



Catholic
Education
Commission
Tasmania

MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Mandatory reporting requirements form a critical element of **CET's** endeavours to protect **Children** and **Young People** from harm.
- 1.2 Mandatory reporting requirements overlap with other obligations on CET workers to report instances of concerns regarding children's welfare, including obligations that arise under CET's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023*.
- 1.3 This Policy has been developed to:
- (a) Enable CET **Workers** to fulfill their mandatory reporting requirements, while also meeting other reporting requirements under CET's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023*.
 - (b) To help to establish and maintain CET as a child and youth safe organisation within the context of the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* and the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023* (Tas).

2 WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all Catholic Schools operating in the Archdiocese of Hobart, the TCEO, and all CET Workers in the course of their work (whether paid or voluntary) or when involved in any CET activity
- 2.2 For the purposes of this Policy, a CET Activity includes any Catholic School or TCEO activity held or occurring:
- (a) in a CET Workplace.
 - (b) in a CET School Environment; or
 - (c) on an external site, such as school camps or excursions, where the child remains under the supervision and duty of care of CET.

There are no exclusions to the application of this policy.

3 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

- 3.1 CET has made the following statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of young

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people.

- (a) We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people while enabling their participation as valued members of our community.
- (b) We have zero tolerance to child abuse and harm. Our people prioritise the safety of the children they interact with in the performance of their role and must report any conduct of concern.
- (c) We recognise the importance of child safety in the provision of quality education services. All children who attend Catholic Schools in Tasmania have the right to feel safe, be safe, and be heard.
- (d) We recognise our legal and moral responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe and have robust policies and procedures in place to meet this commitment that are aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- (e) We want children to thrive, be safe, happy, and empowered, and are dedicated to ensuring their views are listened to and respected, and they are given opportunities to contribute to how we plan and deliver our services that affect them.
- (f) We are committed to being a Child Safe Organisation.

4 POLICY

- 4.1 CET is committed to maintaining and encouraging an organisational culture where Children and Young People feel safe, are treated with respect and protected from harm. It does this by putting in place the settings required to establish and maintain CET as a child safe organisation within the context of applicable legislation and the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*.
- 4.2 All **Mandatory Reporters** shall comply with obligations under applicable legislation, this Policy and all other elements of CET's **Child Safety Program**.
- 4.3 Without limiting any statutory obligation, Mandatory Reporters must:
 - (a) Notify Tasmania Police on 000 if they believe a CET **Student** has been **Sexually Abused** or is in immediate danger of being **Abused, Harmed** or **Neglected**.
 - (b) Notify the Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line (1800 000 123) as soon as practicable if they have a **Child Safety Concern** regarding a CET Student.

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(c) Notify the relevant Principal and CET's Child Safety Officer as soon as practicable that they have contacted Police or the Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line by completing CET's **Child Safety Notification Form**.

(d) Take any steps necessary to ensure the safety of the Child or Young Person.

4.4 Any CET worker who suspects that a CET Worker has engaged in **Reportable Conduct** must report their suspicion using the Inappropriate Worker Behaviour Form in accordance with CET's Reportable Conduct Policy.

4.5 An annual review of reported mandatory reports / child safety notifications shall be undertaken by the Child Safety Officer to ensure that:

(a) Any systemic issues are identified.

(b) Action is taken, where reasonably practicable, to reduce Child Safety Concerns.

(c) Action is taken where possible to improve CET's Mandatory Reporting regime.

4.6 Adequate records of mandatory reports / child safety notifications and of associated matters shall be created and kept in accordance with CET's records management guidelines.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The following people must fulfill the responsibilities allocated to them under this Policy:

<i>People who are:</i>	<i>Must:</i>
<i>Directors</i>	1. Ensure compliance with this Policy.
<i>CET's Child Safety Officer</i>	2. Ensure Mandatory Reporters are trained and understand their responsibilities in relation to mandatory reporting.
<i>Workplace Managers</i>	3. When approached or notified by a Mandatory Reporter who has a Child Safety Concern: (a) Ensure the child or young person's safety. (b) Assist, if necessary, the reporter to notify the Police or the Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line and to complete CET's Child

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	<p>Safety Notification Form.</p> <p>(c) Continue to observe the child or young person and take further action as required.</p> <p>(d) Provide support as required to:</p> <p>(i) The reporter.</p> <p>(ii) Others involved in ongoing support of the child or young person.</p> <p>4. On becoming aware a mandatory report involves a Reportable Conduct allegation against a CET Worker, immediately inform CET's Child Safety Officer (the TCEO's Executive Manager: People Services T: 03 6210 8888).</p> <p>5. Cooperate with any Child Protection Agency investigation and implement required protective interventions.</p>
Workers who are Mandatory Reporters	<p>6. Comply with this Policy.</p>

6 COMPLIANCE (LEGISLATION AND OTHER DOCUMENTS)

6.1 Applicable legislative instruments containing overarching obligations:

Tasmanian legislation

- (a) *Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997.*
- (b) *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023.*
- (c) *Criminal Code Act 1924*

Other

- (a) *Non-government Schools Registration Board Guidelines.*
- (b) *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.*
- (c) *Tasmanian Office of the State Archivist Notice of a disposal freeze on records relating to children*

6.2 Any failure to comply with an obligation under this Policy will likely result in disciplinary action

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taken under CET's Workplace Behaviour Policy and CET's Code of Conduct.

