



# AQUINAS COLLEGE

## CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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### **PART 1: COMMITMENT**

#### **Statement of Commitment**

Aquinas College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students. Aquinas College respects and values the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of every child and young person, based on our Christian belief that every person is made in the image of God and children and young people are entrusted to us by the love of God.

#### **Vision and Mission**

Aquinas College is a welcoming community enthused by the teachings of Jesus Christ where academic excellence is valued and students are nurtured and empowered to create a future of hope.

In living our vision, we are inspired by:

- The academic excellence exemplified by Thomas Aquinas
- The mercy and justice witnessed by Catherine McAuley
- The faith and courage of Edmund Rice
- The proactive service embodied in the life of Caroline Chisholm
- The compassion of Oscar Romero

#### ***Community***

We value:

- A community where there is a love of God, of life and of learning
- A welcoming community where we can feel safe, learn and be treated with respect
- The life and dignity of each person
- Relationships which foster lifelong learning

#### ***Learning***

We value:

- A process of constant curriculum renewal
- A curriculum which offers a dynamic, challenging, rich and diverse range of learning experiences
- The learning which encourages stewardship of our environment.

Aquinas College's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy has been developed in compliance with our obligations under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011* to promote and protect children and young people. Aquinas College is a systemic Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Brisbane which is administered by Brisbane Catholic Education ("BCE").

## **Codes of Conduct**

BCE has developed codes of conduct and standards of behaviour for employees, students, volunteers (including parents) and other personnel in consultation with relevant parties. These codes of conduct set out BCE's requirements in relation to the conduct of employees who work at Aquinas College, together with students, volunteers and other personnel at the school and contain specific information on interacting with students.

BCE employees who work at Aquinas College are also bound to comply with BCE's Statement of Principles for Employment in Catholic Schools or the Statement of Principles for Employment Catholic Education and other relevant professional standards (for example, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Australian Professional Standards for Principals which describe effective, contemporary practice for teachers and principals).

### **BCE Employee Code of Conduct**

The Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane Code of Conduct ("Code of Conduct") sets out the standard of behaviour required of BCE employees working at Aquinas College. All BCE employees must comply with the Code of Conduct, including employees employed on a temporary, casual, fixed term or continuing basis.

The Code of Conduct states that BCE employees must act appropriately and professionally at all times in their interactions with students and observe appropriate boundaries, behaviour and contact with students. In addition, the Code of Conduct covers the employees' duties in relation to risk management and duty of care obligations to students.

The Code of Conduct is uploaded on BCE's Intranet (KWeb). The Principal at Aquinas College facilitates enrolment in the online Code of Conduct training for school employees at the time of induction for all new staff and at least biennially for all other staff, and, uses the training materials provided by BCE.

### **Student Behaviour Support Policy**

Aquinas College has developed a Student Behaviour Support Plan for the school, in consultation with all groups in the school community and in accordance with BCE's Student Behaviour Support Policy. The Student Behaviour Support Plan has been implemented for a whole school approach to support student behaviour in the school environment.

Aquinas College's Student Behaviour Support Plan reflects the shared values and expectations of the school to student behaviour support and encourages a supportive Catholic school environment. The Student Behaviour Support Plan includes a student code of behaviour which is guided by BCE's Student Behaviour Support Policy.

The Student Behaviour Support Plan is readily accessible to students and parents and is uploaded on the Aquinas College's Intranet/Website.

Our school uses BCE's Student Behaviour Support System (SBSS) to track the behaviour of students and proactively support student's behaviour through data-based decision making.

### **Volunteer and Other Personnel Code of Conduct**

BCE has developed a Volunteer and Other Personnel Code of Conduct which outlines the standard of behaviour which is required of volunteers (including parents) and other personnel in their activities in the school, including the need to think and act safely and treat students and staff with respect.

Aquinas College takes the following actions to ensure that the BCE Volunteer and Other Personnel Code of Conduct is implemented in the school community:

- all volunteers and other personnel are able to access a copy of the Volunteer and Other Personnel Code of Conduct;
- all volunteers and other personnel are required to comply with the Volunteer and Other Personnel Code of Conduct to continue their voluntary/professional engagement at the school;
- all volunteers and other personnel have completed Student Protection Training via the interactive online training module located on the BCE Public Website; and
- all volunteers and other personnel must complete and sign the Volunteer and Other Personnel Register Sheet.

