Aquinas College
Safeguarding Plan 2026



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Brisbane Catholic Education

teaching · challenging · transforming

Our Safeguarding Commitment

As an agency of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, we have a zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and are committed to safeguarding everyone involved in its activities, ministries, and services. The safety and wellbeing of children and adults-at-risk is paramount.

Accessibility

Brisbane Catholic Education is committed to providing accessible services to people from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this document, you can contact Translating and Interpreting Service National on 13 14 50 to arrange for an interpreter to translate it for you.

Contact for enquiries

Aquinas College

Edmund Rice Drive, Ashmore QLD 4214

Yugambeh Country,

PO Box 34, Ashmore City QLD 4214

07 5510 2888

www.aquinas.qld.edu.au

Attributions

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Acknowledgement of Country

We at Aquinas College acknowledge the Kombumerri people of the Yugambeh Language Nation as being the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our College is located and where we are meeting upon today. For thousands of years, the Kombumerri people have lived and nurtured the land, beaches, the rivers and mountains of this land we now know as "The Gold Coast".

This is a place of rich history, tradition, and great spiritual and cultural significance to the Kombumerri people. We acknowledge the Traditional custodians of the past and present, and their spiritual ancestors who have gone before us.

We acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and their importance as an integral part of and reflection of the cultural diversity of our school community.

For we too are one in land, one in spirit, one in faith united in God's love.

Introduction

> **Because wherever a child or vulnerable person is safe, there you serve and honour Christ.**
>
> Pope Francis written address to the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors' plenary assembly in Rome March 24-28, 2025.



Aquinas College, Ashmore, is committed to creating environments where children and young people feel protected, valued, and heard. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and every child has the right to grow and thrive free from harm.

We are guided by our Christian Catholic Tradition and the teachings of Jesus Christ who advocated for the protection of children and the marginalised. Our mission to teach, challenge and transform through our educational endeavours is actioned by Catholic Social Teaching, as part of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

The Queensland Government recently introduced new Child Safe Standards. These Standards clearly outline what child safe organisations must do to create environments where children are protected, respected and able to speak up. They focus on building safe, welcoming cultures, hearing and valuing children's voices, working closely with families, celebrating diversity, making sure the right people work with children, responding quickly to concerns, and always looking for ways to improve safety.

> The Archdiocese has **zero tolerance** for all forms of abuse and is committed to safeguarding everyone involved in its activities, ministries, and services. The safety and wellbeing of children and adults-at-risk is paramount.

Throughout 2026, our school will review its compliance against the new Child Safe Standards using a phased approach in line with Queensland Family and Child Commission guidelines. We will review, self-assess and report against selected Standards each term, building towards full implementation and continuous improvement across all Standards by the end of the year. This staged process allows Aquinas College to embed the Standards meaningfully and ensure our practices reflect the needs, voices and safety of our students.

As a Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Brisbane, we honour the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Commitment and uphold the values of Catholic education in our safeguarding practices.

This School Safeguarding Plan is developed in consultation with students, families, and employees, and is contextualised to our local school environment. It reflects our commitment to continuous improvement, cultural safety, and child-centred practice, and is supported by both Brisbane Catholic Education policies and procedures and school-specific safeguarding actions. Further Information about BCE wide practices can be accessed here.

For more information or to request accessible formats, please contact the school Principal.

The Child Safe Standards

Standard 1: Leadership and Culture
Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the entity's organisational leadership, governance, and culture.

Standard 2: Voice of children
Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Standard 3: Family and community
Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Standard 4: Equity and diversity
Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

Standard 5: People
People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Standard 6: Complaints management
Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused.

Standard 7: Knowledge and skills
Staff and volunteers of the entity are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training.

Standard 8: Physical and online environments
Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed.

Standard 9: Continuous improvement
Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

Standard 10: Policies and procedures
Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children.

Universal Principle
Requires child safe entities to provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety.

Safeguarding Focus Areas

The 10 standards are grouped under four key focus areas:



The Universal Principle

Ensuring cultural safety through the Universal Principle is essential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families.

While the Principle intentionally focuses on First Nations children, the cultural safety indicators which make up the Principle are designed to adopt a proactive and comprehensive approach to safeguarding, ensuring that policies, and practices are inclusive for all children, particularly those who may be marginalised or vulnerable.
The Universal Principle is embedded within all 10 Standards.

Cultural Safety Indicators

1 **Transformational unlearning** – Organisations must challenge unconscious bias, racism, and discrimination within their structures and workforce.

