



**Catholic Education**  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**Catholic Education Centre**

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## MEMO

JS:SAH:GENERAL\2002\CHILD PROTECTION

<b>TO:</b>	<b>ARCHBISHOP WILSON; JOAN ATKINSON</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>ALLAN DOOLEY</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>20 MARCH 2002</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CHILD PROTECTION</b>

Please find below briefing notes regarding our work in child protection.

1. Catholic Education SA has a variety of strands in its commitment to child protection; these vary from proactive to reactive.

The SACCS Child Protection Policy and the child protection legislation, namely the Children's Protection Act (1993) define our work in this area. A further document that articulates the values which shape our work in child protection is the SACCS Vision Statement.

2. **Proactive**

The Catholic Education Office, through the Human Resource Services Team and the Principal Consultants, is responsible for supporting schools in implementing the Child Protection Policy.

In SA a teacher must be registered with the SA Teachers Registration Board. Any new registration now requires a police check. Any renewal of registration now requires the completion of a declaration by the teacher stating that the teacher:

- Has never been found guilty or convicted of a criminal offence
- Has never been dismissed or asked to resign from a teaching position
- Has never been refused or withdrawn registration in another country or in another state in Australia.

A policy for the scrutiny of other staff is currently being finalised by SACCS. Our advice to schools currently is that before the employment of any person, their current employer or if not currently employed their immediate past employer, must be contacted and prospective staff at all levels are questioned regarding any investigations or convictions on matters involving children and or violence.

Principals receive information as part of their induction and ongoing training. Staff receive training in Mandatory Notification of Child Abuse. The Catholic Education Office arranges this full day training with providers who are accredited by Family and Youth Services (FAYS) or refer individuals to other providers such as Mission Australia. In addition, the Catholic Education Office can arrange for an abridged session of

Mandatory Notification Training for schools who wish to update their skills and knowledge.

The Catholic Education Office has worked with FAYS and in particular the Central Intake Team to strengthen the relationship between FAYS and Catholic Education SA.

Catholic Education SA was also involved in developing the Interagency Guidelines that were launched several years ago.

Catholic Education SA maintains co-operative relationships with DETE and AISSA in relation to specific child protection issues.

Catholic Education SA provides advice to all schools regarding careful character screening of:

- ♦ employees
- ♦ volunteers
- ♦ third party providers.

Professional development sessions are provided to boarding house staff, teachers and ESO's, regarding duty of care (including child protection issues) by our Legal Officer.

Catholic Education SA is working with the union to develop guidelines for dealing with complaints of misconduct against staff (including principals) including child abuse. This will be an adjunct to the document "Dealing with Allegations of Child Abuse".

The procedures of Catholic Education SA are consistent with Towards Healing, the Catholic Church's procedures for dealing with complaints of abuse.

### 3. Reactive

The Catholic Education Office has guidelines for investigating allegations of child abuse against employees or volunteers in Catholic schools.

The role of FAYS and the police is paramount here.

Principals handle such situations with advice from their Principal Consultant, the Coordinator of Human Resource Services and the Legal and Industrial Officer. The Director actively oversees these processes.

The safety of each child is the paramount consideration in such matters.

When the Catholic Education Office is advising a school regarding its handling of any matter connected with possible child abuse staff are always reminded of their individual obligation to report suspicions about child abuse to FAYS.

The Directors of Catholic Education in South Australia report to the Archbishop of Adelaide and the Bishop of Port Pirie on any reports or matters of concern regarding the safety of students.



ALLAN