Dear Parent Volunteers,

We have a diocesan requirement for volunteers, which must be completed by all people who assist in a non-paid capacity for school time activities. There is one stapled document with two sections to read:

- Student Protection: Information for Volunteers
- Volunteer Code of Conduct.

Once both sections have been read, fill in the Volunteer Student Protection Declaration Form and return it to our school office.

Hint for one of the sections you have to complete:

Student Protections Officers

- Joanne Cavanagh
- Angela Martlew
- Shauna Coren
- Chris Bartlett

If you have any queries please contact me.

Kind Regards,

Chris Bartlett

Principal
Student Protection: Information for Volunteers

1. Introduction

Catholic Education - Toowoomba is committed to the protection of children and young people and upholding their right to a safe and secure environment. In addition, staff members working within schools operated by the Diocese of Toowocmba have various legislative and policy obligations to report suspected abuse and harm to students, and inappropriate behaviour by staff members or volunteers.

To give effect to these requirements, staff members working within our schools are required to follow the Student Protection Policy and Procedure, which provides information and guidance around reporting suspicions of abuse, harm and inappropriate behaviour to students.

In Queensland, volunteers are not bound by the legislative mandatory reporting obligations, however it is the policy of the Catholic Education - Toowoomba that volunteers report an awareness or suspicion of harm or the risk of harm or inappropriate behaviour to a student by any person in accordance with this document. This document seeks to clarify how volunteers contribute to the safety and well-being of students.

2. Guiding Principles

- The welfare and best interests of the child/student are paramount
- Every child/student has a right to protection from harm
- All adults have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their welfare and to protect them from any kind of harm
- Sexual, physical, psychological or emotional harm to children/students by persons in positions of trust and authority is a serious matter
- Catholic Education - Toowoomba is committed to the implementation of child/student protection strategies and processes in our schools in accordance with legislative and church requirements
- All instances of known abuse or harm to a student will be referred to the Police and/or the Department of Communities, Child Safety Services according to statutory and Diocesan policy obligations
- Catholic Education - Toowoomba will respond immediately to any allegation or report of suspected or actual abuse or harm, or risk of harm to a student by another person or self harm by the student himself or herself
- Catholic Education - Toowoomba will seek to ensure that a person who honestly reports a student protection matter in good faith will not be disadvantaged for doing so
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect
- Catholic Education - Toowoomba will act fairly and reasonably towards a staff member or volunteer who is the subject of an allegation of improper conduct and will provide access to support services as appropriate
- Catholic Education - Toowoomba will support a staff member or volunteer who is the subject of a proven false allegation of causing harm to a student

Updated 19 January 2015
- Support of the student and the staff member or volunteer against whom the allegation is made is assisted by ensuring:
  - confidentiality
  - transparency of processes and procedures
  - adherence to processes, both at the school and at the Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Education Office
  - reporting to and involving Police and or the Department of Communities, Child Safety Services
  - provision of appropriate emotional support and pastoral care

- Where there is any doubt about an allegation or report of abuse or harm to a student, the decision must be in favour of reporting the allegation

3. What are the types of Harm?

Harm includes any significant and detrimental effect on a child’s or a student’s physical, psychological or emotional well-being. It can be caused by physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect by a parent, caregiver or other person including staff members and volunteers at the school.

Children and young people being exposed to domestic violence situations can be harmed or be at risk of harm as a result. Harm can be caused by other children, students or young people by, for example, the use of electronic/cyber mediums, bullying, physical assault and problem sexual behaviour. Students can also self-harm.

Examples of signs for the specific types of harm you may see include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSICAL</th>
<th>NEGLECT</th>
<th>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facial, head, neck bruises or lacerations</td>
<td>Delay in achieving developmental milestones</td>
<td>Difficulties in eating and sleeping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burns/scalds</td>
<td>Untreated physical problems</td>
<td>Regressive behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple injuries or bruises, especially over time</td>
<td>Poor personal hygiene leading to social isolation</td>
<td>Developmental delays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fractures, dislocations, twisting injuries</td>
<td>Scavenging for/stealing food; lack of adequate school lunches</td>
<td>Child is over-protective of the mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explanation offered by child not consistent with the injury</td>
<td>Self-comforting behaviour</td>
<td>Abuse of siblings/parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated injuries with the same explanation e.g. “I fell off my bike”</td>
<td>Extreme seeking of adult affection</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL</th>
<th>SEXUAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inability to value self and others</td>
<td>Direct or indirect disclosures of abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of trust in people</td>
<td>Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour and knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statements from the child e.g. “I’m bad” or “I was born bad”</td>
<td>Use of threats, coercion or bribery to force other children into sexual acts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extreme attention seeking behaviours</td>
<td>Sexual themes/fears expressed in artwork, written work or play</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repeated urinary tract infections, especially in girls</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical trauma to buttocks, breasts, genitals, lower abdomen, thighs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unexplained accumulation of money/gifts</td>
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Examples of inappropiate behaviour by staff or volunteers you may see include:

