

Safeguarding Children Officer

PORTFOLIO:	People and Safety
TEAM:	Safeguarding Children
REPORTS TO:	Assistant Director, People and Safety
LOCATION:	Coffs Harbour or Port Macquarie

Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore

Catholic schools have been part of the Diocese of Lismore since the nineteenth century and play a significant role in the life of parishes, being part of the evangelising Mission of the Church. Under the pastoral leadership of the Bishop of Lismore, Catholic schools provide faith-filled, inclusive and caring environments that allow young people to grow in their faith, better understand the Mission of Jesus Christ and experience 'fullness of life' (John 10:10) in learning and living well.

The Diocese of Lismore stretches along the coastal strip of New South Wales from Tweed Heads in the north to Laurieton in the south and west to Dorrigo on the Great Dividing Range. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lismore are governed by the Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools Limited (DLCSL). *Educational Ministry in the Diocese of Lismore: Co-responsibility in the Service of the Mission* outlines the ministry, principles and ecclesial dimensions of Catholic education under DLCSL.

The Catholic Schools Office

The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) provides a range of services to support approximately 2,500 staff in 45 vibrant and dynamic Catholic school communities that serve more than 18,000 students. The CSO assists schools to build teaching and leadership capabilities in communities of professional educators who share responsibility for school improvement and for achieving the best outcomes for our students.

People and Safety

The People and Safety portfolio develops and implements people strategy, policies and programs to support and improve people performance across all schools in the Diocese and within the Catholic Schools Office. This is achieved through four key areas within the People and Safety Portfolio:

- Human Resources
- Workplace Health and Safety
- Safeguarding Children
- Media and Communications.

Position Purpose

The Safeguarding Children Officer provides specialised advice and support in the areas of child protection and safeguarding. The Safeguarding Children Officer will play a significant role in ensuring the Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools Limited (DLCSL) is supported with safeguarding practices and to develop a culture to meet child protection and safeguarding responsibilities.

This role supports the underlying Mission of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore by delivering services that contribute to enabling students to achieve the fullness of life.

Organisational Relationships

Reporting lines:

The Safeguarding Children Officer reports to and takes direction from the Assistant Director, People and Safety

Interactions:

The Safeguarding Children Officer will work closely with staff within the Catholic Schools Office, Primary & Secondary Schools, Parishes and DLCSL Board.

The role will interact with other key stakeholders including Catholic Schools NSW, NESA and Office of the Children's Guardian.

Key Responsibilities

In completing the duties of the role all employees are expected to adhere to and support the Lismore Diocese Catholic Education Vision, Mission and Foundational Values and the achievement of the strategic priorities. Employees are required to adhere to Catholic Education policies and procedures and comply with a range of statutory requirements, including work health and safety legislation, safeguarding children and promotion of a child safe culture.

Employees are required to lead and participate positively in the Mission of Catholic Education, planning forums, staff meetings and ceremonies at executive, team, diocesan and regional and broader levels across the Diocese.

The major responsibilities of this position include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting fair and accurate investigations of all allegations against employees in accordance with the NSW Children's Guardian Act 2019 and undertaking investigations of allegations of misconduct (Child Protection) in accordance with Diocesan Child Protection policy and procedures.
- Provide support and advice regarding child protection/safeguarding related policies, practices and legislative obligations.
- Provide support regarding the assessment and management of risk of significant harm and wellbeing concerns for students and families at risk in accordance with the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.
- Provide support and advice to school principals, school staff and the wider school community in relation to all aspects of child protection and safeguarding.
- Maintain good record keeping practices to ensure accountability and transparency in decision making and to ensure information is managed in an organised, systematic way in a secure and confidential environment.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of safeguarding and child protection related professional development initiatives for staff of DLCSL.

- Participate in cross-sector initiatives both within DLCSL and within the Diocese relating to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people and promote systems and programs for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- Keep abreast of current issues and trends in the NSW child protection system and the Child Safe Standards.
- Contribute to the implementation of Child Safe Standards within DLCSL and schools to ensure compliance and build a culture of safety.

Selection Criteria

Work Requirements

- Hold a valid clearance to work with Children (Working with Children Check).
- A current/valid Australian Driver's Licence and eligibility to work within Australia for the period of the appointment.
- A Criminal History check.
- Requirement to travel between locations

Qualifications

- Relevant tertiary qualifications (e.g. social work, social welfare, human resources, law), or, at least 5 years relevant industry experience in investigations.

Work Experience

- At least five years' experience in the area of child safeguarding, the welfare sector, or a related field that requires investigation skills.

Key Capabilities

- Accomplished investigation skills.
- An ability to provide effective advice and support in relation to managing allegations against employees of inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people.
- An ability to provide effective advice and support in relation to dealing with risk of significant harm and wellbeing concerns for students and families at risk.
- Knowledge of child safe standards and practices and their application in an education setting.
- Highly developed written skills including investigation report writing skills and risk assessments.
- Sound record keeping practices to ensure accountability, transparency and confidentiality.
- Highly developed oral communication and interpersonal skills.
- The ability to research and participate in policy and training development and delivery.
- Capacity to work in a team.
- Preparedness to work within the ethos of a Catholic school setting.

Plus the following generic criteria

- Knowledge of WHS and equity principles in the workplace
- Respect for the teachings of the Catholic Church and by conduct and lifestyle, ability to give witness to the Church's mission.

The job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities required of the employee. Duties, responsibilities and activities may change or new ones may be assigned in line with the changing needs of the CSO.