadly arranged into the following types and respective control measures:

7.1 Curriculum Activity

Curriculum activities are planned using the Diocesan Learning Profile. Risk assessments for these activities are conducted utilising the Department of Education and Training – [Curriculum Activity Risk Assessments](#). 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.

7.2 Interschool activity

Where inter-school activities for a given school are being conducted at their grounds, the standard curriculum activity risk assessments are required to be undertaken, ensuring that this also addresses the needs for the visiting school. Where inter-school activities are being conducted at another school's grounds, excursion risk assessment requirements are to be undertaken which shall include a revision of the hosting school's risk assessment.

7.3 Excursions/Field Trips

Where there is a curriculum activity involved within the Excursion/Field Trip, then the respective Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment is to be completed and approved by the Principal. In addition to this requirement, all excursions and field trips are to have an [excursion/field trip risk assessment](#) completed and approved by the Principal. Where the excursion involves interstate or overseas travel, the following requirements are to be followed:

7.3.1 Intrastate School Camps

Where a school camp occurs within Queensland, the respective curriculum activity risk assessments, excursion risk assessments as well as [school camp risk assessment](#) are to be completed and approved by the Principal prior to the camp.

7.3.2 Interstate or overseas travel

For all interstate and overseas excursions, an [interstate and overseas risk assessment](#) is to be completed and submitted to the Director of the Catholic Education Office. The Director of the Catholic Education Office requires the submission of a risk assessment one month prior to the excursion so that the activity may be reviewed.

7.4 School Fetes and Fairs

For all school fetes and fairs, a [Fete and Fair Risk Assessment](#) is to be completed and approved by the Principal prior to the event.

7.5 Working Bees

For all working bees, a [Working Bee Risk Assessment](#) is to be completed and approved by the Principal prior to the event.

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

The Diocese of Toowoomba 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 publically available student protection policy and procedure on the [Catholic Education Office website](#)
 - Student Protection Brochures for Students
 - Student Protection Brochures for Parents and caregivers
- 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.

9. Visibility Audit Processes

St Joseph's School 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 processes](#), including the [visibility audit](#) timeframes, to ensure that risks are identified and managed accordingly.

10. Weapons in Schools

As per [circular 031/2012](#), the Director of the Catholic Education Office has directed Principals to make it known in their school communities that, under NO circumstances are knives to be brought to school by students.

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

This position is guided by the Catholic Education Board [Health and Well-being policy](#), which states that Catholic Schools will promote a safe and supportive environment in which members of the school community may acquire skills and knowledge to make decisions which optimize the health and well-being of themselves and others.

Our [Weapons Guidelines](#) clarify how schools manage processes when there is a suspicion that a weapon has been brought onto school grounds.

What are the responsibilities for schools?

In order to comply with the Diocesan Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, St Joseph's School is 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 policy and procedure
 - 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
 - Ensuring that the school's risk management strategy is reviewed annually

Compliance with the requirements of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy is monitored by the annual Senior Education Officer school compliance visits, and documented using the [Student Protection Compliance Checklist](#). Please note that the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy does not supersede or replace existing HSE processes. The focus of this strategy is around

managing risks associated with the Blue Card process – broader workplace health and safety strategies are still required in schools as a component of overarching risk management requirements.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Student Protection Officer at the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Toowoomba.