- yelling at a student
- allowing a student to over-step rules
- discussing personal details of lifestyle of self or others
- making inappropriate personal comments about a student's behavior that may have a psychological impact on a student including targeted and sustained criticism, belittling or teasing
- using inappropriate locations or social isolation outside of the school's behaviour support policy as punishment
- any form of corporal punishment
- restraining a student for any purposes other than a student's actions causing imminent harm to self or others
- hitting or kicking a student
- holding a student
- pushing, pulling, shoving, grabbing, pinching or poking a student

4. How might a volunteer form a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm?

"Reasonably suspects" means:

- a student reports or discloses information to a volunteer that leads the volunteer to suspect that the student has been harmed or is at risk of harm
- a student reports or discloses information to a volunteer that leads the volunteer to suspect that the student knows a student who has been harmed or is at risk of harm
- someone else gives a volunteer information that leads the volunteer to suspect that a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm (this information may come from a relative, friend, acquaintance of the student, or sometimes could be anonymous)
- a volunteer's own observation of a particular student's behaviour or physical appearance, or knowledge of children generally, leads the volunteer to suspect that the student has been harmed or is at risk of harm

5. Summary of staff member reporting obligations

1. The requirement to report sexual abuse, suspected sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse of a student by another person in compliance with sections 366 and 366A of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (a category 1 mandatory report)
2. The requirement to report significant harm or risk of significant harm to a student, where there may not be a parent willing and able to protect the student from harm, to Child Safety Services under the Child Protection Act 1999 (a category 1 mandatory report)
3. The requirement to report significant harm or risk of significant harm to a student caused by a staff member or volunteer to Police (a category 1 mandatory report)
4. The requirement to report staff member inappropriate behaviour - professional misconduct (a category 2 report)
5. The requirement to report staff member inappropriate behaviour - minor incidents (a category 3 report)
In addition, schools have processes for responding to concerns of student self-harm, and harm between students, with a focus on maintaining the safety of the students involved.

As noted above, volunteers are not bound by these legislative reporting requirements. However a volunteer may form a suspicion that a student has been harmed, or is at risk of harm or inappropriate behaviour, and in these circumstances it is important that the concerns are responded to immediately. See section 6 for the processes to follow in responding to these concerns.

6. What should a volunteer do if they have a reasonable suspicion of harm or inappropriate behaviour by a staff member or volunteer?

The primary concern is always the safety of the student. Therefore in responding to a student concern, safety should be the first consideration.

When receiving information directly from a student, it is important to:

- listen attentively, actively and be non-judgemental
- react calmly to the information the student provides
- reassure them they are not to blame
- provide pastoral support to the student and be aware of the privacy issues involved
- be honest about your responsibility to take action

Volunteers must not:

- react emotionally or make accusations
- seek any more information than is absolutely necessary
- ask leading or probing questions or put words in the student’s mouth

When a volunteer becomes aware or reasonably suspects harm or risk of harm or inappropriate behaviour to a student by any person, or where there are any concerns whatsoever regarding a student, the responsibility of the volunteer is to immediately advise the School Principal or the School Student Protection Contact. Where the concerns involve the School Principal, the volunteer must contact the Catholic Education Office directly with their concerns. The volunteer may be required to provide a written account of their concerns, in order to accurately capture the information.

Once the concerns are received by the Principal, the Student Protection Contact or by the Catholic Education Office, the Student Protection Policy and Procedure reporting processes will be followed.

More information about these processes can be found at:

Remember: “student protection is everyone’s responsibility”
Volunteer Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

The contribution of volunteers is highly valued by the Catholic Education Office in the Diocese of Toowoomba, enhancing the safe, productive and positive environment within our schools. This Code of Conduct seeks to affirm the standards of behaviour that are expected of our volunteers, in order to ensure a continuing safe and supportive environment.

2. Applicability

This Code of Conduct applies to all volunteers engaging in volunteer duties within Toowoomba Catholic Education, including the Catholic Education Office and all schools within the Diocese.

3. Principles

It is expected that volunteers abide by the following principles:

- ensuring that the safety and well-being of students is met at all times
- engaging in respectful and supportive relationships with students, families, staff members and other volunteers
- ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of students, families, staff members and other volunteers is met at all times
- being committed to the educational, religious and social values of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Toowoomba
- carrying out all volunteer duties in a conscientious and ethical manner.