2 **Negotiating values, motivations, and paradigm** – Policies and programs should be co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to reflect their perspectives on child safety.

3 **Prioritising social and emotional wellbeing and health** – A holistic, strengths-based approach must be adopted to support the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, staff, and families.

4 **Sharing power and decision-making** – Decision-making processes should be led or co-led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure genuine partnerships.

5 **Sharing resources** – Organisations should dedicate resources to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led initiatives, research, and governance mechanisms, where appropriate.

6 **Creating a strategic enabling environment** – Leadership must set clear priorities and accountability structures ensure cultural safety into daily operations.

7 **Operating on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terms of reference** – Service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children should be grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and self-determination principles.

8 **Accountability and continuous quality improvement** – Progress should be measured using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-defined success indicators, ensuring sustained improvement.

The Cultural Capability Framework

This framework enables Brisbane Catholic Education to develop a workforce grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural humility, enabling responsive and innovative practices that contribute to Reconciliation. The Cultural Capability Framework and Molum Sabe assists our workforce to critically reflect on individual and organisational practices and develop effective practices across four cultural standards:

Teaching

Culturally responsive teachers and education professionals create the conditions for respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and learning of knowledges, identities, cultures and languages.

Relationships

We develop relationships and connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, students, families and communities to build and sustain inclusive and culturally safe practices and environments.

Environment

We establish an inclusive and culturally safe environment, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, students, families and communities feel a sense of belonging and connection.

Leadership

All employees are accountable for building and sustaining inclusive and culturally safe practices and environments with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, students, families, and communities. Leaders have additional responsibilities to articulate a clear vision and provide ongoing cultural capability development opportunities for employees.

Standard 1: Leadership and Culture

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the entity's organisational leadership, governance, and culture[1]

Brisbane Catholic Education's commitment to Standard 1

At BCE, student safety is central to how we plan, think and act, shaping a safeguarding culture that protects their safety and wellbeing. We use a whole of organisation approach; led by strong leadership, embedded in practice and supported through shared responsibility. Clear policies, codes of conduct, Student Protection Processes and risk management plans set behavioural expectations and guide how we keep children safe. Our Safeguarding Policy aligns with the Archdiocese of Brisbane Safeguarding Framework and is available on our website. Leaders are accountable for ensuring these requirements are followed and continually improved. Safeguarding is a system critical foundation of the BCE Strategic Plan 2025–2027 and an identified enterprise risk, monitored through regular monitoring, internal audits and escalation pathways. Governance transparency is reinforced through quarterly reporting to the BCE Executive Team, Safeguarding Committee and Catholic Education Council, including assessments of practice effectiveness and improvement progress. We take a strong stand against discrimination, bias or harm toward any child and are committed to cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

What Standard 1 looks like at our school:

At Aquinas College, safeguarding is a shared and visible leadership responsibility. Our leadership team actively embeds child safety and wellbeing into governance, strategic planning and daily decision-making, guided by our Catholic identity, the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Commitment and Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) expectations. This includes ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and Community feel welcome, safe, valued, included and respected. At Aquinas College, we publicly display visual representations such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, artwork, and First Nations language signage that demonstrates our commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of First Nations students and their families.

The Archdiocese of Brisbane Safeguarding Commitment displayed in our school foyer. This Safeguarding Commitment serves as a regular reminder that at Aquinas College, the safety and wellbeing of our students are paramount.

Safeguarding is a standing priority within leadership meetings, staff briefings and school planning processes. Leaders model child safe behaviours, reinforce clear expectations for professional conduct and ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are understood and enacted by all employees, volunteers and third parties. Leadership oversight includes monitoring compliance with BCE policies, the Child Safe Standards and legislative. Before every school event, excursion or incursion, a risk assessment is completed to identify and manage risks to students' safety and wellbeing. This includes consideration of supervision arrangements and ratios, transport and emergency procedures, student privacy, and obtaining appropriate consent for photographs or recordings

Our leadership culture actively promotes openness and accountability. Staff, students and families are encouraged to raise concerns or ideas for improvement, knowing they will be responded to respectfully, sensitively and in a timely manner. Student voice and cultural safety are intentionally prioritised, ensuring safeguarding practices reflect the lived experiences of our students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disability.

