



TASMANIAN
CATHOLIC
education commission

CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION POLICY

Policy No. 03:2017

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1 AUTHORITY AND APPLICATION

Date of approval	2 March 2017
Source of approval	Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission
Start date	7 March 2017
Date of review	March 2020
Date of amendments	20 February 2017
Previous policies replaced by this Policy	Not applicable

SIGNED:



Chair of the TCEC

DATE:

6 March 2017

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2 RELATED DOCUMENTS

This Policy should be considered in conjunction with the following related documents:

TCEC Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safe Code of Conduct • Cyberbullying • Disciplinary • Employee Code of Conduct • ICT (Information and Communication Technology) - Workers • Induction • Issues Resolution • Mandatory Reporting • Performance Management • Policy Terms, Definitions and Interpretation • Recruitment and Selection • School Grievances • Work Health & Safety • Working With Vulnerable People • Workplace Behaviour
AoH Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young Persons Protection Policy • Safe Communities – Protecting Children and Vulnerable People
Applicable Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (TAS)</i> • <i>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</i> • <i>Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 (TAS)</i> • <i>Criminal Code Act 1924 (TAS)</i> • <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i> • <i>Education Act 1994 (TAS)</i> • <i>Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)</i> • <i>Family Violence Act 2004 (TAS)</i> • <i>Police Offences Act 1935 (TAS)</i> • <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</i> • <i>Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (TAS)</i> • <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</i>

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3 DEFINITIONS

The TCEC document “Policy Terms, Definitions and Interpretations” defines a number of terms used in this document and should be referred to in conjunction with this policy. Some of the defined terms include:

- **CET** is Catholic Education Tasmania; a reference to the TCEO, all Schools and Governance operating in the Archdiocese of Hobart
- **Child** is a person under 18 years of age or a Student aged 18 years or older
- **Child-connected Work** is any Regulated Activity or other work authorised by the School and performed by a Worker in a School Environment while Children are present or reasonably expected to be present
- **Child Safe** is a safety-oriented approach to providing for the care and protection of Children in an environment and manner that maximises their opportunities to grow, learn and reach their potential
- **Child Safety Service (CSS)** (previously Child Protection Services) is the organisation established by the Tasmanian government to protect children and young people who are at risk of abuse or neglect
- **CTC** is the Roman Catholic Church Trust Corporation of the Archdiocese of Hobart
- **Governance** is the various authority structures, decision-making processes and lines of accountability and responsibility that pertain to any Catholic education School or organisation operating in the Archdiocese of Hobart
- **Mandatory Reporter** is any person who is prescribed as such under Section 14 of the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997. Within CET this includes any:
 - Principal or Teacher
 - Registered Psychologist
 - Registered Nurse or Enrolled Nurse
 - Worker involved in the provision, management and administration of education, health, welfare and/or childcare services
- **Mandatory Reporting** is the legislative requirement imposed on Mandatory Reporters to report to the Child Safety Service if he or she knows, believes or suspects, on reasonable grounds that:
 - a Child has been or is being abused or neglected;

- a Child has been or is being affected by family violence;
 - there is a reasonable likelihood of a child being killed or abused or neglected by a person with whom the child resides; or
 - while a woman is pregnant, there is a reasonable likelihood that after the birth of the child:
 - the child will suffer abuse or neglect, or may be killed by a person with whom the child is likely to reside; or
 - the child will require medical treatment or other interventions as a result of the behaviour of the woman or other person with whom the woman resides or is likely to reside with, before the birth of the child.
- **Other Person** refers to any person in a School Environment or Workplace who is not a Worker
 - **Parent/Guardian** is a person who has the legal authority and responsibility for the care of a Child
 - **Principal** is the person accountable for operating a School in accordance with the School's Governance and is directly responsible for overall leadership and management of the School
 - **Regulated Activity** is any activity or service which involves Children as defined in Registration to *Work With Vulnerable People Regulations Act 2014* (TAS)
 - **School** includes any Systemic School or College, Archdiocesan College or Congregational School or College
 - **School Activity** is any Student-based program or endeavour that does not fall within the scope of the regular curriculum (eg school camp, sporting events, excursions, outdoor learning, concerts, competitions etc)
 - **School Environment** is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by a School for use by Children during or outside School hours, that includes:
 - School grounds, including all campuses
 - online School environments, including email, intranet systems and Social Media platforms
 - other locations provided by the School for a Child's use including locations used for School Activities and School Events
 - **School Event** is any occasion that involves the wider School community (eg a fair, fundraiser, parent education evenings, parents and friends social functions etc)
 - **Student** is a person enrolled at a School
 - **TCEC** is the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission, an entity with delegated