## **PART 2 - CAPABILITY**

### **Procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff that enhance the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and the protection of children and young people from harm**

#### **Recruitment and selection**

Aquinas College aims to recruit and select employees that work with students in the school that are appropriately qualified and suitable for working with children and young people.

Aquinas College is responsible for staff recruitment, selection, training and management of employees in the school in partnership with personnel from the BCE office.

Principals and employees involved in staff recruitment, selection, training and management of employees at the school must comply with the relevant BCE policies which are published on the BCE Intranet and include:

- Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Teachers Procedure
- Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Brisbane Catholic Education Office Staff
- Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Middle Leaders
- Recruitment, Selection and Appointment (Acting Senior Leadership Positions in Schools)
- Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of P – 12 Heads
- Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of DPs, APs and APREs

- Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Principals
- Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of Specialist Positions, such as Guidance Counsellors, School Pastoral Workers, Speech Pathologists, Campus Ministers and School Chaplains.

In advertising new positions for the school, the advertisement states that “This position involves working with children. The appointment of a successful applicant will be subject to satisfactory employment screening for child related employment in accordance with the law”.

Aquinas College adheres to BCE's policies and procedures in relation to employment which are contained in the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*, *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011*, *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act and Regulation 2017*, and the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005*.

All non-teaching employees working at Aquinas College are required to comply with BCE's Blue Card Screening Procedures (discussed below). All non-teaching employees, volunteers and trainee students who work with students and who require a Blue Card under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*, are required to obtain a Blue Card and keep it current. All teachers are required to produce evidence of current teacher registration with the Queensland College of Teachers (“QCT”) before they commence work at Aquinas College.

### **Training and Management of Employees**

The Principal is required by BCE to ensure that all new BCE employees at Aquinas College are provided with induction training on the school's processes and procedures, the values and expectations of BCE and the standard of behaviour required of employees in their interactions with students, to support BCE and Aquinas College to provide an environment that is safe and supportive for students.

All staff at Aquinas College must complete mandatory online training in BCE's Student Protection Processes, once every two years. Student protection training covers BCE's requirements under the Student Protection Processes in relation to reporting by staff of suspicions or allegations of:

- sexual abuse/likely sexual abuse of students;
- harm or risk of harm to students caused by physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect; and
- inappropriate behaviour of staff to students.

This training provides our staff at Aquinas College with strong skills to effectively respond to and report suspicions or allegations, as required by law. New employees must complete this training within four weeks of commencing work at the school. In the alternate year, face to face refresher training for staff is conducted by the Principal at Aquinas College. In addition, the school's newly appointed Student Protection Contacts complete BCE mandatory training for Student Protection Contacts to upskill them in receiving and managing disclosures from students.

Additional on-going training is provided by BCE and employees at the school are encouraged to attend. BCE has a dedicated Workforce Capability Team which co-ordinates professional learning opportunities for BCE employees to enable BCE employees to enhance their professional or personal knowledge and skills. Aquinas College encourages its staff to attend professional learning courses. Many of the courses offered to employees relate to

the safety and wellbeing of students. For example, courses are offered from time to time on bullying at schools, behaviour management of students, students at risk of harm and students with special needs.

Where there is a complaint or allegation in relation to an employee of inappropriate behaviour, unsatisfactory performance or misconduct, the Principal (or in some cases, the Senior Leader – Learning and Identity or the Employee Relations Team at the BCE office) will take all appropriate management action, which may include requiring employees to undertake additional training, mentoring employees, explaining BCE's and the school's expectations and requirements to the employee, or dismissal. The BCE Staff Complaints Management Procedure and BCE Staff Misconduct Procedure sets out a clear process for handling complaints and allegations of misconduct.

BCE provides the Employee Assistance program to give free and confidential counselling to employees at the school who require support.

### **Other BCE Support for Student Wellbeing**

Aquinas College recognises that students learn best in school environments in which they feel safe, both physically and emotionally. BCE has developed a number of policies, processes and resources to support the pastoral care and wellbeing of students at Aquinas College. These are readily accessible to BCE employees on BCE's Intranet. The Principal at Aquinas College provides informal training, from time to time, at staff meetings and 'in service' days, so that employees at the school are aware of these policies.

