



POLICY ON STUDENT PROTECTION

1. Reflection Material

- 1.1 All Hallows' School Mission Statement
- 1.2 All Hallows' School Strategic Plan
- 1.3 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Edition 2019

2. Definitions

Abuse – students can experience abuse in several ways including sexual abuse, physical abuse and emotional or psychological abuse.

Harm – as defined by Section 9 of the Child Protection Act 1999:

1. Harm, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.
2. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
3. Harm can be caused by –
 - (a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
 - (b) sexual abuse or exploitation.
4. Harm can be caused by –
 - (a) a single act, omission or circumstance; or
 - (b) a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

3. Rationale

All Hallows' School is committed to being a safe and nurturing community of care where the rights and dignities of all children and young people are upheld and protected.

This policy complements and enhances the statutory child protection obligations of Queensland Catholic schools. The objectives of the policy will be achieved through implementing child safe practices and processes, building the capacity of all staff, volunteers and other personnel who provide services to students to act protectively, and holding to account those staff charged with responsibility to protect children. All engagement with students is underpinned by the principle of acting with the best interests of the child as a primary consideration.

Student protection is integral to teaching and learning. A safe, supportive, inclusive and positive environment underpins a student's capacity for learning and maximises potential for personal and social development, ultimately enhancing wellbeing and life opportunities.

4. Policy

The objective of this policy is to support students at All Hallows' School to both feel safe through providing the care and protection necessary for their wellbeing and to support staff in the implementation of student protection processes.

Compliance

Measures to ensure compliance with State and Commonwealth legislative requirements and Church expectations will include ongoing development, monitoring and review of:

- formal student protection reporting and governance processes, that ensure compliance with legislation, including the reporting of harm and abuse of students;
- implementation of risk assessment and mitigation processes when student harm has occurred, or appears imminent;
- codes of conduct that clearly outline expected professional boundaries when working with students;
- clear avenues to support the pastoral care and wellbeing of students, and others affected by harm to a student;
- immediate and appropriate responses to disclosures of abuse and harm, actual or suspected.

Building Capacity

All Hallows' School staff must have the knowledge and capabilities required to identify risks of harm and respond appropriately. The capacity of staff to manage student protection in a proactive and compliant manner is developed by:

- building a culture of transparency and accountability to ensure that student protection is the responsibility of every person and is an integral aspect of student wellbeing;
- requiring participation of all staff in annual, mandatory professional training in student protection;
- providing additional, professional learning for the Principal, other relevant specialist staff and the staff who are designated as Student Protection Contacts;
- training volunteers and other personnel who work in schools providing services to students;
- providing learning programs for students to develop awareness and skills that lead to their empowerment and an ability to identify risk, act protectively and seek assistance;
- ensuring that staff recruitment processes emphasise student protection.

Partnerships

Effective partnerships are essential to protecting students and All Hallows' School will:

- partner with parents and caregivers as an essential element of student protection within our school community, including respecting the diverse circumstances of students and responding effectively to those with vulnerabilities;
- keep families and students informed and involved in creating and maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment for students and facilitate child-friendly ways for students to communicate and raise their concerns;
- develop and maintain professional relationships with relevant government and non-government agencies to enhance the protection and support of students.

Accountability

Internal and external accountability is achieved through:

- demonstrated compliance by specified staff, in accordance with their legislated student protection obligations, included mandatory reporting to relevant authorities;

- appropriate governance, effective and accurate record keeping and respect for privacy and confidentiality;
- maintaining rigorous review processes.

5. Related Policies, Guidelines and Procedures

- 5.1 Student Protection Processes for Queensland Catholic School Authorities – All Hallows’ School
- 5.2 Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct
- 5.3 Volunteers Code of Conduct
- 5.4 School Community Code of Conduct
- 5.5 Student Code of Conduct

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