

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN – FAILURE TO PROTECT PROCEDURE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Protection of Children – Failure to Protect Procedure applies to all primary and secondary Catholic schools managed and operated by Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (**DOSCEL**). This Procedure also applies to the DOSCEL Secretariat.

Protecting children and young people against sexual abuse is a community wide responsibility. DOSCEL has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure children and young people are safe in their care and to ensure that all forms of abusive behaviours towards children are prevented.

It is a clear legal duty of all adults to report child sexual abuse to police. Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child has an obligation to report that information to Victoria Police on 000 or the local police station.

This obligation applies to all non-mandated employees and adult community members over the age of 18 years, and should be read in conjunction with the DOSCEL Protection of Children – Failure to Protect Policy.

It is imperative to prevent, reduce and minimise child abuse and exploitation in all their forms.

2.0 PURPOSE

This procedure informs DOSCEL employees of their responsibilities in relation to the disclosure/reporting responsibilities and removing the risk to children and young people of suspected abuse where practicable.

This procedure acknowledges the particular duty DOSCEL employees have towards children and young people in their care.

It respects the dignity of children and young people and outlines the rights and responsibilities of DOSCEL employees.



3.0 PROCEDURE

Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, and their voices heard, and where they are safe and feel safe.

The successful implementation of this policy will include the following:

- Regularly communicating this policy to employees and the wider community
- Educating children in personal safety and sexual abuse
- Educating school employees to identify possible sexual abuse
- Taking action that is timely, respectful and coordinated when an employee forms a belief that a child or young person is at risk of being harmed through sexual abuse, or has been harmed, such action to include:
 - Reporting the matter to the Police and the Principal
 - Knowing that Victoria Police has primary responsibility for conducting investigations into the alleged matter.
- Reporting to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (**DFFH**) unless otherwise advised by the police
- Ensuring the child or young person and the child or young person's family have access to appropriate services in order to reduce any long-term effects of the abuse
- Documenting all allegations and retaining records in a secure area, ensuring their confidentiality
- Where appropriate, sharing information with other prescribed Information Sharing Entities under the Child Information Sharing Scheme or Family Violence Sharing Information Scheme.

4.0 REFERENCES

- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)
- *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014* (Vic.)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse*
- *Protect: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools*
- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Code of Conduct and Ethics

5.0 RELATED POLICIES

- DOSCEL Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy
- DOSCEL Child Protection and Safety Policy
- DOSCEL Duty of Care Policy
- DOSCEL Family and Domestic Violence: A guide to supporting staff
- DOSCEL Guide to Reporting Conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- DOSCEL Mandatory Reporting Policy
- DOSCEL Pastoral Care Policy

- DOSCEL Protection of Children – Anti-Grooming Policy
- DOSCEL Protection of Children – Failure to Disclose Policy
- DOSCEL Protection of Children – Failure to Protect Policy
- DOSCEL Reporting Obligations Procedure