STUDENT PROTECTION RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Guidelines

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1.0   Introduction

Under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, organisations and individuals providing regulated child-related services are responsible for fostering safe service environments for children. Brisbane Catholic Education is captured within this framework.

Since 17 January 2005, organisations regulated by the Commission's Act have been required to develop and implement child-protection risk management strategies.

In order to ensure compliance with the Act it is important that all Brisbane Catholic Education employees adhere to the procedures outlined in these Guidelines.

1.1   Applicability

These Guidelines applies to all our employees engaged on a temporary, casual, fixed term, contract or continuing basis.

1.2   Context and Commitment to providing safe environments for children

We unequivocally commits to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of every person. To meet this commitment a Code of Conduct is being developed in consultation and with the endorsement of all relevant parties. The provision of a safe and supportive environment is essential to ensure that all children and young people entrusted to our care are to be affirmed in his or her dignity and worth as a person. We believes that children and young people should develop skills in building positive relationships based on those modelled by our employees.

It is expected that all our employees endorse the principles of student protection as a fundamental responsibility. The Brisbane Catholic Education Student Protection Policy and Procedures details the roles, responsibilities and procedures for handling suspicions or disclosures of harm.

1.3   Clarification of the Guidelines

If there is any conflict between these Guidelines and applicable legislation, the legislation will prevail. If an employee is in doubt about the interpretation of these Guidelines then the matter should be discussed with a more senior employee. If this matter cannot be clarified at a local level, the matter may be referred to the Executive Director – Brisbane Catholic Education.

1.4   Compliance with and Breaches of the Guidelines

The requirements under these Guidelines and the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* will be audited under our regulatory compliance schedule.

Brisbane Catholic Education employees hold special positions of trust, and therefore must be accountable for their actions. Conduct or inaction which is contrary to these

Guidelines may amount to professional misconduct which will be dealt with in accordance with our Employee Misconduct Process.

1.5   Review of the Guidelines

To maintain the currency and validity of these Guidelines it will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

Review date: 12 months from the date of launch

SECTION 2: BUILDING PEOPLES CAPABILITIES

2.0   Codes of Conduct for Students, Employees and Volunteers (including parents)

The Codes of Conduct outline the standards of behaviour expected of those persons within our schools and related offices and sites. These Codes of Conduct outline the expectations that we have in relation to the conduct of students, employees, parents and volunteers. The relevant Codes of Conduct and associated documents are as follows:

   2.0.1   The Statement of Principles forms part of the contract of employment for all persons employed by us, including part-time, full-time, casual and relief staff.

   2.0.2   The Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers is a directive of the Queensland College of Teachers. All teachers are required to observe these Standards

   2.0.3   Brisbane Catholic Education Code of Conduct for Employees is currently being developed and will be ratified in 2007. It will be a requirement of the employment contract that all our employees adhere to and observe the Code of Conduct.

   2.0.4   Each school is provided with a framework Student Code of Conduct to be implemented and integrated into their school community. This document outlines the standards of behaviour expected of students and what they should expect from school staff in return.

   2.0.5   Each school is provided with a framework Volunteer Code of Conduct to be implemented and integrated into their school community. This document outlines the standards of behaviour expected of volunteers (including parents). In order for volunteers to continue their voluntary engagement at the school they must adhere to the Code of Conduct.

2.1   Information Materials for Students, employees, parents and volunteers to minimize the risk of harm

   2.1.1   Student Protection Contact information
   In accordance with the legislation and to comply with our guidelines, our schools must nominate the principal and at least one other teacher/counsellor, as the Student Protection Contact (SPC) within the school. All staff and students (including volunteers and parents) must be made aware of the details for the SPC's at the school.

   2.1.2   Employee Induction Program
   All employees engaged by us undertake an induction program. This includes undertaking the mandatory Student Protection training, which is a statutory requirement (Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act and Regulations 2001) and a requirement under the Student Protection Policy. The information associated with this training can be obtained by clicking on the following: In-service material for

[student protection mandatory training including updated power point presentation](#)

2.1.3 Volunteer Induction Procedures

The volunteer induction procedures must be observed when engaging a volunteer (including parents). The procedures include;

- Attending a Student Protection Training Session or reading and completing the [Student Protection Handbook for Volunteers](#).
- Providing the volunteer with a copy of the [Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)
- The volunteer is to sign and return to the school the [Volunteer Suitability Declaration](#)
- The volunteer is to be provided with a copy of the [Statement of Principles](#)
- The volunteer must complete and sign the [School Volunteer Register Sheet](#) (this may include a requirement to apply for a Positive Notice Blue Card)
- The Principal is to ensure that the volunteer is familiar with the schools OHS and lockdown procedures.

