

HOLY SPIRIT SCHOOL



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The community has clear expectations of Holy Spirit School in matters relating to child protection and child abuse. It expects that its children, while at school, will be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect. It also expects that its children, while at school, will be taught how to protect themselves and to seek help if they are concerned about abuse.

As teachers, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidences involving abuse and neglect of children with whom we have contact, and to report instances that we believe involve physical abuse or neglect.

At Holy Spirit School, procedures will be followed in handling any such allegations in accordance with recent legislative changes in NSW. These procedures are based on the following:

- All children have the right to safety and to be protected from any kind of abuse.
- Persons involved in situations where abuse is disclosed or suspected should be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- If any action related to child abuse, the total well-being of the child is the primary concern.
- The value of the family unit is respected but not to the detriment of the well-being of the child.
- The Principal is responsible for the administration and conduct of the school and all that relates to it. The Principal (or designated delegate) is to be informed promptly of suspected or disclosed incidents of reportable conduct as well as serious matters concerning the welfare of students. All staff shares this obligation!
- All such incidents of reportable conduct to be directed to the 'Director of Schools' Wagga Diocese.
- Appropriate confidentiality in relation to such information will be maintained.

REPORTABLE ACTIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Definitions (please refer to Section 23 of the Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

- Risk of harm
- Reportable conduct
- Child sexual assault
- Physical abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Neglect or ill-treatment
- Sexual misconduct

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS OF HOLY SPIRIT SCHOOL

- **Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.**

Mandatory notification/reporting of suspected concerns of a child or young person under 18 years of age.

The Principal must be made aware (from all employees and volunteers) of any genuine concerns and brought to the attention of the Department and Community Services.

- **Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998.**

This Act prohibits persons with a conviction for serious sex offences from working in child related employment. Employees are obligated by law to disclose to their employer (the school) their status in relation to the Act.

- **Commission for Children and Young People Act.**

Part 7 of this Act mandates the employment screening of preferred applicants for child related employment in schools.

Holy Spirit School is required to conduct employment screening for employing staff. As employer, we are required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of relevant disciplinary proceedings taken as a result of an allegation/conviction of abuse by an employee. We are also required to notify the 'Commission' of applicants who have not been offered child related employment as a result of an employment screening and assessment.

- **Ombudsman Act 1974**

This Act requires the Director of Schools to report to the NSW Ombudsman within 30 days, any allegations or convictions of reportable conduct made against employees of schools within the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

.... and that appropriate actions take place as a result of the findings of these investigations.

There is an obligation on the part of employees to inform the Principal of Holy Spirit School of any reportable conduct allegation or conviction against an employee. The Principal then has to inform the Catholic Schools Office Wagga Wagga.

PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL OFFICE IS YOU WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THE RELEVANT PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING MATTERS RELATING TO THIS POLICY.

Date Ratified	Principal's Endorsement	Review Due