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responsibility from the CTC for oversight of CET in accordance with its Constitution

- **TCEO** is the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office, the operational arm of the TCEC that provides professional support, services and guidance to all Schools
- **Teacher** is a person who holds either full registration, provisional registration or a limited authority to teach (LAT) with the Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania
- **Volunteer** is a person who gives their time willingly for the common good without financial gain
- **Wellbeing Staff** includes a counsellor, psychologist, social worker or other professional, employed or contracted by a School or the TCEO to provide health and wellbeing support services to Children
- **Worker** includes any person who carries out work or services in any capacity for CET either as:
 - an Employee
 - a Volunteer
 - a priest or a member of a religious order
 - a contractor, subcontractor or consultant
 - an employee of a contractor, subcontractor or consultant
 - an employee of an employment agency or labour hire company
 - an apprentice or trainee
 - an external student gaining work experience or on work placement
- **Workplace** is a place where work is carried out for CET, including any School Environment
- **WWVP** is Working With Vulnerable People

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4 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish and maintain Catholic Education Tasmania (CET) as a Child Safe Organisation within the context of the Archdiocese of Hobart policy framework, in support of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and to meet legislative obligations.

5 POLICY

- (a) The TCEC believes that a Child's fundamental right to be respected, nurtured, cared for and protected is embedded in Gospel values and that every Child is entitled to be educated and cared for in a safe environment and in a manner that optimises their opportunities to grow and develop to reach their full potential.
- (b) The TCEC is committed to the 'best interests of the Child' Principle as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and believes that all adults have a responsibility to take steps to prevent the occurrence of abuse or neglect towards a Child.
- (c) The TCEC has established CET as a Child Safe Organisation that:
 - is committed to Child Safe practices and procedures,
 - takes a preventative, proactive and participatory stance on Child Safety issues; and
 - has zero tolerance to Child abuse.
- (d) The TCEC has established a Child Safe framework that sets out behavioural and system requirements necessary to guide Child Safety practices and procedures in all CET Schools, School Environments and Workplaces.
- (e) The Child Safe framework forms the basis for embedding an enduring culture of safety that not only protects Children from harm, but also promotes their health and wellbeing in a broader sense.
- (f) The TCEC Child Safe Code of Conduct sets out behavioural expectations for Workers and Other Persons in School Environments and Workplaces and should be read and complied with in conjunction with this policy.
- (g) The TCEC requires Workers to demonstrate the highest standards of Child Safe conduct and performing whilst undertaking their duties, and in all School Environments and Workplaces.
- (h) The TCEC requires all Governance, Schools and Workplaces to implement Child Safe strategies and practices that align with the Child Safe framework and associated TCEC policies and procedures.

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6 CHILD SAFE FRAMEWORK

The CET Child Safe framework has Children at the centre, representing the primacy of their safety at the heart of what we do. The framework has four intersecting Child Safety elements set within a broader environmental context. The framework is represented diagrammatically below, followed by a more detailed explanation of the environment and TCEC’s expectations and requirements for each element.

Catholic Education Tasmania – Child Safe Framework



6.1 Environmental Context

6.1.1. Catholic Identity and Mission

Catholic education is underpinned by the teachings and tradition of the Catholic Church, in particular the belief in the innate dignity of every human being and giving witness to Christ by living according to the Catholic values of respect, integrity, hospitality, inclusiveness, forgiveness and justice. Catholic Schools are living expressions of the church’s pastoral mission and Students and Workers are encouraged to reflect and live the Catholic identity in every facet of life, study and work.

6.1.2. Catholic Communities

Catholic education is part of the wider Catholic community of local parishes, the

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Archdiocese of Hobart and the world. As such, Schools are encouraged to actively participate in their local parishes and collaborate with other Tasmanian, Australian and international Catholic communities to access the richness of shared faith and spiritual heritage.