7 DEFINED TERMS

Abuse, Harm or Neglect means sexual abuse or physical or emotional injury or other abuse, harm or neglect, to the extent that:

- (a) The abused, harmed or neglected person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological harm detrimental to the person's wellbeing; or
- (b) The abused, harmed or neglected person's physical or psychological development is in jeopardy.

Child Safety Concern means a belief, suspicion or knowledge that a person has committed Reportable Conduct or that the safety, psychological wellbeing or interests of a child or young person are affected or likely to be affected by family violence.

Child Safety Notification Form means the relevant form accessed by the designated QR code on CET's Mandatory Reporting Flowchart or via the child safety icon on the CETKP homepage.

Child Safety Program means CET's suite of child safety governance instruments that collectively form CET's Child Safety Program i.e.:

- (a) Child Safety Policy (this policy)
- (b) Child Safety Code of Conduct
- (c) Reportable Conduct Policy
- (d) Mandatory Reporting Policy
- (e) Working with Vulnerable People Policy
- (f) TCEO Child Safety Committee Terms of Reference.

Grooming means conduct of a person that:

- (a) is intended to establish trust with the aim of normalising sexually harmful behaviour towards, or allowing the person to engage in an unlawful act, sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, against, the child; and
- (b) forms part of a pattern of manipulative or controlling behaviour in relation to –
 - (i) the child; or
 - (ii) the child's guardian, family, or friends; or
 - (iii) a worker of a relevant entity that provides services to, or has dealings with, the child.

Mandatory Reporter means any CET employed or engaged person involved in the provision,

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management or administration of education, health, welfare or childcare services. Includes but is not limited to principals, teachers, support staff, volunteers, coaches, bus drivers, utility officers, psychologists and counsellors.

For the purposes of this policy the meaning of a mandatory reporter excludes:

- (a) A student on a work experience placement.
- (b) A worker under the age of 16 years.

Reportable Conduct means behaviour that constitutes:

- (a) A breach of CET's Child Safety Code of Conduct
- (b) **Grooming** of a Child or Young Person.
- (c) Conduct that causes or is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm to a Child or Young Person.
- (d) Physical violence against Child or Young Person.
- (e) Sexual offence or sexual misconduct, committed against, with, or in the presence of a child or Young Person (includes sending/uploading sexually explicit digital/social media posts, child pornography offences, whether or not the behaviour falls below the criminal offence threshold).
- (f) Significant neglect Child or Young Person.
- (g) Unreasonable treatment of a Student but not extending to conduct which is reasonable for the purposes of the discipline, management or care of students having regard to appropriate professional standards.

Reportable Conviction means a conviction for an offence that involves reportable conduct, regardless of whether the conduct or conviction occurred before the commencement of the *Child and Youth Safe organisations Act 2023*.

Sexually Abused means any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Child sexual abuse includes grooming, which refers to behaviours that manipulate and control a child, their family and other support networks, or institutions with the intent of gaining access to the child, obtaining the child's compliance, maintaining the child's silence, and avoiding discovery of sexual abuse.

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Worker means any person who carries out work or services in any capacity for CET either as a member of staff, a volunteer, a cleric, a member of a religious institute or lay catechist, member of a religious order, a nun or a brother, a contractor, a subcontractor, an employee of a contractor, a consultant, a counsellor, a casual worker, an employee of an employment agency or labour hire company, an apprentice or trainee or an external person gaining work experience or on work placement.

Workplace Manager means a member of staff with team leadership responsibilities e.g. a principal.

Young Person/People means persons who have attained the age of 16 years but have not attained the age of 18 years.

Definitions for all other key terms used in this document are included in the *CET Terms and Definitions* on the CET Website.

8 FURTHER INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

- 8.1** For further information and assistance in relation to this Policy please contact CET's Child Safety Officer (the TCEO's Executive Manager: People Services) T: 03 6210 8888.

9 REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

- 9.1** This Policy will be reviewed every four years.
- 9.2** Updated versions of this Policy will be available on the CET website and on request.

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