What is a volunteer: The definition of what constitutes a volunteer is the same for the Risk Management Strategy as it is for the Positive Notice Blue Card Requirements. Under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act* a *volunteer is a person who is employed by another person and does not carry out any work for the other person for a financial reward.* A volunteer is required to hold a blue card (unless exempt) irrespective of whether they are engaged on one occasion or on an ongoing basis, the position is the same for volunteers undertaking the induction into our Student Protection Processes. That is to say it is irrelevant how often the volunteer attends the school they must be provided with the above documentation and information (as this constitutes Brisbane Catholic Education's induction program for volunteers within our schools).

The records relating to Volunteers are to be maintained at the school and audited on an *annual basis* to ensure that all details on the Volunteer Register Sheet are correct and current.

2.1.4 Information for parents

The involvement of parents/caregivers and other relevant community members is an important factor in achieving successful, co-operative personal safety education for students. In order to do this it is important that the school ensure that [Information for parents](#) is made available.

2.2 Student education programs to minimize the risk of harm

Since 2002 when we launched the Feeling Safe Strategy in all schools, all staff have been receiving student protection in-service, and posters have been displayed throughout every school providing students with easily recognisable and easy to implement protective reporting processes.

Information about these posters and the associated student reporting processes can be found by clicking on the following: [Feeling Unsafe Posters and Network cards - Reporting Process for Students](#)

2.3   Student pastoral support strategies

Our schools have a number of established structures in place to provide pastoral care as part of our commitment to know and care for each individual and to protect them from harm if possible. Such structures include:

- 'Home room' groupings and the responsibilities of home room teachers
- The role of other sin the school with a specific pastoral role in the school (including persons in positions of leadership and guidance counsellors)
- Support services available to students such as counselling support

The documents [Student Protection Reporting Processes for Harm to Students (not by employees)](#) provides a framework for the various elements of pastoral provisions for students' personal safety and welfare.

2.4   Student Protection Officer

Student Protection Officer is a person(s) appointed to assist school personnel in the assessing of harm and/or risk of harm to students, offering support and guidance to schools during and after intervention, assisting with compliance with student protection policies and procedures and developing and facilitating professional learning for staff.

2.5   Student Protection Contacts

In accordance with the legislation and to comply with our guidelines, our schools must nominate the principal and at least one other teacher/counsellor, as the Student Protection Contact (SPC) within the school. All staff and students (including volunteers and parents) must be made aware of the details for the SPC's at the school.

It is recommended for schools with a student population larger than 500 to consider having two designated Student Protection Contacts (as well as the Principal).

More information about the Student Protection contacts and requirements for their appointment can be found by clicking on the following: [The Role of Student Protection Contact](#)

2.6   Supervision of Students

It is essential that each school ensures that there is adequate supervision of students in order to discharge their duty of care. This should include:

- Instructions provided to staff and/or volunteers for supervision in the playground, an excursion, camps and other activities;
- A map showing playground supervision areas of responsibility;
- A current playground supervision roster;

- Communication method and devices made available in the case of emergency. These methods and instructions to staff should be written (please refer to Brisbane Catholic Education's Procedures for Responding to Critical Incidents); and
- All staff, students and volunteers made aware and provided with a copy of the fire evacuation procedures.

2.7   Managing visitors and other outsiders

It is essential that each school ensure that there are procedures in place for the management of visitors and other outsiders. This includes:

- Signage and directions around the school relevant to visitors;
- A visitor sign in register and clearly defined procedures for signing in and out of the school;
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements for Positive Notice Blue Cards for visitors and other outsiders (such as contractors);
- Instructions (written and verbal) given to staff, students and volunteers in the event of an unwelcome intrusion; and
- Clearly communicated procedures for lockdown situations.

SECTION 3: CONSISTENT PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

3.0 Recruitment, screening, selection, induction, training and management of staff

The requirements of the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act*, the Queensland College of Teachers; and the Non-State School Accreditation Board with regard to staffing are followed.

All support staff within the school are to be provided with a position description. Where schools need assistance with this process they can contact a member of the Employee Relations Team at the Brisbane Catholic Education Centre on 07 3033 7478.

All teachers are required to produce evidence of teacher registration and other support staff within the school must hold a current positive notice blue card where necessary. Schools should follow the Employment Screening Guide 2006 to ensure appropriate personnel hold a Positive Notice Blue Card.