6.1.3. Tasmanian and Global Communities

Catholic education plays a significant role in developing responsible citizens, responding to global challenges and human need with compassion, fairness and justice that respects the dignity of all. CET Schools, in partnership with families and local communities, provide quality education and opportunities to engage in faith, social action and justice activities to support Students to develop as citizens who respect others and are empowered to shape and enrich the world according to Catholic values.

6.2 Child Safe Elements

6.2.1. Open and Aware School Culture

The TCEC requires Schools, Governance and the TCEO to develop and maintain open and inclusive cultures where:

- (a) the safety and wellbeing of all Children is of primary importance;
- (b) School Child Safe systems and processes are clear and transparent;
- (c) Children are instructed on their rights to be safe and made aware of what to do if anything makes them feel worried, afraid or unsafe;
- (d) Children with distinct needs from diverse cultures and backgrounds have those needs recognised and respected;
- (e) Children are recognised as individuals and their opinions and views are encouraged, listened to, and valued;
- (f) Children are provided with opportunities to learn and develop skills that empower them and encourage them to reach their full potential;
- (g) Children are given opportunities to participate in decision-making processes that affect them; Workers are provided with access to the TCEC Child Safe Code of Conduct and understand expectations;
- (h) Workers involved in Child-connected Work are instructed how to identify, respond to and report Child Safe concerns;
- (i) all members of the School community have access to the TCEC Child Safe Code of Conduct and know what to do if they have a concern;
- (j) all members of the School community feel they can speak up if they have a problem or concern, knowing they will be heard and supported;
- (k) all members of the School community are encouraged and enabled to understand and participate in discussions about Child Safety to increase knowledge and skills;
- (l) School leaders take the lead in championing and embedding a culture of preventative, proactive and participatory Child Safety; and
- (m) Child Safe systems and processes are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

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6.2.1. Child Safe Conduct

The TCEC requires Schools, Governance and the TCEO to ensure that conduct in School Environments and Workplaces is Child Safe and that people are held to account for their conduct in accordance with the following as applicable:

- (n) TCEC Child Safe Code of Conduct;
- (o) TCEC Employee Code of Conduct;
- (p) other relevant professional codes of conduct;
- (q) TCEC Mandatory Reporting obligations;
- (r) other relevant TCEC policies, procedures or contractual arrangements, and
- (s) other relevant School policies and procedures, including guidelines for Children and how they are expected to interact with one another.

6.2.3 People Management

The TCEC requires Schools, Governance and the TCEO to have systems and practices in place to ensure:

- (a) recruitment and selection of Employees is conducted in accordance with TCEC policies and procedures;
- (b) appointment/engagement of Volunteers and other non-employee Workers involved in Child-connected work is conducted in accordance with TCEC policies and procedures;
- (c) all commencing Workers are provided with access to the TCEC Child Safe Code of Conduct and any specific School Child Safe policies;
- (d) commencing Workers involved in Child-connected work receive instruction to enable them to understand their Child Safe responsibilities with respect to:
 - (i) identifying and taking appropriate action to protect Children from harm; and
 - (ii) Mandatory Reporting;
- (e) supervision, feedback and ongoing training is provided to Workers;
- (f) Worker misconduct concerns are managed in accordance with TCEC policies and procedures; and
- (g) Children misbehaviour concerns are managed in accordance with School behavioural management policies.

6.2.4 Reporting Concerns

The TCEC requires Schools, Governance and the TCEO to have systems and practices in place for Workers to respond to, report and appropriately manage:

- (a) concerns about a Child's welfare;
- (b) disclosures of Child abuse;
- (c) notifications to the Child Safety Service;
- (d) allegations or disclosures of Worker misconduct; and

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- (e) other grievances/complaints.

7 COVERAGE

This Policy covers and applies to all Workers and Other Persons.

8 REQUIREMENTS

- (a) Schools, Governance and the TCEO must communicate and implement this Policy within their area of responsibility.
- (b) Principals/Managers/Supervisors are required to promote and champion this Policy within their area of responsibility and take reasonable steps to ensure that any potential breaches of this Policy are taken seriously and acted upon immediately and appropriately.
- (c) Workers are required to comply with this Policy and Applicable Laws.
- (d) Parents/Guardians agree to support this policy as a condition of enrolling their Child in a CET School.