These policies and processes include:

- BCE Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Position Statement
- Children and Young People in Care of the State
- Refugee, At Risk and Marginalised Students
- Natural Disasters: Preparation and Response
- Critical Incident Response Guidelines
- A Catholic Perspective on Relationships and Sexuality Education Shape Paper
- Teacher Background Supporting a Catholic Perspective in Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Relationships and Sexuality Conceptual Framework
- Online BCE Australian Curriculum and a Catholic Perspective
- Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy
- Management of Drug Related Incidents in Schools
- Management of Police Interventions in Schools
- Management of Weapons in Schools Guideline
- Suicide Intervention (Lifeline Prevention Program)
- Suicide Postvention Guideline
- Students with Disabilities Policy
- Student Attendance Policy and Guidelines
- Manual Handling – the Handling of Students Policy
- Administration of Medicine to Students Policy
- Positive Behaviour for Learning
- Social Media Policy

BCE has a Student Wellbeing Team which supports Aquinas College in the pastoral care and wellbeing of students at the school and develops strategies, policies and procedures to assist the school and students. Aquinas College employs a School Guidance Counsellor to work with students, parents and staff and provide pastoral care, personal safety strategies, support for marginalised students and support for students who may be at risk of being harmed.

BCE has a number of university partnerships which may provide additional psychological services to students and their families together with professional learning for staff regarding a Catholic perspective on relationships and sexuality education.

## **PART 3 - CONCERNS**

### **Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm**

#### **Student Protection Processes**

BCE's Student Protection Processes provide a process for all staff who work at Aquinas College to recognise, respond and report allegations or suspicions of:

- sexual abuse/likely sexual abuse of students;
- harm or risk of harm to students caused by physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect; and
- inappropriate behaviour of staff to students.

The Student Protection Processes have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act and Regulation 2017*, the *Education (General Provisions) Act and Regulation 2006*, the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* and *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011*, the *Child Protection Act 1999* and the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005*. The *Student Protection Processes Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane* document was reviewed and republished in keeping with the QCEC template that was developed in collaboration with BCE and other Catholic employing authorities. The BCE processes were approved by NSSAB in June 2017.

The Student Protection Processes are also underpinned by the Archdiocese of Brisbane Catholic Education Council's *Student Protection Policy (2011)* and complements the procedures developed by the National Committee for Professional Standards entitled *Towards Healing – Principles and Procedures in Responding to Complaints of Abuse Against Personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia (2010)* and the document entitled *Integrity in the Service of the Church (September 2011)*.

Reports are to be made to the Queensland Police Service in relation to allegations or reasonable suspicions of sexual abuse/likely sexual abuse of a student or to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for harm/risk of harm to a student caused by sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. If a report is made in relation to inappropriate behaviour of a staff member towards a student, that report will be handled by the Principal, with support from BCE's Professional Standards and Student Protection Team. All school based employees must complete mandatory on-line training on BCE's Student Protection Processes every two years. The Principal must sign off that this mandatory training has been completed. Face to face refresher training is provided to staff in the alternate year to school based employees.

The Student Protection Processes are readily available for employees, parents, students and carers and Aquinas College has uploaded the link to the Student Protection Processes on their school website.

BCE has processes to enable staff at Aquinas College to complete on-line a Record of Concern about any student protection concerns, including allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse of a student, harm or risk of harm to a student or inappropriate behaviour of a staff member towards a student.

BCE has developed a complaints procedure to enable parents or students at Aquinas College to make a complaint that the school has not complied with the Student Protection Processes. Parents or students may make a complaint via the Record of Complaint about Non-Compliance with BCE's Student Protection Processes located on BCE's public website. The Principal or Senior Leader – Learning and Identity will handle these complaints in accordance with BCE's Procedure for Handling Complaints about Non-Compliance with BCE's Student Protection Processes.

### **School Student Protection Contacts**

In accordance with the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017*, Aquinas College has four stated staff members to whom a student can report behaviour of another staff member that the student considers is inappropriate.

The Principal is a Student Protection Contact at the school. The other Student Protection Contacts are a staff members at the school. The role of the Student Protection Contact is to receive complaints and allegations from staff and students and to make or assist staff to make all reports as outlined in BCE's Student Protection Processes. The identity of the Aquinas College Student Protection Contacts is made known to staff, students, volunteers and parents through the school website, school newsletters, posters in the school and/or parent information nights.

Information about the Student Protection Contacts and requirements for their appointment is detailed within the Student Protection Processes.

### **Student Protection Officers**

BCE has a Student Protection Team and Student Protection Officers working in this team are experts in the field of child protection. They all hold a degree in human services (generally social work) and have significant experience working in child protection.

