



CHILD PROTECTION: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE RECORDKEEPING

‘The management of accurate records by institutions that care for children is critical to identifying, preventing and responding to child sexual abuse.’ Royal Commission CEO Philip Reed

The Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga recognises the 5 key principles proposed by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse as foundational to the implementation and maintenance of comprehensive record management.

Principles Underpinning Good Recordkeeping

1. Creating and keeping accurate records is in the best interest of children.
2. Accurate records must be created about all decisions and incidents affecting child protection.
3. Records relevant to child sexual abuse must be appropriately maintained.
4. Records relevant to child sexual abuse must only be disposed of subject to law or policy.
5. Individuals’ rights to access and amend records about them can only be restricted in accordance with law.

The Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga accepts that;

- Good recordkeeping practices and accurate records can contribute to better outcomes in complaints handling, redress and criminal proceedings
- These principles are intended to promote child safety, institutional accountability and just outcomes for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse

In addition to child sexual abuse, the Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga accepts these principles as being applicable to all forms of abuse including physical abuse, neglect, psychological harm, domestic violence and grooming.

Maintaining Appropriate Records

All workers have an obligation to maintain appropriate records and data in relation to their professional practice in the care and protection of children and young people.

A record serves an essential administrative, legal and historical purpose. Records can include class rolls, student assessment records, emails, electronic documents, digital image and audio recordings, meeting minutes, correspondence, statements, records of interviews, files, forms, plans, drawings, notes, photographs and films.

The responsibility to create and maintain appropriate records of professional activities and decisions in the care and protection of children and young people includes contemporaneous records of any disclosure, observations and discussions including any breach of the Guidelines.

Workers should be mindful of the need to retain such records securely and confidentially and seek appropriate advice regarding the retention/destruction of such records

The principal/supervisor/manager has a responsibility to ensure that the workers reporting to them comply with their records management obligations.

Confidentiality and privacy

The Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga and its agencies collect and store confidential and personal information about students, families and workers. Any misuse of confidential or personal information, whether intentional or reckless, is inconsistent with the policy, mission and ethos of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga. Such misuse might not only be harmful, but may also be unlawful.

It is expected that workers will:

- treat confidential and personal information about students, families or other personnel respectfully
- exercise caution and sound judgement in discussing other people's confidential and personal information
- comply with relevant laws and regulations regarding the collection, dissemination, use and security of all such information
- only use such information for work-related and/or authorised purposes
- only communicate such information to those who need to know in order to perform their role

Sharing of confidential and personal information with external persons or agencies may only occur:

- within the established guidelines for such communication, or
- in accordance with any relevant legislation relating to the provision of such information

Procedures for managing allegations of reportable conduct by employees and persons engaged in parish ministry

Allegations of reportable conduct involving staff members and persons engaged in parish ministry must be investigated and may need to be notified to the Office of the Children's Guardian during or after the investigation.

Procedures for managing allegations of reportable conduct by employees of Centacare South West NSW Ltd.

Allegations of reportable conduct involving:

- Centacare staff members employed under funds provided it by the Catholic Schools Office shall fall under the CSO procedures relating to allegations of reportable conduct against contractors.

- all other Centacare employees shall be directed to the Diocesan Child Protection Delegate who will advise the Centacare Sector Lead as to how to proceed.

While the primary concern of the Diocese at all times is the safety and care of children and young people, the principles of procedural fairness (refer *DWW: Child Protection; Procedures for Responding Section 5.4*) and natural justice should be adhered to at all times, so that the privacy and dignity of all involved may be considered and maintained.