9 CHILD SAFE ACCOUNTABILITIES

9.1 Schools, Governance and the TCEO

Schools, Governance and the TCEO are responsible for:

- (a) implementing and enforcing TCEC policies, procedures, codes and guidelines in their Schools and Workplaces;
- (b) establishing clear conduct and behavioural expectations in accordance with TCEC policies, procedures, codes and guidelines, statutory obligations and professional registration responsibilities;
- (c) ensuring access to policies, procedures, codes, guidelines, obligations and responsibilities as they apply; and
- (d) working with parishes and other non-Catholic schools to develop an awareness of Child Safety in all areas of involvement.

9.2 Principals/Managers/Supervisors

Principals/Managers/Supervisors are responsible for:

- (a) developing and implementing safe and supportive learning and teaching environments that fulfil professional standards of a duty of care to Children, where Children feel safe, are treated with respect and protected from harm, in all School Environments and Workplaces;
- (b) developing and maintaining Child Safe cultures in their areas of responsibility;
- (c) implementing reliable and effective Child Safe risk management strategies, particularly around how risks are managed and reported;
- (d) ensuring that all Workers who are Mandatory Reporters (whether paid or voluntary), are

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aware of, and understand their responsibilities in relation to Mandatory Reporting as set out in the TCEC Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures; regularly reinforcing TCEC professional conduct and behavioural expectations and managing poor performance and misconduct in accordance with TCEC policies and procedures;

- (e) where necessary and in accordance with TCEC policies, procedures and guidelines:
 - (i) managing reliable and effective Child Safe complaints processes;
 - (ii) providing pastoral care and support for Children and their families where disclosures and/or allegations of abuse have been made;
 - (iii) implementing measures to maintain procedural fairness for Workers where disclosures and/or allegations of abuse have been made;
 - (iv) providing pastoral care and support to a Worker who has disclosed misconduct or against whom an allegation of abuse has been made; and
 - (v) complying with all Child Safe reporting requirements, including Mandatory Reporting, and cooperating fully with all Child Safety investigations as needed.

9.3 Workers

- (a) Workers involved in Child-connected Work are responsible for:
 - (i) promoting the safety and wellbeing of Children in all School Environments and Workplaces so that Children are treated with respect, protected from harm and feel safe;
 - (ii) engaging in behaviours and conduct consistent with the TCEC Child Safe Code of Conduct;
 - (iii) supporting Children to develop awareness, understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe;
 - (iv) encouraging Children to engage in decisions that affect them;
 - (v) recognising and respecting distinct needs of Children from diverse cultures and backgrounds; ensuring that Children know who they can talk to if they are feeling unsafe;
 - (vi) taking all reports of suspected harm seriously;
 - (vii) complying with all relevant Child Safe policies, procedures and reporting requirements, including Mandatory Reporting as per the TCEC Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures, and cooperating fully with all Child Safety investigations as needed.
- (b) Workers not involved in Child-connected work are responsible for having their work area reasonably secured or fenced off in such a manner that they do not have contact with Children.

9.4 Other Persons

Other Persons are responsible for engaging in behaviours and conduct consistent with the TCEC Child Safe Code of Conduct.

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9.5 Parents/Guardians

Parents and Guardians are expected to support the TCEC and their School in relation to policies and systems as agreed in the terms and conditions of enrolment of their Child.

9.6 Children

Children are expected to adhere to their School's guidelines for how they are expected to interact with one another.

10 APPOINTMENT OF CHILD SAFE OFFICER

The TCEC requires the Director to appoint a Child Safe Officer at the TCEO to:

- (a) support Principals/Managers/Supervisors with Child Safety matters and queries;
- (b) assist the Director with complex Child Safety matters and queries; and
- (c) regularly review the elements of the TCEC Child Safe Framework to ensure that TCEC policies, processes, systems and risk management strategies remain contemporary and compliant.

11 BREACH OF POLICY

- (a) There will be consequences for breaches of this policy that may involve disciplinary action and/or termination of employment or services.
- (b) Incidents of abuse, neglect or Child-harming behaviours will involve referral to the Police or the Child Safety Service.

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