Student Protection Officers assist our school based employees in assessing sexual abuse and likely sexual abuse and harm caused or at a risk of being caused to students by sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect. They also offer support and guidance to Aquinas College during and after a student protection intervention, assist with compliance with the Student Protection Processes and develop and facilitate professional learning for staff.

## **A plan for managing breaches of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy**

BCE and Aquinas College takes any breach of the BCE Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy or the Aquinas College Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy seriously. Breaches may be dealt with as follows:

- if the alleged breach relates to the actions of an employee, this will be managed, as appropriate, in accordance with the BCE Staff Complaints Management Procedure, the BCE Staff Misconduct Procedure or School Employee Unsatisfactory Performance Process;
- if the alleged breach relates to a report of inappropriate behaviour of a staff member to a student, this will be managed in accordance with the process set out in the Student Protection Processes;
- if the breach relates to a complaint made via the Record of Complaint about Non-Compliance with BCE's Student Protection Processes, that complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the Procedure for Handling Complaints about Non-Compliance with BCE's Student Protection Processes;
- if the breach relates to the actions of a volunteer or other personnel, this will be dealt with in accordance with the Volunteer and Other Personnel Code of Conduct and the procedures set out in the Student Protection Processes, as appropriate; and
- if the breach relates to the action of a contractor this will be managed in accordance with BCE's contract with the contractor.

## **A risk management plan for high risk activities and special events**

### **Risk Management Tools**

Aquinas College considers all curriculum activities in terms of their inherent level of risk. When undertaking a medium or high-risk activity or special event, our school is responsible for identifying potential risks and considering the safety and wellbeing of students and the risk of harm to students.

Aquinas College develops and implements an effective risk management plan to remove or minimise the risk of harm to students. The plan includes risk assessments and risk mitigation which are carried out for all medium or higher risk activities undertaken within the school and all activities undertaken outside of the school. Aquinas College refers to information in relation to risk assessments for various activities and risk assessment tools provided on BCE's Health and Safety Portal on the BCE Intranet.

The Health and Safety Team at BCE provides support to our school, if requested, to help us carry out risk assessments and develop and implement a risk management plan. In addition, a dedicated Workplace Health and Safety Officer ("WHSO") is employed at Aquinas College (who is required to complete a Certificate 4 in Workplace Health and Safety within 12 months of commencing the role). The WHSO's role is to co-ordinate risk assessments at our school and support the Principal in carrying out the health and safety responsibilities under legislation. BCE provides training and updates to the WHSO.

BCE has developed a Contractor Induction Manual to give contractors information on BCE's Workplace Health and Safety Contractor Management System at BCE schools, so that contractors working at Aquinas College play their role in maintaining a safe environment for students.

### **Risk Management for Excursions and Fetes**

The Principal is responsible for approving all excursions. The Principal has reference to BCE forms and fact sheets to assist in identifying, assessing and managing risks associated with excursions, for example, the BCE OH & S Fact Sheet: Excursions, OH & S Standard - Risk Management Form and the Risk Assessment Template Form. The

Principal completes the Risk Assessment Template Form prior to each excursion. This form specifies that in carrying out a risk assessment, student protection risks must be assessed and managed.

The Principal may utilise BCE's International Travel Procedures to assist in planning for the safety of students participating in international travel.

Students undertaking IDT and Hospitality undertake online safety training to assist teachers to ensure that students receive consistent safety training for the use of high risk equipment in these curriculum areas.

The Principal completes the BCE Fete Safety Planning Checklist prior to a fete taking place. This Fete Safety Planning Checklist assists the Principal in managing the health and safety risks of conducting a fete. The Principal accesses links to relevant information provided on BCE's Health and Safety Portal, to assist in the risk assessment and management process, including the Fireworks Checklist, Amusement Devices Checklist, Contractors Workplace Health and Safety Agreement and information on the hygienic handling of food.

