

Child Safe Policy

Catholic Education Office

March 2017

Our commitment to child safety

The dignity of the human person, who is created in the image and likeness of God, is a fundamental belief of the Catholic Church and the foundation of Catholic Social Teaching. This Catholic anthropology leads us to afford all people, especially children, young people and the most vulnerable, the highest respect. Within this context, the CEO is committed to providing a safe, supportive and secure environment that promotes respect, care and values diversity.

The CEO is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Protection Program designed to keep children safe.

The CEO is at all times committed to zero tolerance for child abuse and to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and exposure to family violence.

The CEO regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Children's rights to safety and participation

Staff and volunteers of the CEO encourage children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them. We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

We value diversity and do not tolerate discriminatory practices in the Catholic Education Office. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally, religiously and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome children with a disability and their families to promote their participation

Recruiting staff and volunteers

The Catholic Education Office maintains high standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require Working with Children Checks for relevant positions. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements.

Code of Conduct

The Catholic Education Office seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The Catholic Education Office takes all allegations seriously and has appointed Kevin Lawlor and Frances Browne to be the Child Safety Persons with specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers parents or children. They can be contacted through the CEO's Bendigo office on 03 5443 2377

Risk management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively work to minimise risks of abuse to our children.

Regular review

This policy was approved by the Director of Catholic Education on ***, and will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. The CEO undertakes to seek views, comments and suggestions from staff, volunteers and others.

The next review of this policy is due in April 2019.