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# Child Protection Policy

## PURPOSE

The Diocese serves the people of God 'through her witness and through such activities as dialogue, human promotion, commitment to justice and peace, education and the care of the sick, and aid to the poor and children' (*Redemptoris Missio*, 1990, n.20).

The purpose of this policy is to inform and remind those engaged or employed in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lismore of the standards of behaviour, duties, obligations and other requirements that must be adhered to when working with children.

This policy aims to:

- Clarify the expectations of employees, contractors and volunteers who work in child related employment;
- Provide for a safe and supportive environment for children and those engaged or employed in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lismore; and
- Strengthen and maintain a contemporary Catholic workplace that is safe, respectful, professional and legally compliant.

A range of checks and undertakings are required for people who work for or provide services to Catholic education in the Diocese of Lismore, including the mandatory considerations of professional standards, codes of conduct and accepted community standards.

## APPLICATION

This policy sets out the expectations required of employees, contractors and volunteers of Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools Limited (DLCSL) in the context of child protection.

Employees, contractors and volunteers are to make themselves familiar with the requirements of this document and ensure they comply with the behaviours and obligations outlined within it.

This policy does not form part of any employment contract or contractor agreement and does not impose contractual obligations on DLCSL.

## POLICY

Children and young people have a fundamental right to grow, develop and feel safe in environments that are free from violence, exploitation and harm. DLCSL has clear expectations that all students in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lismore will be protected from all forms of harm including sexual, physical and psychological harm, as well as ill-treatment and neglect.

DLCSL has certain responsibilities and expectations to ensure the safety and protection of children in their care, including supporting measures to ensure that children and young people will be taught how to protect themselves, and how to seek help if they are concerned about their safety.

## **RATIONALE**

Consistent with its mission and values, and in compliance with its legislative obligations, DLCSL strives to ensure children in its care are safe and secure. Implementing a variety of practices that reduces potential risk, forms part of our strategy to build child safe communities.

## **OUTCOMES**

Employees, contractors and volunteers of DLCSL will recognise the following principles:

- Jesus Christ through the Scriptures, instructs us about the dignity and infinite value of every human being, especially children and young persons;
- The care and protection of children and young people is paramount;
- The value of the family unit is respected but not to the detriment of the wellbeing of the child;
- Support is provided for the right of students, parents and employees to bring forward complaints or allegations to be heard without fear of reprisal;
- Persons involved in situations considered to be inappropriate or where reportable conduct is disclosed or suspected should be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect;
- All employees, contractors and volunteers have an obligation to promptly inform the Principal or a member of Human Services at the Catholic Schools Office of alleged incidents of reportable conduct as well as serious matters concerning the welfare of children;
- Information regarding suspected or disclosed child abuse shall be made available only to those personnel who have a genuine need to be informed. Personnel who have access to such information have the obligation to observe appropriate confidentiality in relation to this information; and
- DLCSL will ensure all employees, contractors and volunteers are aware of the required standards of behaviour, and provide support to those persons to remind them of expectations in maintaining professional standards through online training, face to face training and support to high risk employees, contractors and volunteers through targeted induction.

This policy is a direction to all DLCSL employees, contractors and volunteers. This policy must be complied with, and a breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or cessation of any other engagement with DLCSL.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore: The Mission of Jesus Christ Foundational Values

Anti-bullying Policy and Procedures

Child Protection Procedures

Code of Conduct

Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace Procedures

Privacy Policy and Procedures

*Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)*

*Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*

*Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)*

*Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)*