[1] Alignment with National Catholic Safeguarding Standard (NCSS): Standard 1: Committed Leadership Governance and Culture | Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld), Schedule 1, Section 2(1), (2)(a) and (2)(b) | Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s 6 (1), (2) and s9 (e)

Standard 2: Voice of children

Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously[2]

Brisbane Catholic Education's commitment to Standard 2

We strive to create a culture where every child feels safe, heard and confident to share their ideas or concerns. Our employees and volunteers are supported to engage respectfully with students, listen carefully, and respond to their immediate needs. BCE's school safeguarding storybooks and animation series help explain our policies, processes and key safeguarding concepts to students in age appropriate ways. We also support schools to deliver Consent and Respectful Relationships Education so students understand their rights, identify trusted adults, and build positive, healthy and respectful relationships. Each year, students across all BCE schools are invited to share their views through the *Tell Them From Me* survey. This feedback helps us understand how students are feeling, their concerns and how we can strengthen safety and support in our schools. Our Student Voice Program gives students a platform to contribute to BCE wide decisions affecting their safety, wellbeing and learning. Our Archdiocesan First Nations Student Representative Council and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Team help co-design culturally safe policies and practices.

What Standard 2 looks like at our school:

At Aquinas College, student voice is embedded through a deliberate combination of curriculum, pastoral structures and leadership practices. Students are explicitly taught about their rights to safety, information and participation through the Health and Physical Education curriculum, where consent, respectful relationships and protective behaviours are systematically developed from Years 7–10 and reinforced in senior schooling.

Beyond classroom learning, students access a wide range of tools and supports including pastoral care programs, Guidance Counsellors, wellbeing initiatives, and external providers such as Headspace and e-Safety resources. These are reinforced through assemblies, Vertical Pastoral Care (VPC), and whole-school messaging, ensuring that learning about safety is continuous and visible.

Student voice is actively gathered and valued through structures such as the Student Voice Council and regular consultation processes. Feedback demonstrates that students generally feel heard and supported through pastoral pathways; however, it also highlights areas for growth, including inconsistent awareness of Student Protection Contacts and perceived stigma in accessing support.

In response, the College is strengthening: visibility of support pathways and key contacts; normalisation of help-seeking behaviours; and consistency of pastoral responses across Houses.

Student participation influences decision-making through formal leadership forums, feedback processes, and ongoing dialogue with staff. This ensures that safeguarding practices are shaped by student experience. Cultural safety is reflected in intentional efforts to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and to provide inclusive, accessible communication for all students.

Aquinas College promotes a strong curriculum integration of consent and safety education, established pastoral and student voice structures and targeted actions to improve visibility and reduce stigma.

[2] Alignment with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Standard 2 Children and Adults Are Safe, Informed and Participate | Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld) sch 1 s 2(8) (a) (ii) | Education (Accreditation of Non-state schools) Regulation (Qld) 2017 s 16(4) (a)–(b)

Standard 3: Family and community

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing[3]

Brisbane Catholic Education's commitment to Standard 3

Student safety, wellbeing and learning are best supported when families and schools work together and share responsibility for protecting students. At BCE, we believe informed and engaged families and communities are essential to creating safe learning environments. We support schools to partner with families in ways that are consistent, respectful, culturally safe and shaped by local needs. We also make sure families and community members have clear, accessible information about our safeguarding approach and how to raise concerns. Each year, parents and caregivers share their perspectives through the *Tell Them From Me* Parent Survey. This feedback helps BCE understand family experiences and concerns, guiding improvements that make our schools safer and more supportive for students.

What Standard 3 looks like at our school:

At Aquinas College, safeguarding is strengthened through active partnership with families and the broader community. Communication is consistent, layered and accessible, including newsletters, principal communications, the College website, parent meetings (AQPC) and direct engagement with pastoral leaders. Families are provided with clear information about pastoral care structures and student wellbeing supports, behaviour and safeguarding frameworks, access to Guidance Counsellors and support pathways and whole-school wellbeing initiatives and programs.

Feedback from parents indicates that the College is experienced as welcoming, communicative and relational, with strong confidence in wellbeing support. However, there is variability in understanding of processes and limited awareness of specific safeguarding contacts, highlighting the need for improved clarity and visibility.

Families are engaged as partners through AQPC and parent consultation forums, community events and College celebrations, feedback processes such as surveys and advisory groups.
These structures provide opportunities for families to contribute to decision-making and the ongoing development of safeguarding practices.

