



St Mary's College Board

286 Margaret Street
TOOWOOMBA Q 4350

PO Box 6237
TOOWOOMBA WEST Q 4350

Email: board@stmaryscollege.com

Telephone: (07) 4631 7333

Fax: (07) 4631 7399

Website: www.stmaryscollege.com

STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

RATIONALE:

St Mary's College has student protection as a priority. In the first instance this priority is inspired by the sincere belief that every student is made in the image of God and should be treated with respect. Recent revelations of the abuse and neglect of children and young people by those in positions of trust and responsibility, demonstrates a wide-spread evil in society. St Mary's aims to honour its ethical and legal obligations in the matter of student protection.

PRINCIPLES

- All adults have a responsibility to care for children and older students, to promote their welfare and to protect them from any kind of harm.
- Students have a right to safety in relationships as part of their total education and therefore should be protected against harm caused by school staff, other school students or those beyond the immediate school community.
- All persons involved in situations where harm to a student is suspected or disclosed, must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

VALUES

- Every human being is created in the image of God and has inherent dignity.
- Personal integrity is both a right and a responsibility.
- Respect in relationships is essential to Christian community.

POLICY

St Mary's College is committed to fostering a safe and caring environment within which students experience a proper sense of their own dignity and the dignity of others; safety in relationships; as well as security and support in addressing any situation in which they are at risk of or suffer harm.

CONSEQUENCES

- The compliance with this policy is mandatory for each person working within St Mary's College Toowoomba.
- That any behaviour which jeopardises this environment is contrary to the ethos of Catholic schools and will not be tolerated.
- That all suspected or alleged 'harm'¹ to children and youth will be addressed by procedures that provide an immediate response and comply with civil and church requirements.
- That regular professional development will be provided to staff so that a clear understanding of these requirements is understood.
- That support for the principles of privacy and the need for confidentiality will be maintained.

- That systems for the implementation of the policy will periodically be reviewed and updated as required.
- That St Mary's will provide opportunities for all boys to learn to protect themselves as an essential part of the school's curriculum.
- That responsibilities, procedures and consequences for non compliance with this policy as outlined in the Catholic Education Office's STUDENT PROTECTION & RISK MANAGEMENT KIT will be followed at St Mary's.

REFERENCE

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes *Towards Healing, December 2000.*

¹. "Harm" caused to a student under 18 years of age, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the student's physical, psychological or emotional well-being.

- It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
- Harm can be caused by
 - Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
 - Sexual abuse or exploitation.

(The Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulations 2001, 3).

While the legal definition applies to students under 18 years of age, the position of Catholic Schools Authorities is that their duty of care extends to all students. A liaison between a teacher and a student over the age of 18 could be regarded as a breach of a pastoral relationship even if it cannot be deemed a criminal offence.

The definition given here does not include spiritual hurt, yet this is a serious concern within all areas of Church Ministry.