WHITFORD
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Faith in God, Faith in Self

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE

Sources of Authority	
CECWA Policy	Community
Executive Directive	Student Safety, Wellbeing, and Behaviour

RATIONALE

From the moment they join a Catholic school community, students should learn of their value as human persons. Every aspect of the school's life should reflect a Christian pastoral dimension. The pastoral dimension of a Catholic school needs to include the mutual care and support staff demonstrate both towards each other and for their students.

Some schools have full-time pastoral care staff. Others may have staff in counselling roles, contributing in a special way to the wellbeing and development of students with particular needs. While appreciating the contribution of these people, we stress that every staff member shares responsibility for the pastoral dimension of the Catholic school in accordance with the Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools2 1. We call on all staff to develop the kinds of relationships that will help them respond proactively to their students' pastoral needs. (Mandate, paragraph 37, page 21).

Catholic schools are entrusted, in partnership with parents/guardians/caregivers who are the primary educators of their children, with the total education of the child. Catholic school staff therefore have a duty of care to students during school operating hours and at other times when a staff/student relationship exists. Staff discharge this duty by taking reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which they can reasonably foresee would be likely to result in harm or injury to the student.

The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia is committed to child protection strategies and procedures to ensure the care, safety and protection of all children in Catholic schools.

DEFINITIONS

Child Abuse

Refers to the long term and/or short term maltreatment of a person under the age of 18 years of age. It is the result of action or inaction which results in harm or injury to a child. Child abuse may be categorised as follows:

• physical abuse

• sexual abuse

• emotional abuse and/or psychological abuse

• neglect

Greater detail on the definitions of child abuse may be found in the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.

Child Protection

'Child protection' refers to prevention and response to abuse against children. This includes the policies, preventative measures and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In context it applies particularly to the duty of Catholic Education and individuals associated with Catholic Education, towards children in their care.

Catholic School

Refers to an educational venue as defined in the Teacher Registration Act 2012 that is a part of the Catholic Education system in Western Australia. This includes schools as well as Early Learning and Care Centres.

Principal

Refers to a principal of a Catholic school.

Historic Allegations

Refers to any information alleging child abuse where the child is a former student of any Catholic school.

PRINCIPLES

In the best interests of the child, the child protection strategies and procedures to be followed are based on the following principles:

· All staff in Whitford Catholic Primary School have a responsibility to care for children and to promote their safety and wellbeing.

· All children have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety. This should be done in partnership with their parents/guardians/caregivers.

· The dignity of the person shall be maintained and respected in all dealings regarding allegations of child abuse.

· Principals are required to ensure that all staff are aware of and comply with legislation and policies with respect to child protection.

· The confidentiality of all concerned in relation to an allegation of child abuse should be respected3 subject to the disclosures required to be made in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.4

PROCEDURES

1. All staff at Whitford Catholic Primary School who identify concerns regarding the sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect of a child must respond according to the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.

2. Allegations of Misconduct and Serious Misconduct against Staff at Whitford Catholic – Processes and Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia, is to be followed when an allegation is directed against school employees. These include teachers, administrative staff, grounds staff or any other staff member.5

3. Allegations directed against any clergy or members of religious institutes should be discussed with the Director of Professional Standards and follow Towards Healing: Principles and Procedures in Responding to Complaints of Abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia, as well as fulfilling other relevant requirements i.e. mandatory reporting.

4. The principal shall ensure that staff receive induction, in relation to the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia and Mandatory Reporting within the first 12 months of appointment

5. The principal shall ensure the school's pastoral care structures reflect the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia. All members of the Whitford Catholic Primary School community are required to comply with the 12 Code of Conduct statements to ensure the safety and well-being of students.

6. Principals of Catholic schools are an approved “class of persons” in accordance with the Act and are able to take mandatory reports regarding child sexual abuse. Principals of Catholic schools have a legal obligation upon receiving mandatory reports regarding child sexual abuse to forward these unaltered to the approved agency (currently the Department for Child Protection - DCP) as soon as possible (usually within 24 hours). Teachers also have the option at law to report directly to DCP.

7. Staff shall act in accordance with the relevant section of Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia in regard to any historic allegations of child abuse.

REFERENCES

Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools

Bishops of Western Australia 2009, Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia 2009 – 2015

CECWA policy statement 2-D8 The Management of Confidential Information in Schools

The Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia

Allegations of Misconduct and Serious Misconduct Against Staff – Processes and Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia

Towards Healing, Principles and Procedures in Responding to Complaints of Sexual Abuse Against Personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Children and Community Services Act 2004 (as amended in 2008) (WA)

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