The College is strengthening transparency of wellbeing processes and support pathways, structured opportunities for parent co-design and input and consistency of messaging regarding inclusion and safeguarding.

Cultural safety is progressively embedded through engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including RAP initiatives and consultation with community voices.

Aquinas College promotes strong communication structures and parent engagement, positive parent perception of wellbeing supports and targeted actions to enhance clarity, co-design and cultural engagement.

[3] Alignment with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Standard 3 Partnering With Families Carers And Communities | Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld) sch 1 s 2(8) (a) (ii) | Education (Accreditation of Non-state schools) Regulation (Qld) 2017 s 16(4) (a)–(b)

Standard 4: Equity and diversity

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice[4]

Brisbane Catholic Education's commitment to Standard 4

Every student deserves to flourish and has the right to learn in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment, free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. BCE supports all students, regardless of background, identity or ability, to access and fully participate in their learning. We embed equity at the heart of our culture through the Student Diversity and Inclusion Policy, the Student Wellbeing Policy and the Queensland Catholic Education Council's Inclusive Practice in Catholic Schools. We expect school practices to reflect each child's circumstances and needs, and to prioritise culturally safe, trauma informed approaches in planning, communication and engagement. The Engage Student Support System and the Multi Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) help schools provide a student centred, comprehensive continuum of support. These systems enable collaborative, targeted and personalised assistance for diverse learners. We also provide children with opportunities to learn about different cultures, people and communities through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures Cross Curriculum Priority and the Australian Curriculum.

What Standard 4 looks like at our school:

At Aquinas College, equity and inclusion are supported through a layered approach that combines data-informed practice, pastoral care and targeted intervention. Student experience data indicates that while systems are effective and stable, there are opportunities to strengthen consistency, inclusion and student confidence in accessing support.

The College supports diverse learners through: Vertical Pastoral Care and Heads of House structures; Guidance Counsellor and Student Wellbeing services; Student Support Team processes and case management; differentiated practices aligned to the College Improvement Plan; and partnerships with families and external agencies.

Students are able to access support through multiple entry points, including trusted adults, pastoral leaders and curriculum-based teaching of help-seeking strategies. These supports are reinforced through assemblies, wellbeing programs and student leadership structures.

The College demonstrates a commitment to: trauma-informed practice through sensitive, relational responses; Cultural safety through the Reconciliation Action Plan initiatives and engagement with First Nations voices; and Inclusive practice for students with disability, diverse backgrounds and additional needs. However, the self-assessment identifies that staff understanding of culturally safe and trauma-informed practice, while developing, requires greater consistency, and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are not yet fully embedded across all policies and practices.

To address this, the College is implementing actions to strengthen staff capability in culturally safe and trauma-informed practice and embed First Nations perspectives within curriculum, policy and pastoral care. Aquinas College promotes strong pastoral and support systems for vulnerable students, data-informed identification and response to student needs and clear actions to strengthen cultural safety and inclusive practice.

[4] Alignment with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Standard 4 Equity Is Promoted And Diversity Is Respected | Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld) sch 1 s 2(3) (a) (ii) | Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s 11, s 15 (a)

Standard 5: People

People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice[5]

Brisbane Catholic Education's commitment to Standard 5

BCE supports schools to ensure that everyone working or volunteering with students is suitable, safe and capable of upholding child safety and wellbeing. Our recruitment and screening processes embed safeguarding at every stage, from role design and advertising through to interviews, reference checks, onboarding and performance development. The Employee and Volunteer Screening Procedure includes a role risk matrix, Blue Card screening requirements and clearly defined responsibilities. These help leaders identify potential risks to student safety and wellbeing and respond appropriately. BCE's Human Resource Information System, Ignite, operationalises these procedures and helps employees monitor and maintain their safeguarding screening requirements. Our Procurement Procedure requires all external providers engaging with BCE offices or schools to be child safe and compliant with relevant legislation. The Risk Management Framework guides how we monitor safeguarding practices in schools through established quality control mechanisms. These processes ensure schools can safely engage employees, volunteers and third parties, with appropriate oversight, training and supervision in place before any child related work occurs.