4. Standards of Behaviour

It is expected that volunteers will behave in a manner that is consistent with the principles outlined in this Code of Conduct. Volunteers must also:

- **participate in an induction program prior to commencing volunteer duties.** This induction will cover a number of areas, including student protection
- **consider safety as a priority in all volunteer activities**, following all school and/or Catholic Education safety procedures. For example, volunteers must be aware of evacuation processes within schools
- **work only within the limitations of the volunteer role**, acknowledging the requirement to seek guidance from, and report any issues to, school and/or Catholic Education Office Administration
- **follow the instruction of staff members** in order to ensure that correct procedures are implemented within schools/at the Catholic Education Office
- **report all concerns to an appropriate staff member**, such as the Principal or a Student Protection Contact. For example, a suspicion of illegal activity should be reported immediately
- **exercise due care and diligence in the performance of volunteering work at the school.**
5. Volunteers must not:

- **smoke or use tobacco products whilst volunteering** or on the Catholic Education Office or school grounds
- **possess, consume, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs whilst volunteering** within schools or at the Catholic Education Office
- **supply tobacco products, alcohol or illegal drugs to students**
- **engage in any behaviour that may cause harm to a student**
- **engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards a student.** Examples of inappropriate behaviour include, however are not limited to:
  - swearing at, or in front of, students
  - pushing, shoving or grabbing a student
  - using threats or instilling fear in a student
  - using sarcasm towards or demeaning a student
  - showing favouritism towards specific students, including giving gifts or showing special favours
  - any and all forms of sexual behaviour, including sexual jokes or innuendo.

6. Communication

Volunteers must use appropriate communication skills with students in order to maintain a safe and supportive environment. Such communication includes:

- **listening to and supporting the student**
- **being aware of physical boundaries and personal space, including your own body language**
- **being visible when interacting with students, ensuring the presence of other staff members or volunteers**
- **being clear, calm and positive in verbal interactions with students and families**
- **avoiding any discriminatory, offensive or inappropriate language when interacting with students and families.**

7. What should I do if I have a concern about a student or the behaviour of a staff member or other volunteer?

All staff members within the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Toowoomba and within Diocesan schools are required to follow the **Student Protection Policy and Procedure** in relation to the reporting of abuse and harm to students, and inappropriate behaviour by staff or volunteers.

If a volunteer has a concern regarding a student, or the behaviour of a staff member or volunteer, then this must be raised **immediately** with the School Principal or School Student Protection Contact. If in doubt, a volunteer should always report the concern. More detailed information can be found in the **Student Protection – Information for Volunteers** document.

If the School Principal, the School Student Protection Contact or any other staff member receives information from a volunteer about harm or suspected harm or the risk of harm or inappropriate behaviour to a student, that person is required to follow the appropriate student protection process to ensure the safety and well-being of the student(s).
8. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Any allegations of breaches of this Code of Conduct are treated seriously by the Catholic Education Office, and will be investigated accordingly with due regard to the principles of natural justice. If necessary, the appropriate authorities will be notified.

9. How can I access more information about student safety and well-being?

Student protection is a high priority for the Diocese of Toowoomba. Information regarding the policies and procedures that schools are required to follow can be found on the Catholic Education Office website at: http://www.twb.catholic.edu.au/Board/Pages/GuidelinesSP.aspx.

Alternatively, volunteers can seek further information from School Administration or by contacting the Catholic Education Office, 73 Margaret Street, Toowoomba, phone (07) 4637 1400.

10. How can I access support?

Volunteers are highly regarded by the Catholic Education Office in the Diocese of Toowoomba. To access any support or guidance, please do not hesitate to approach school or Catholic Education Office Administration.
VOLUNTEER STUDENT PROTECTION DECLARATION FORM

As a volunteer engaged with a school within the Diocese of Toowoomba, or working within the Catholic Education Office in Toowoomba, it is a requirement that you are aware of student protection processes to ensure the safety and well-being of students. This will form part of your induction as a volunteer.

Please complete the following:

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<th>Sign once completed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have received and read the Volunteer Code of Conduct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have received and read the Student Protection Information for Volunteers document</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I have sought any clarification needed on content from my Principal, Student Protection Contact or the Student Protection Officer (if applicable)</td>
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For volunteers engaged with a school:

I am able to identify the Student Protection Contacts within my school:
1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________________________
5. __________________________________________________________________________

Volunteer Name: __________________________________________________________________________
School (if multiple schools, list all): __________________________________________________________________________
Signed: __________________________________________________________________________ Date: __________________________________________________________________________

Principal/CEO supervisor __________________________________________________________________________
Signed: __________________________________________________________________________ Date: __________________________________________________________________________

Once completed, signed copy of form to be retained at the school and copy sent to the Catholic Education Office in Toowoomba, attention Peter Simpson, Student Protection Officer (peter.simpson@twb.catholic.edu.au or fax 4637 1499). Please keep a copy for your own records.