



BDSAC Child Protection Policy 2015

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Next Review: 2016

RATIONALE:

The dignity of the human person, who is created in the image and likeness of God, is the foundation of Catholic Social Teaching. This Catholic anthropology leads us to afford all people, but especially children, young people and the most vulnerable, the highest respect.

Within this context, effective Catholic schools provide a safe, supportive and secure environment that promotes respect and care and values diversity.

The mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of children and young people are essential pre-conditions for successful learning. These qualities cannot be developed for individuals in isolation from the health and wellbeing of the school community as a whole.

This policy provides a framework within which the Catholic schools and education offices in the Diocese of Ballarat can ensure a safe environment for all children and young people.

This policy applies to **all** Catholic schools and the Catholic Education Office in the Diocese of Ballarat.

POLICY STATEMENT:

“The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for people of all ages, with special concern for children, young people and vulnerable adults.”
(*Diocesan Professional Standards Policy Statement, 2014*)

In schools in the Diocese of Ballarat, child safety policy and practices support a proactive role in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people, the provision of child safe environments and intervention procedures for responding to abuse and neglect.

DEFINITIONS:

Children and Young People: A Child is legally a person who has not reached the age of 18. In this policy, the term “children and young people” will be used to designate legal children as well as the students and young people for whom Catholic schools have a duty of care.

Parent: In this policy the term 'parent' will be used for brevity, and also includes a responsible person or carer.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Respectful relationships that support the dignity of children and young people are central to the life and teachings of the Catholic Church.
2. Primary responsibility for children and young people resides with the family and schools work

in partnership with families.

3. The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a shared responsibility for all members of the Catholic education community. This responsibility extends to the identification and timely response to concerns regarding the possible sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect of a child. This will include responses to all types of bullying.
4. All adults have the responsibility to protect children and young people.
5. When a child makes a disclosure it must be taken at face value and referred to the appropriate statutory body.
6. Children and young people have a right to be heard regarding decisions that affect their lives.
7. Children and young people are encouraged to develop skills to contribute to their own safety and wellbeing.
8. Policies and practices in Catholic schools demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements, cultural sensitivity and co-operation with Church, government, police and human service agencies.
9. Complaint processes are consistent with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness and the relevant Diocesan and BDSAC policies.
10. All people involved in the reporting of child protection issues and incidents are to be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect and will be provided with appropriate professional support.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Recognising the various governance contexts of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Ballarat, the BDSAC endorses the following shared responsibilities for CEOB, school governors, school leaders and CEOB/school staff and volunteers with regards to Child Protection:

	CEOB	Governor and Principal	Staff & Volunteers (of schools and of CEOB)
Policy	<p>With the BDSAC, develop, monitor and review this policy in accordance with legal requirements and the Church's teachings.</p> <p>Ensure child protection policies and procedures for diocesan schools are promoted and communicated in the diocesan community and via the CEOB website.</p>	<p>Implement policies and organisational procedures which provide children and young people with a safe school environment in consultation with school advisory councils and parent communities.</p> <p>Keep abreast of legal requirements advised by CECV and CEOB.</p> <p>Ensure child protection policies and procedures are promoted and communicated in the school community and with parents/carers.</p>	<p>Observe, implement and adhere to policies and organisational procedures which provide children and young people with a safe school environment.</p>

