

Child Protection

CATEGORY: C
POLICY: 3

Mission Statement

In the spirit of John XXIII, Mary Ward and Ignatius Loyola, our College seeks to develop people of competence, conscience and compassion who are committed to God and the service of others.

Strategic Priority

Community

Rationale

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

Every John XXIII College staff member shares responsibility for the pastoral dimension of the College. In doing so, they place themselves at the service of a core objective in Catholic education, as explicated in the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia's Child Protection Policy:

"We call on all staff to develop the kinds of relationships that will help them respond proactively to their students' pastoral needs. (Bishop's Mandate, paragraph 37, page 21).

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

Principles

The Ignatian tradition of John XXIII College places great emphasis on the concept of *cura personalis* – 'care of the whole person'. This concept has always played an integral role in guiding and driving the educational mission of the Jesuit fathers and Loreto sisters. In the words of the former Jesuit Superior General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ: "Cura personalis is simply help, from person to person, so that God and human may really meet."

In this context, and as a fundamental part of John XXIII College's broader commitment to meeting the pastoral needs of every student in its care, the College is committed to child protection strategies and

procedures to ensure the care, safety and protection of all children in our school.

The protection strategies and procedures to be followed are based on the following principles:

- 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.
- The value of the family unit is to be respected. However, this should not be to the detriment of the well-being of the child.
- All staff at John XXIII College have a responsibility to care for children and to promote their wellbeing.
- The dignity of the person shall be maintained and respected in all dealings regarding allegations of child abuse.
- In accordance with legislated requirements, the Children and Community Services Act (2004) (the Act) shall be adhered to in all Catholic schools.
- The confidentiality of all concerned in relation to an allegation of child abuse should be respected.

Definitions

Child abuse is 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
- neglect.

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.

Possible indicators of physical abuse

- Broken bones or unexplained bruises, burns, or welts in various stages of healing.
- The child or young person is unable to explain an injury, or explanations given are inconsistent, vague or bizarre.
- Direct admissions from the parents that they are concerned that they might harm their child
- Family history of violence.
- Marked delay between injury and obtaining medical assistance.
- A parent who shows little concern about the welfare of their child or the treatment and care of the injury.
- Repeated presentations of the child to health services with injuries, ingestion or minor complaints (this could also be an indicator of Factitious Disorder by proxy, a rare expression of physical and emotional abuse).
- The child or young person is unusually frightened of a parent or carer, or is afraid to go home.
- The child or young person reports intentional injury by their parent or caretaker.
- Arms and legs are kept covered by inappropriate clothing in warm conditions.

- Ingestion of poisonous substances including alcohol or drugs.
- Avoidance of physical contact by the child (particularly with a parent or carer).

Possible indicators of sexual abuse

- Sexualised behaviours inappropriate to their age (including sexually touching other children and themselves).
- Knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate to their years
- Disclosure of abuse either directly or indirectly through drawings, play or writing that describes abuse.
- Pain or bleeding in the anal or genital area with redness or swelling.
- Fear of being alone with a particular person.
- Child or young person implies that he/she is required to keep secrets.
- Presence of sexually transmitted disease
- Sudden unexplained fears.
- Enuresis and/or encopresis (bed-wetting and bed soiling).

Possible indicators of emotional or psychological abuse

- The parent or caretaker constantly criticises, threatens, belittles, insults, or rejects the child or young person with no evidence of love, support, or guidance.
- The child/young person exhibits extremes in behaviour from overly aggressive to overly passive.
- Delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development.
- Compulsive lying and stealing.
- High levels of anxiety.
- Lack of trust in people.
- Feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves.
- Eating hungrily or hardly at all.
- Uncharacteristic seeking of attention or affection.
- Reluctance to go home.
- Rocking, sucking thumbs or self-harming behaviour.
- Fearfulness when approached by a person known to them.

Possible indicators of neglect

- Signs of malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food.
- Poor hygiene: matted hair, dirty skin, or severe body odour.
- Unattended physical or medical problems.
- The child or young person states that no one is home to provide care (inadequate supervision, failure to ensure safety).
- Child or young person appears constantly tired.
- Frequent lateness to school or absence from school.
- Inappropriate clothing, especially inadequate clothing in winter.
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse present in the household.
- Frequent illness, low grade infections or sores.
- Hunger.

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

Reporting child abuse and neglect

Everybody has a duty to report concerns that involve the safety of children and young people.

- 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.

Procedures

- John XXIII College staff 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.
- Allegations of Misconduct and Serious Misconduct against Staff – 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
- 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.
- 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
- The principal shall ensure the school's pastoral care structures reflect the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.
- The principal is 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.
- 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

¹ [Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools](#)

² [Bishops of Western Australia 2009, Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia 2009 – 2015](#)

[John XXIII College Policy: The Management of Confidential Information in Schools](#)

⁴ [The Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia](#)

⁵ Allegations of Misconduct and Serious Misconduct Against Staff – Processes and Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia

⁶ 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)

[How to Deal with A Dispute or Complaint.](#)