3.1 Positive Notice Blue Card Register

A centralised register of Positive Notice Blue Card information for all paid employees is maintained at our Dutton Park Office. It is a requirement that all schools provide Positive Notice Blue Card information to the office when an employee is engaged. Schools must also ensure that details of any renewal, applications and changes in status are also forwarded to the Employment Screening Contact Officer at BCEC.

Reporting is carried out (by appropriate personnel at the Brisbane Catholic Education Centre) on the register on a fortnightly basis in order to ensure that all records are current. When it is necessary to obtain information the school principal is contacted and advised that they need to seek the information from the employee, or facilitate to lodging of an application.

3.2 Student Protection Training Register

Brisbane Catholic Education maintains a centralised register of Student Protection Training information for all paid employees at its Dutton Park Office (BCEC). It is a requirement that all schools provide details of staff attendance at mandatory Student Protection in-servicing to BCEC.

Reporting is carried out (by appropriate personnel at the Brisbane Catholic Education Centre) on the register on a fortnightly basis in order to ensure that all records are current and that all staff have undergone the training. When it is necessary to obtain information the school principal is contacted and advised that they need to seek the information from the employee, or facilitate the employee's attendance at in-servicing.

3.3 Risk Assessment in planning activities and attendance at outside events

The *Department of Education Manual Workplace Health and Safety – Curriculum – Activity Modules* are to be used as a guide to teachers and school staff when planning curriculum activities. Other more specific information in relation to various practices and risk assessment tools can be found at the Health and Safety area of our Intranet.

All schools are required to undertake Student Protection Risk Assessments under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act*. The assessments should be carried out for all activities undertaken as well as a general student protection assessment for the school. The following may be of use to schools in initiating such assessments:

Student Protection Risk Assessment Tool
Sample Student Protection Risk Assessment

For further information on carrying out a successful Student Protection Risk Assessments please see the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian website (http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/employment/bluecard/risk.html)

3.4 Media and Communications strategies to minimize risk of harm

The permission (using the Media & Communications Consent Form) of parents is obtained for the use of student photographs (and names) in any materials issued to the public in printed or electronic form. This permission is routinely obtained at the time of enrolment and confirmation is sought when identifying details are also to be published.

Identifying information is not used in promotional material without the specific permission of the parents and the student concerned.

3.5 Requirements for the appropriate use of electronic information and communication technology

It is imperative that we manage the use of electronic information and communications technology in order to safeguard students from risk of harm, including exposure to pornography and cyber bullying.

All employees must observe the BCE Email, Internet and Intranet Acceptable Use Statement. At a school level resources such as the Acceptable Use Statement for Primary Students are to be implemented.

The Commonwealth Governments resource Net Alert – CyberSafe Schools – A Teacher's Guide to Internet Safety is used to assist the school in developing appropriate programs and procedures.

3.6 Handling and Recording complaints and concerns

The document Student Protection Reporting Processes for Harm to Students (not by employees) has been developed in accordance with the legal requirements of the

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act and Regulations 2001 and the *Child Protection Act 1999*. It provides the rationale and principles and the subsequent processes to be followed when responding to suspected cases of student harm by those other than current or past personnel of the Catholic Church.

The document [Student Protection Reporting Processes of Inappropriate Behaviour and Harm to Students by Employees](#) has been developed in accordance with the legal requirements of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act and Regulations 2001, Child Protection Act 1999 and the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005. It provides procedures on how to deal with allegations of physical, sexual, psychological or emotional inappropriate behaviour and harm or risk of harm to children/students in our schools, or outside of our schools, by employees including voluntary workers

3.7   Record Keeping and the documentations process

Staff, or a visitor to the school, where students require first aid treatment at school, a record of the treatment is entered in the school First Aid Register.

Where students, staff or visitors to the school, require medical treatment, suffer serious bodily injury at school or a school related function or develop a work-caused illness, the school is to complete a WHS7 Form and lodge it with BCEC.

The [Student Protection Reporting Processes for Harm to Students (not by employees)](#) and [Student Protection Reporting Processes of Inappropriate Behaviour and Harm to Students by Employees](#) – set out the records required to be completed with respect to allegations and expressions of concern made in accordance with these processes.

Where a report is forward to a Relevant State Authority (in relation to a student protection concern) a copy of these documents are to be forwarded to Student Protection Services (BCEC). A copy should also be retained at a school level.