What Standard 5 looks like at our school:

In line with our implementation plan, at the end of Term 4 we will explain:

- How we screen and onboard employees, volunteers and third parties
- How we ensure safe supervision and conduct
- How we apply BCE recruitment and HR procedures for employees and volunteers
- How we track and keep safeguarding screening requirements current
- Evidence of practice and planned improvements

[5] Alignment with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Standard 5 Robust Human Resource Management | Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld) sch 1 s 2(8)(b) | Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s 15 (b)

Standard 6: Complaints management

Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused[6]

Brisbane Catholic Education's commitment to Standard 6

BCE fosters a culture where concerns about safety and wellbeing can be raised openly, respectfully and without fear. We support child focused complaint pathways that are accessible to students, families, employees and community members. Our policies and procedures outline reporting requirements, cooperation with authorities, and expectations for timely and safe responses to concerns. From 1 July 2026, BCE will implement Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme. This means BCE will report any reportable allegation or conviction, conduct investigations, provide interim and final reports to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, and immediately notify police of any suspected criminal conduct within required timeframes. BCE provides guidance and training to ensure complaints are handled in trauma informed and culturally safe ways, supported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation Officers and expertise from safeguarding, student protection, legal, wellbeing, school operations and program teams, and employee relations and investigations teams. System wide improvements are strengthening complaint handling processes, creating clearer pathways and embedding safeguarding expertise across the framework. These structures help schools respond to concerns with transparency, sensitivity and procedural fairness.

What Standard 6 looks like at our school:

At Aquinas College, students and families can raise concerns through trusted adults, Pastoral Leaders, Teachers, Guidance Counsellors, wellbeing staff or College Leadership, as well as by telephone, email or direct contact with the College. Student consultation indicates that students generally feel safe, supported and heard when approaching their Pastoral Leader. The College continues to promote help-seeking as a positive and responsible action.

Complaints are taken seriously and addressed promptly, respectfully and in a child-focused manner. Responses prioritise each student's safety, dignity, privacy and voice, with significant matters managed sensitively and privately by appropriate pastoral, wellbeing and leadership personnel. Restorative and trauma-informed practices seek to minimise further distress, avoid unnecessary repetition of a student's account and provide support appropriate to the student's individual needs and circumstances.

The College applies Brisbane Catholic Education policies and procedures to record, manage, escalate and resolve complaints, including reporting concerns to relevant authorities where required. Matters involving employee or volunteer conduct are escalated through BCE processes in accordance with Reportable Conduct Scheme requirements, while the College maintains student safety, appropriate records and support for those affected.

Evidence of practice includes established pastoral and wellbeing pathways, student access to trusted adults, private management of significant concerns, restorative responses and leadership review of complaint and incident information. The Self-Assessment identified the need for more consistent maintenance of the school-based complaints register and clearer culturally safe pathways. Planned improvements include termly audits of complaint records, stronger analysis of safeguarding trends, clearer communication of complaint processes, and consultation with BCE First Nations personnel to establish pathways for culturally safe, First Nations-led advice and support where required.

[6] Alignment with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Standard 6 Effective Complaints Management | Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld) sch 1 s 2 (4) (b) | Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s7 | Child Safe Organisations Act (Qld) Chapter 3

Standard 7: Knowledge and skills

Staff and volunteers of the entity are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training[7]

Brisbane Catholic Education's commitment to Standard 7

BCE builds a confident, capable and culturally aware workforce committed to children's safety and wellbeing. Our Mandatory Safeguarding Training Framework sets clear onboarding and refresher requirements for all employees. Every year, BCE employees complete online student protection training covering indicators of child harm, grooming behaviours, how to respond to disclosures and mandatory reporting requirements. School staff also participate in additional face to face training each term on topics related to student safety and wellbeing. Staff who serve as Student Protection Contacts (SPCs) receive advanced training in managing disclosures and supporting colleagues to keep students safe. Volunteers and third party providers complete mandatory safeguarding onboarding before commencing any child related work, along with annual refreshers recorded in school registers in line with the Volunteer Policy and Procedure and Third Party Safeguarding Guidelines. BCE has developed a Cultural Learning Plan and Cultural Capability Framework to strengthen cultural competency and responsiveness, promote cultural safety and BCE's Ngutana-Lui Centre provides curriculum-aligned cultural learning for students and staff. All employee training is tracked through BCE's Learning Management System (iLearn), which issues automated reminders and provides compliance reports to managers.

What Standard 7 looks like at our school:

In line with our implementation plan, at the end of Term 4 we will explain:

- How employees, volunteers and third parties complete required safeguarding training
- How the school reinforces safeguarding practice throughout the year
- How cultural capability is embedded in training
- How the school monitors and supports employees and volunteers to undertake mandatory training
- Evidence of practice and planned improvements

[7] Alignment with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Standard 7 Ongoing Education and Training | Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld) sch 1 s 2(8)(b) | Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s16, 4 (c)

Standard 8: Physical and online environments

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed[8]

Brisbane Catholic Education's commitment to Standard 8

BCE is committed to creating healthy, safe and productive physical and online environments that support student wellbeing, prevent harm and safeguard everyone involved in our activities. We take a holistic, strengths-based approach that recognises all dimensions of a child's wellbeing – physical, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural. Building plans are reviewed with a focus on environmental risks that may affect children's safety. The BCE Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Policy and BCE Safeguarding Guidelines for School Design provide practical guidance to build safe, inclusive spaces with strong visibility, supervision and access control. To support online safety, BCE aligns with the eSafety Commissioner's Best Practice Framework and delivers the Australian Curriculum for Online Safety (P–10). The Acceptable Use of Devices and Digital Resources agreement promotes safe digital behaviour and is supported by content filters and monitoring tools. Policies such as the Employee Code of Conduct, IT Acceptable Use Policy and Privacy Policy outline expectations for safe online behaviour. BCE provides guidance to help schools maintain safe digital environments, and student safety considerations are embedded in risk assessments, school risk registers and organisation wide risk management processes.

What Standard 8 looks like at our school:

At Aquinas College, physical and online environments are intentionally managed to promote student safety, wellbeing, dignity and participation. Physical spaces are maintained and supervised through clear duty arrangements, visible staff presence, leadership oversight and access to safe, supervised areas such as the e-hub and library. Higher-risk locations and one-to-one support spaces are regularly considered to ensure appropriate visibility, privacy, supervision and accountability.

Online safety is promoted through the curriculum, pastoral programs, assemblies and communication with families. College-managed platforms are monitored, harmful programs and unauthorised virtual private networks are blocked where possible, and cyberbullying concerns are documented and addressed through established behaviour and wellbeing processes. Employees model safe digital behaviours by using technology in accordance with BCE and College expectations, reinforcing responsible online conduct, monitoring student device use and referring concerns to pastoral, wellbeing, leadership or IT personnel as appropriate.

Physical and online risks are identified and managed through environmental scans, risk assessments, incident and injury data, student and staff consultation, workplace health and safety processes, technology controls and leadership review. Activities, excursions and external-provider arrangements are risk assessed to clarify safeguarding expectations, supervision responsibilities and appropriate controls before students participate.

Evidence of practice includes visible supervision, leadership monitoring of duty arrangements, facilities and workplace health and safety processes, curriculum-based cybersafe education, monitoring of College-controlled platforms and risk assessments for activities and external providers. Planned improvements include:

- Reviewing supervision and environmental controls in J Block, the Covered Sports Facility, balconies and out-of-bounds areas
- Reinforcing staff expectations for one-to-one interactions through induction, briefings and professional learning, with a focus on visibility, accountability and notification of student-support meetings.

[8] Alignment with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Standard 8 Safe Physical And Online Environments | Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld) | Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s 18 (1) s19

Standard 9: Continuous improvement

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved[9]

Brisbane Catholic Education's commitment to Standard 9

BCE is committed to continual review, learning and strengthening of safeguarding practice across both system and school levels. Ongoing improvement ensures our policies, frameworks and practices evolve in response to emerging issues, data and feedback, and remain effective in preventing harm and promoting wellbeing. System wide reviews are carried out by the Assurance Team, Risk and Compliance Team and through school accreditation processes. These reviews assess the effectiveness of safeguarding measures and identify opportunities to strengthen practice. Critical incidents also trigger structured post incident reviews to identify risks, evaluate responses and enhance wellbeing supports for students and employees. Governance committees, including Safeguarding, Risk and Assurance, and People and Safety, monitor trends and support system wide improvements. Schools are supported to monitor their own safeguarding indicators, such as Blue Card compliance, attendance, bullying and wellbeing data, enabling a local cycle of review, reflection and continuous improvement.

What Standard 9 looks like at our school:

Aquinas College is committed to continuous improvement in safeguarding practice. In alignment with the Child Safe Standards; safeguarding policies, procedures and practices are reviewed at least annually and following any incident, concern or identified risk to ensure they remain effective, relevant and child-centred.

We use a range of review mechanisms to inform improvement, including an: annual review of the Child Safe Standards; analysis of complaints, concerns and incident data; feedback from students, families, staff and volunteers; and outcomes from audits, training compliance and risk assessments.