Staff screening	Take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff/volunteers engaged by CEOB to work with children and young people are screened regarding their suitability for working with children.	Take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff/volunteers engaged by the school to work with children and young people are screened regarding their suitability for working with children.	Maintain currency of VIT Registration and/or WWCC and/or NCRC and provide evidence of same on request by employer.
Child Protection Officer	Appoint a Child Protection Officer to assist schools and community members in monitoring and implementing child protection policies and procedures.	Appoint a Child Protection Officer to assist staff and community members in monitoring and implementing child protection policies and procedures. (This may be the Principal).	Cooperate with the school's Child Protection Officer in monitoring and implementing child protection policies and procedures.
Compliance	Comply with all relevant legislation which concerns the welfare of children and young people. Advise schools and CEOB staff of changes to compliance requirements with regards to child protection.	Comply with all relevant legislation which concerns the welfare of children and young people. Advise staff of changes to compliance requirements with regards to child protection.	Comply with all relevant legislation which concerns the welfare of children and young people. Keep apprised of changes to compliance requirements with regards to child protection.
Training	Ensure that resources and personnel are available to facilitate ongoing training, advice and support for school leaders and staff in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people. Induct and update CEOB staff on matters of child protection.	Ensure school personnel receive training for, understand and carry out their legal obligations, responsibilities and correct procedures when notifying suspicion of child abuse and neglect. Induct and update staff on matters of child protection.	Undertake regular training and education in order to understand individual responsibilities in relation to child protection and the health and well being of children and young people. Participate in induction and updates on matters of child protection.
Mandatory Reporting	Ensure Diocesan Mandatory Reporting Policy reflects legislation. Induct new staff and remind continuing staff of Policy. Support schools in training staff around mandatory reporting requirements. Support school personnel directly involved with the handling of disclosures and mandatory reporting.	Ensure school Mandatory Reporting Policy is up-to-date and aligned with diocesan/CEOB advice. Induct new staff and remind continuing staff of Policy. Ensure annual training of staff around mandatory reporting requirements. Support school personnel directly involved with the handling of disclosures and mandatory reporting. Provide appropriate support to families affected by mandatory reporting.	Observe school's Mandatory Reporting Policy. Participate in induction and updates. Participate in annual training around mandatory reporting requirements. Seek counsel as appropriate when directly involved with the handling of disclosures and mandatory reporting.

School Environment	Ensure procedures and processes are in place to provide a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured.	Ensure procedures and processes are in place to provide a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured.	Provide a physically and psychologically safe classroom and school environment where the well being of children and young people is nurtured.
Curriculum	Provide advice and support for school personnel to develop and/or implement curriculum in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people.	Provide guidelines and support for staff to develop and/or implement curriculum in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people • protective behaviours for children and young people. Ensure the curriculum around protective behaviours and student safety (including online safety) is explicit and monitored.	Develop and/or implement curriculum in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people • protective behaviours for children and young people. • online safety for children and young people.
Risk	Provide advice to schools on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risk assessments for student activities. • appropriateness of school buildings and facilities in relation to protection of students. 	Ensure risk assessments are carried out for all student activities. Monitor appropriateness of school buildings and facilities in relation to protection of students.	Ensure risk assessments are carried out for all student activities. Monitor appropriateness of school buildings and facilities in relation to protection of students.
Relationships	Promote models of behaviour between CEOB, school personnel, families, children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration. Assist schools to ensure policies and procedures are in place to assist children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse. Work with school governors and leaders to ensure they understand their responsibilities with regards to child protection.	Promote models of behaviour between school personnel, families, children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration. Ensure policies and procedures are in place to assist children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse. Cooperate with CEOB to ensure they understand their responsibilities with regards to child protection.	Treat families, children and young people with dignity and respect, act with propriety and protect children and young people in their care. Implement school policies and procedures to assist children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse.

Legal	Provide support to school personnel to review on a regular basis their legal obligations under the various acts. Ensure relevant legislation is referenced and readily available on CEVN.	Review on a regular basis the school's legal obligations under the various acts. Monitor school and staff compliance with relevant legislation.	Be aware of the legal obligations of staff/volunteers under the various acts. Self-monitor compliance with relevant legislation.
Partnership	Support schools to ensure that an inter-agency approach to the management of child protection is fostered and supported.	Ensure that an inter-agency approach to the management of child protection is fostered and supported.	Cooperate with colleagues, families and students to ensure that an inter-agency approach to the management of child protection is fostered and supported.
Privacy	Advise schools on appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children and young people in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.	Ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children and young people in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.	Ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children and young people in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.
Monitoring	Ensure child protection matters are monitored as part of the School Improvement Framework and School Review processes. Monitor and provide updated checklist on CEVN.	Regularly and consciously monitor child protection matters. Complete the Child Safety School Checklist at least annually.	Regularly and consciously self-monitor child protection matters. Assist in annual completion of the Child Safety School Checklist when required.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