### **Other Strategies to Minimize Risks of Harm**

Aquinas College takes seriously its commitment in relation to the safety and protection of students. BCE has developed policies and procedures to manage risks of harm to students, which our school complies with, for example:

- Supervision – Aquinas College manages the supervision of students appropriately to ensure that there is adequate supervision of students as detailed in the Code of Conduct.
- Emergency – Aquinas College ensures that all employees are briefed to appropriately handle emergency situations and critical incidents in accordance with BCE's Procedures for Responding to Critical Incidents.
- Fire/Lockdown – Aquinas College ensures that all employees and volunteers are made aware of fire evacuation and lockdown procedures at the school.
- Visitors/Outsiders – Aquinas College has procedures in place for the management of visitors and other outsiders, including relevant signage and directions, together with a visitor sign in register and procedures for signing in and out of the school [**insert other details for managing visitors and outsiders as appropriate**].
- Media/Communications strategies – Aquinas College obtains the permission of parents (using the Consent Form, All Forms of Media and Communications) for the use of student photographs and names in any materials issued to the public in printed or electronic form. Identifying information of students is not used in promotional material without the specific permission of the parents and the students concerned. Aquinas College obtains the specific informed consent of parents for any publication of names and photos of students in the media outside the local school.
- Computer/Internet - All employees and students at Aquinas College are required to observe the Brisbane Catholic Education Email, Internet and Intranet Acceptable Use Statement. Aquinas College implements the BCE Acceptable Use of Computer and Internet Resource Consent Form in the school.

- Guidance Counselling Service – The Guidance Counsellor at our school must obtain Informed Consent from a parent and/or student for participation in any guidance counselling services offered.

## **PART 4: CONSISTENCY**

### **Policies and procedures for compliance with Chapter 8 of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (which regulates the Blue Card system)**

#### **Blue Card Requirements and Employee Register**

Aquinas College complies with BCE's Blue Card Screening Procedure which details BCE's requirements in accordance with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* to ensure that the required personnel hold a Blue Card.

All employees, volunteers and trainee students who work at Aquinas College with children under 18 years of age are required by our school to obtain and hold a Blue Card (unless exempt), including:

- all school-based BCE employees who are not registered with either the QCT or the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency;
- volunteers (who are not parents of enrolled children);
- preservice teachers undertaking practical teaching sessions as part of compulsory academic course requirements;
- self-employed people, paid employees and volunteers whose usual duties include, or are likely to include, the teaching, coaching or tutoring of a child, individually on a commercial basis;
- students who undertake formal traineeships as part of their studies which involve work in child related employment, including conducting sport and recreation activities directed at children; and
- school board members (excluding current parents on a board at their own child's school).

A centralised register of Blue Card information for all paid employees, unless exempt, is maintained by BCE. **Aquinas College** provides Blue Card information to the BCE office when an employee, unless exempt, is engaged. Aquinas College ensures that details of any Blue Card renewals, applications and changes in status are also forwarded to the BCE office.

All teachers employed by BCE must be registered with the QCT. The Principal of Aquinas College sights the original certificates of registration and qualifications before employment commences at the school. The Principal ensures that new non-teaching employees must have applied for a Blue Card prior to commencing work at the school.

Aquinas College maintains a register of Blue Card information for all volunteers, unless exempt. Volunteers who require a Blue Card under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* must obtain the Blue Card before commencing work.

#### **Procedures for reviewing the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy**

To ensure that Aquinas College Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy remains current and effective, this strategy will be monitored and reviewed annually. In the event that Aquinas College identifies concerns, particularly following an incident, Aquinas College's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy will be reviewed.

Issues to be considered in the review may include:

- whether BCE and school policies and procedures were followed;
- whether any incidents/concerns relating to risk management regarding children and young people occurred;
- the effectiveness of the process used to manage any incidents;
- the effectiveness of BCE's and Aquinas College's policies and procedures in preventing or minimising harm to children and young people; and
- the content and frequency of training in relation to BCE's or Aquinas College's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategies.

Following the review, employees, parents and volunteers at Aquinas College will be advised of any significant changes to BCE's or Aquinas College's policies and procedures as a result of the review and where appropriate, training will be provided.

## **Strategies for communication and support**

### **Student Protection Training**

As discussed above, all staff working at Aquinas College must complete mandatory on-line training on BCE's Student Protection Processes. The Principal is required to sign off that every staff member has completed the course.

BCE's Student Protection Processes are readily accessible to parents, students and staff at Aquinas College and parents, students and staff are made aware of the processes and the process for reporting behaviour of a staff member that a student considers to be inappropriate. The Principal ensures that the 'Recognise React Report' posters are displayed prominently in areas of the school frequented by students.

### **Training on the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy**

Aquinas College's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy is uploaded on the school's website. The Principal implements and communicates Aquinas College's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy to parents, employees, volunteers and other personnel by:

- placing the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy on the school's website; and
- providing training to the school's employees by giving details on Aquinas College's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy and BCE's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy.