

Essential Behaviours

Staff must accept responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of appropriate pastoral relationships including their use of technology in relation to these relationships.

To safeguard integrity and to preserve clarity of sexual and professional boundaries it is essential that members of staff

- ◆ Report any perceived breaches of professional conduct to the Principal or the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education.
- ◆ Avoid any behaviour that could be reasonably interpreted as harassment, inappropriate or harmful.
- ◆ Ensure, whenever reasonably possible, that another adult is present or close by when working in a one-to-one situation with a student, and avoid providing pastoral care or individual tuition in situations where students are or may feel isolated.
- ◆ Avoid, whenever reasonably possible, being alone with a student or students in sleeping, dressing or bathing areas.
- ◆ Take particular care to respect personal space e.g. when supervising the sleeping quarters of students.
- ◆ Never supply or serve alcohol or any prohibited substance to a student.
- ◆ Never supply or serve any controlled substance to a student without the express permission of a parent or guardian.
- ◆ Never administer corporal punishment to students.
- ◆ Ensure that language or actions (including that utilizing technology) cannot be reasonably interpreted as sexualising a pastoral relationship.
- ◆ Seek professional advice and review of pastoral relationships when there is any sense the relationship is uncomfortable, dysfunctional or unproductive.
- ◆ Never ridicule, demean or intimidate a student or threaten their sense of personal safety.

These essential behaviours (not to be considered an exhaustive list) must be observed in all relationships between staff and students (even if students are 18 years of age or older) enrolled in Rockhampton Diocesan Catholic schools.

If any of these behaviours are breached, staff may be liable to criminal, employment and professional penalties.

This brochure is authorised by the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Rockhampton, March 2013.

Integrity In Relationships

Principles and Standards for Staff in Catholic Schools



**Diocesan Catholic Education Office
Diocese of Rockhampton**

INTRODUCTION

As people working in the name of the Church, members of staff are not only in a legal relationship but are also in a pastoral relationship with students of the school. They are also in a pastoral relationship with other people where their roles as staff members require them to assist with supervision, education, counselling, medical care etc.

All members of staff in Catholic schools have a duty of care towards the students in that school. Students, whose trust is seriously betrayed, can thereafter find it difficult to trust those in positions of authority or pastoral care or to believe in or trust in God. Hence, relating sensitively to students is central to the ministry of the Catholic school. In the case of teachers and other professional staff there are additional obligations that arise out of their professional roles. It is intended that this statement of Principles and Standards forms part of a Code of Conduct that would supplement other professional statements of principles and standards that apply, for example, the most current Code of Practice relating to professional conduct issued by the Queensland College of Teachers.

The document is based on *Integrity in Ministry* which provides useful guidance to all those who work in the name of the Church.

This document is intended for use by all staff in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Rockhampton and should be read in conjunction with the Diocesan Code of Conduct, the ICT Policy and Codes of Ethics. It incorporates principles that staff are expected to uphold in their interactions with each other, students, their families and the wider school community. The behavioural standards given in the document provide examples of the type of conduct that flows from the principles and are not to be considered an exhaustive list. Some specific behavioural requirements are also documented. The emphasis in this document is clearly on right relationships. There are other professional and employee responsibilities that are dealt with in other documents.

Principles

- 1.1 **Staff in Catholic schools witness to the students and respective communities, God's nurturing and all-inclusive love for every human person by reverence and respect.**
- 1.2 **Staff are in a special position of trust and authority in relation to students and have a special responsibility to care for students, to promote their welfare and to protect them from any form of harm.**
- 1.3 **Students and others in Catholic school communities have a right to expect that staff members will exhibit a strong respect for the emotional and physical boundaries which are appropriate and fundamental to their pastoral relationships.**

Behavioural Standards that follow from these principles are:

- ◆ treating everyone with fairness, dignity and respect
- ◆ respecting the physical and personal space of others, especially with regard to physical contact
- ◆ respecting the reputation and integrity of others and treating personal information with sensitivity and appropriate confidentiality
- ◆ taking action where it is seen that inappropriate behaviour impinges on the rights or dignity of others
- ◆ applying the principles of justice, fairness and compassion in dealing with behaviour management issues
- ◆ honouring the differences among people (e.g. in ethnicity, religion, age, ability, gender, sexual orientation and economic circumstances)
- ◆ seeking to resolve conflicts peacefully rather than by the unjust use of power
- ◆ exercising caution in the use of status or power and not using them for self-advantage or self gratification
- ◆ encouraging the growth of personal freedom and responsibility, in particular avoiding the possible exploitation of others
- ◆ being aware of the possible inequalities and risks that might accompany a personal relationship where a pastoral/professional relationship is involved
- ◆ accepting responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of appropriate professional and pastoral boundaries
- ◆ being familiar with the causes and signs of child harm, abuse or neglect, the steps to be taken for the protection of students, and the procedures to follow if harm, abuse or neglect is suspected or observed.
- ◆ reflecting on the quality of the pastoral and professional relationships established by the individual and by others