The following legislation provides a reference point for schools:

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (the Act) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 (Regulations)*
- *The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic.)*
- *Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)*
- *The Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Vic.)*
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*
- *Enhancing Online Safety for Children Bill 2015 (Cth) - Act pending*

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Schools are required to ensure that the following CECV, State and Diocesan guidelines and procedures are implemented at the local level:

- CECV: **Catholic Schools Operational Guide**, particularly the sections on “Care and Responsibility”. Available at: <http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au/FinanceLegal.aspx?id=12374>.
- CECV: **Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013**, particularly Clause 14 (Professional Registration and Working with Children). Available at http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/vcsa/Agreement_2013/VCEMEA_2013.pdf
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: *Child Protection Reporting Obligations 2015*. Available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx?Redirect=1>.
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Department of Human Services: **Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, 2010**. Available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/protectionprotocol.aspx>.
- Department of Education and Training: **School Policy and Advisory Guide**. Available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/azindex.aspx>
- Diocese of Ballarat: **Code of Conduct for Caring of Children, 2015**. To be available <http://www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au/policies-and-publications/>
- Diocese of Ballarat: **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy, 2015**. To be available at <http://www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au/policies-and-publications/>.
- Diocese of Ballarat: **Working With Children Check Policy, 2007**. Currently under review. Interim guidelines are provided in the **CEOB VIT WWCC and NCHRC Guidelines March 2015** available at <http://www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au/policies-and-publications/>.
- Diocese of Ballarat: **Protocol for Managing Allegations of Abuse of Students by Employees in Catholic Education, 2015**. To be available at <http://www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au/policies-and-publications/>.
- National Committee for Professional Standards: **Integrity in the Service of the Church, 2011**. Available at <http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au/media/29458/Integrity-in-Service-of-the-Church-final-27032013-v2013-1-copy.pdf>.
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority: **Guide to the Minimum Standards and Other Requirements for School Registration**. Available at <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/registration/Pages/schminsdards.aspx>.
- CECV Social Media Policy Guidelines 2014. Available at <http://web.cecv.catholic.edu.au/frameset.htm?page=projects>.

APPENDIX: Child Safety School Checklist

Task	Checked on:	Action by
1. Policies and protocols are up-to-date and enacted in the following areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integrity in the Service of the Church b. Mandatory Reporting c. Allegations of Abuse of Students by Lay Employees d. Privacy e. Child safety curriculum f. Staff Social Media Policy g. Anti-bullying policy for students 		
2. New staff inducted and continuing staff trained in and reminded of their responsibilities in relation to all child protection policy areas, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integrity in the Service of the Church b. Mandatory Reporting c. Allegations of Abuse of Students by Lay Employees d. Privacy e. Child safety curriculum f. Staff Social Media Policy g. Anti-bullying policy for students 		
3. Staff have been inducted into and indicated their understanding of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integrity in the Service of the Church b. Mandatory Reporting c. Allegations of Abuse of Students by Lay Employees d. Privacy e. Child safety curriculum f. Staff Social Media Policy g. Anti-bullying policy for students 		
4. Volunteers have been inducted into and indicated their understanding of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Integrity in the Service of the Church b. Mandatory Reporting c. Allegations of Abuse of Students by Lay Employees d. Privacy e. Child safety curriculum f. Staff Social Media Policy g. Anti-bullying policy for students 		
5. All staff hold current VIT Registration and/or Working with Children Checks or National Criminal Record Checks.		
6. The currency of VIT Registration and/or Working with Children Checks and/or National Criminal Record Checks is monitored at least annually.		
7. Staff selection processes include interviews of shortlisted candidates and checking with referees regarding the suitability of potential staff member to work with children and vulnerable adults.		
8. Staff directly involved with the handling of disclosures and mandatory reporting are trained and supported.		
9. School buildings, facilities and equipment are audited at least annually to ensure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. they meet safety standards prescribed by VRQA b. they provide private but visible spaces for staff and service providers working alone with students 		