Learning from incidents and near-misses is prioritised. The College collects feedback through surveying the community to support safer practices. Where safeguarding concerns identify gaps in practice, leadership documents actions, implements changes and monitors their effectiveness. These learnings are shared with staff where appropriate to strengthen collective understanding and practice.

Student voice is central to our improvement cycle. We actively seek feedback on students' sense of safety, wellbeing and belonging, including culturally appropriate consultation processes. This feedback informs adjustments to environments, supervision, communication and support structures. Through this reflective and evidence-informed approach, Aquinas College ensures safeguarding remains responsive and proactive.

Aquinas College promotes student wellbeing initiatives through Student Voice, a gathering of its Student Leaders. The Assistant Principal – Student Wellbeing speaks to student safety and wellbeing at fortnightly assemblies. The student leader responsible for Student Wellbeing and Engagement promotes initiatives at the fortnightly assembly and leads Wellbeing Week during Week 8, Terms 1 – 3.

With the implementation of the Child Safe Standards in Queensland in 2026, Aquinas College is undertaking a comprehensive and progressive review of all aspects of student safety and wellbeing. Across 2026 we will self-assess against all ten Child Safe Standards (including the Universal Principle), through consultation with a diverse range of students, families, and staff, review of safeguarding data, and reflection on existing strengths and areas for improvement. Findings from this process will inform ongoing actions and be documented in our School Safeguarding Plan, which will be regularly updated and available on our website to ensure our families and broader community can clearly see how St Example prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all students.

[9] Alignment with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Standard 9 Continuous Improvement | Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld) sch 1 s 2(6)(a) | Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s20

Standard 10: Policy and procedures

Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children[10]

Brisbane Catholic Education's commitment to Standard 10

The Archdiocese of Brisbane Safeguarding Framework guides safeguarding practice across all Catholic entities, including BCE. The BCE Safeguarding Policy sits within this framework and is supported by a range of policies, procedures and guidelines designed to protect student safety and wellbeing. Under the BCE Policy Governance Framework, all policies are reviewed at least every three years through consultation, governance checks and formal approval. This ensures they remain current, reflect best practice and continue to support student safety, wellbeing and cultural safety. Consultation ensures policies reflect lived experience and meet the diverse needs of school communities. BCE is also working to make policies easier to understand and use, including creating child friendly resources. Policies and procedures are accessible to students, families, volunteers and third parties through BCE and school websites, and are available internally to employees through Spire. Safeguarding responsibilities are embedded in the BCE Leadership Capability Framework, ensuring leaders consistently communicate, model and apply policy requirements.

What Standard 10 looks like at our school:

Aquinas College maintains clear, accessible and comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures that document how we keep children safe. These align with BCE Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Standards, ensuring consistency, compliance and clarity across all school operations.

Our policies and procedures clearly outline: expected standards of behaviour and codes of conduct; safe recruitment, screening and supervision practices; processes for identifying, reporting and responding to concerns or allegations of harm; risk management for school activities, environments and online spaces; and complaints handling and escalation pathways.

Safeguarding documentation is actively implemented and communicated. Employees, volunteers and third parties receive induction and ongoing training to ensure they understand their responsibilities under these procedures. Safeguarding information is also shared with students and families in accessible, age-appropriate and culturally responsive ways.

At Aquinas, we use BCE policies and procedures which are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they address the requirements of the Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle and include clear procedures for safeguarding children.

Aquinas College demonstrates its commitment to safeguarding by implementing and maintaining clear, accessible policies that support the safety, wellbeing and dignity of students. Key policies include the *1-1 Device Program Information Booklet*, which provides guidance on safe, responsible and appropriate use of digital technologies. The *Attendance Policy and Procedures*, which support student wellbeing through accurate monitoring, follow-up and care. The *Mobile Phone and Earphone Policy* and *Social Media Policy*, which set clear expectations to protect students from harm, safeguard privacy and promote respectful online and offline interactions. Together, these policies provide a structured framework that guides staff, students, and families, reinforces child-safe practices and ensures that student safety considerations are embedded in daily school operations.

Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to reflect legislative change, emerging risks and feedback from the school community. This ensures that documentation remains practical, child-focused and embedded in everyday practice, rather than existing as standalone compliance documents.

[10] Alignment with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS): Standard 10 Policies And Procedures Support The Safety Of Children And Adults | Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld) s 2 (3-6) | Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)


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