



## Rationale

The Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) is committed to zero tolerance of child abuse, as articulated in our Commitment Statement to Child Safety.

All staff and members of our school communities have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care.

Our schools consist of a diverse population, including students with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

DOBCEL's Board, as a governing authority, understands its obligations in relation to *Ministerial Order No. 870: Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools*, and is committed in ensuring that our compliance and regulatory obligations are met at all times.

In addition, the DOBCEL Board is cognisant of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) that has been endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). DOBCEL Board understands that the Victorian Government is currently reviewing the Victorian Standards to better align with the National Principles, however in the interim, Ministerial Order 870: Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools (Ministerial Order 870) remains in operation and mandatory for schools in Victoria. Therefore, our Child Safety Standards policies and procedures reflect the current requirements in force in Victoria being the Ministerial Order 870.

This document is aligned with the DOBCEL child safety policies and procedures.

## Child Safety Risk Management

DOBCEL and its schools have adopted a risk management approach to child protection by developing and implementing strategies to identify and mitigate our child protection risks based on:

- The nature of all school environments.
- The activities students undertake at schools (including the provision of services by contractors or outside the school's physical environment);
- Physical and online environments that exist schools.

- The characteristics and needs of all of our students.
- The Board sees the importance of embedding an environment of child protection as part of the culture of DOBCEL and its schools.

DOBCEL and all its schools have implemented and will continually maintain adherence to the seven (7) standards, namely:

<b>Standard 1:</b>	Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety.
<b>Standard 2:</b>	A child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety.
<b>Standard 3:</b>	A child safety code of conduct.
<b>Standard 4:</b>	Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse
<b>Standard 5:</b>	Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.
<b>Standard 6:</b>	Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
<b>Standard 7:</b>	Strategies to promote child participation and empowerment.

Along with compliance with the above standards, DOBCEL has implemented the following risk mitigation strategies to ensure that schools maintain a proactive approach to our duty of care in protecting children from harm and comply with our legal and regulatory obligations, including:

- Implementation of our child safety policies, strategies and practices, whereby the standards are communicated via induction and ongoing training to staff annually, including identifying risks of child abuse in the school environment, and articulating their obligations and responsibilities for managing these risks.
- Provision of Board child safety training during induction, but also through ongoing training annually. This commitment exemplifies the Board’s vision of having a strong culture when it comes to matters relating to child safety and protection.
- The presence of extensive policies and procedures in relation to excursions and camps, ensuring that child protection risks specific to excursions and overnight stays are identified and put in place.
- Ongoing, periodic reviews of all physical school environments to eliminate physical isolation risks, such as solid classroom doors or rooms with no windows, or implement procedural controls where elimination is not possible.
- Procedures for verifying the Working with Children Check (WWCC) status of all staff / visitors, who may have direct unsupervised contact with students.
- A system of assurance through which risks of child abuse, and actions taken to reduce or remove these risks (risk controls), are recorded. The system is also used to monitor risk controls and to evaluate their overall effectiveness on a regular basis. These risks are articulated in both the corporate and school risk registers, where controls are validated to ensure their effectiveness. DOBCEL ensures that all controls are functional at schools to ensure compliance and align with our Child Safe Standards and our zero tolerance to child abuse.

## Child Safe Standard: Risk Assessment Process

As part of child safety, risk assessments should be undertaken for any activity, event, or to test compliance measures that are in place.

Each School will be different, and it is vital that each risk event or environment is assessed. The adequacy of existing controls should be assessed, and risk treatments (initiatives) should be developed if gaps (vulnerabilities) are identified.

A risk assessment enables the School to control an identified risk, by the provision of measures to ensure child safety and embedding a culture of proactive child protection, as articulated in the DOBCEL Child Safe Standards.

Below is a list of terms that are used in risk assessments:

Term	Definition
<b>Risk</b>	A situation in where the protection of a child is compromised.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	A systematic process of evaluating the possible risks that may be linked to an activity of task.
<b>Risk Management</b>	A coordinated approach of managing risks and ensuring adherence to Child Safe Standards.

Table 1: Risk Definition Table

### Process

The following table details the principles for risk management in DOBCEL Schools.

Process	Description
<b>Identify Risk</b>	Identify where, when, why and how events could prevent, delay, or degrade the main outcome of the event, activity or meeting.
<b>Analyse Risk</b>	Determine the likelihood of the risks to occur and the potential consequences related to the risks and how these could occur (cause and impacts).
<b>Evaluate Risk</b>	Compare the level of risk against the potential adverse outcomes so that decisions can be made on how to manage the priorities.

Process	Description
<b>Control Risk</b>	Develop and implement strategies and action plans which are cost effective and beneficial to all involved.
<b>Monitor and Review Risk</b>	Monitor the effectiveness of the processes put in place. Provide feedback for improvement, considering on any follow up required from incidences.

## Table 2: Risk Management Principles

Establishing the context of risk is the first step in the risk management process and is essentially termed as **identifying the risk**.

Each School must ensure child safety risk is considered. Child safety risks must be assessed as part of standard risk management processes at School level and this includes activities that the School oversees directly and those activities where the School name is used in the arranging and operation of an activity.

Child safety risks must be controlled from the initial planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of an activity and must be managed throughout the lifecycle of the activity. This could include an excursion, incursion, camp or a risk assessment on school level (e.g. isolated areas of buildings, lack of supervision areas, management/procedural elements, etc.).

Activities can be high risk for a number of reasons. This can be due their nature, their location, cultural sensitivities and whether other organisations are involved, etc.

In addition, the school may be engaging in a low risk activity however the activity may be occurring in a non-school building or environment, which could change the nature of the risk. A child protection risk assessment must be conducted before the activity can proceed.

In other words, the person undertaking the assessment should consider what is the risk?

As part of the risk assessment, consideration should be made on what could cause this risk to occur, and what impacts (worse case) could occur if controls are not in place. The type of harm that could impact children should be addressed.

### ***Unintentional/accidental harm***

Poor physical environment leading to injury.  
 Poor supervision. High-risk activity.  
 Lack of → risk → mitigation → strategies in place.

### ***Physical abuse***

Physical punishment.  
 Pushing, shoving  
 Punching → slapping, → biting  
 kicking.

### ***Cultural abuse***

Lack of cultural respect.  
 Racial → or → cultural  
 → vilification discrimination.  
 Lack of support to enable a child to be aware of.  
 Express their cultural identity.

**Neglect**

Lack of supervision.  
 Not providing adequate nourishment.  
 Not providing adequate clothing or shelter.  
 Not meeting the specific physical or cognitive needs of children.

**Physical abuse**

Sexual abuse, assault, and exploitation.  
 Grooming. Inappropriate touching.  
 Inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature (either face-to-face, online or via other technology).  
 Crossing professional boundaries.

**Physical abuse**

Bullying.  
 Threatening language.  
 Shaming.  
 Intentional ignoring and isolating (either face-to-face, online or via other technology).  
 Spiritual

Table 3: Type of Harm *(Adapted from the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian)*

The assessment should identify what controls are in place to manage or mitigate the risk from occurring. If vulnerabilities or gaps are identified, it is vital that risk treatments (which can be termed as actions or initiatives) be implemented to reduce the risk.

Risk ratings should be devised using the DOBCEL Risk Management Framework, to assess the likelihood, consequence, and risk rating.

All risk assessments should be retained and included in the School’s Child Safe Risk Assessment and Register. If risks are uncontrolled, they need to be escalated as indicated within the Risk Management Framework.

## Reference Documents

[Insert School Name] Child Safe Risk Assessment and Register

DOBCEL Staff Employment, Screening and Supervision Guidelines