



St Patrick's Catholic College

Safeguarding Plan

Our Safeguarding Commitment

St Patrick's College has a zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and are committed to safeguarding everyone involved in its activities, ministries, and services. The safety and wellbeing of children and adults-at-risk is paramount.

Accessibility

St Patrick's College is committed to providing accessible services to people from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this document, you can contact Translating and Interpreting Service National on 13 14 50 to arrange for an interpreter to translate it for you.

Contact for enquiries

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Acknowledgement of Country

St Patrick's College acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our schools and offices stand. We honour the enduring relationship with Country, the lands, waters and skies that have been cared for through wisdom, responsibility and love for tens of thousands of years by First Nations peoples. We extend our deep respect to Elders past and present, and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who continue to nurture culture, community and identity across generations.

We give thanks for the rich cultures, Spiritualities and knowledges that First Nations peoples share with us. These ways of knowing, being and doing continue to shape our understanding of community, justice and care for one another and for creation.

As a Catholic education community, we commit to embedding cultural safety in our school so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and staff are seen, respected and affirmed, and so that no one experiences harm, exclusion or silence because of culture or identity.

Cultural safety calls us to listen deeply, to reflect honestly on our histories, and to walk together in humility and courage. It asks us to ensure our classrooms, relationships, policies and practices uphold dignity, belonging and justice for all.

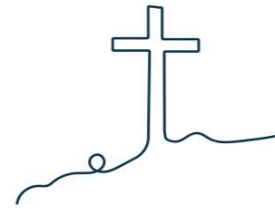
May we continue to walk gently and respectfully together, learning from First Nations peoples and from one another, so that our school is a place of welcome, truth-telling and hope.

May we be one in land, one in Spirit, one in Faith, united in God's love, committed to justice, and faithful to the responsibility entrusted to us as educators of this land.



Introduction

St Patrick's Catholic College, Gympie is committed to creating environments where children and young people feel protected, valued, and heard. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and every child has the right to grow and thrive free from harm.



We are guided by our Christian Catholic Tradition and the teachings of Jesus Christ who advocated for the protection of children and the marginalised. Our mission to teach, challenge and transform through our educational endeavours is actioned by Catholic Social Teaching, as part of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

The Queensland Government recently introduced new Child Safe Standards. These Standards outline what child safe organisations must do to create environments where children are protected, respected and able to speak up.

As a Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Brisbane, we honour the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Commitment and uphold the values of Catholic education in our safeguarding practices.

This School Safeguarding Plan is developed in consultation with students, families, and employees, and is contextualised to our local school environment. It reflects our commitment to continuous improvement, cultural safety, and child-centred practice, and is supported by both Brisbane Catholic Education policies and procedures and school-specific safeguarding actions.

For more information or to request accessible formats, please contact the College Principal.

The Child Safe Standards

1. Leadership and Culture
2. Voice of children
3. Family and community
4. Equity and diversity
5. People
6. Complaints management
7. Knowledge and skills
8. Physical and online environments
9. Continuous improvement
10. Policies and procedures



The Universal Principle

Ensuring cultural safety through the Universal Principle is essential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families. While the Principle intentionally focuses on First Nations children, the cultural safety indicators are used to adopt a proactive and comprehensive approach to safeguarding, ensuring that policies and practices are inclusive for all children, particularly those who may be marginalised or vulnerable.

Cultural Safety Indicators

1. Transformational unlearning
2. Negotiating values, motivations, and paradigms
3. Prioritising social and emotional wellbeing and health
4. Sharing power and decision-making
5. Sharing resources
6. Creating a strategic enabling environment
7. Operating on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terms of reference
8. Accountability and continuous quality improvement

Standard 1: Leadership and Culture

At St Patrick's, we are committed to prioritising every student's safety and wellbeing. This includes ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and Community feel welcome, safe, valued, included and respected.

At St Patrick's, we begin our weekly College Leadership Team meetings with a 'safety share' which allows participants to share a strategy they have improved to maximise the safety and wellbeing of staff and students.

The Archdiocese of Brisbane Safeguarding Commitment is displayed in our school foyer, gathering space and in the Principal's office. This serves as a regular reminder that at St Patrick's, the safety and wellbeing of our students are paramount.

The *St Pat's Way* was developed in partnership with a parent representative group as a clear code of conduct for parents and carers. It sets out the shared expectations, behaviours and conditions that support a respectful and successful relationship between home and school, recognising that strong communication, mutual trust and a shared commitment to student wellbeing are essential to effective partnership.

At St Patrick's, we publicly display visual representations such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, artwork, and Acknowledgment of Country signage that demonstrates our commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of First Nations students and their families. NAIDOC Week features on the College Calendar, with a NAIDOC Mass the highlight of this week.

Our College Board takes an active interest in the development and refinement of the Reconciliation Action Plan, with an update on its implementation provided as part of the Principal's Report at each meeting.

The College has established an identified student leadership position designed to raise the profile, visibility and awareness of First Nations students across the College community. The student holding this role will help ensure that a First Nations perspective is represented in student leadership discussions, College events and relevant decision-making, while providing a strong and authentic voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Standard 2: Voice of children



At St Patrick's, our curriculum planning embeds students' rights to safety, information and participation through age-appropriate teaching on consent, respectful relationships and protective behaviours delivered through Australian Curriculum units and planned cohort learning.

Student voice is gathered over the course of each term, with feedback provided by students considered when planning units of work. Student voice is also used to inform teacher feedback on their teachers, and as a triangulation tool for teacher self-reflection on their teaching practice.

Students engage in interactive classroom-based lessons that support understanding of personal safety, respect for self and others, and help-seeking, with opportunities to ask questions and participate in discussion.



We aim to create a space at school where students see sharing their voice as acceptable and the norm. When students raise safety concerns, we respond in a timely way and ensure they know the outcome.

At St Patrick's we involve students in personalised learning plans and behaviour support processes where appropriate. At a whole-school level, student input is considered in behaviour management frameworks, pastoral care programs and wellbeing priorities.

St Patrick's educators attend professional learning each term with a key focus on multi-tiered systems of support and the manner in which all students can be supported to achieve their best. We have dedicated Student Support Meetings, where our multidisciplinary team comes together to respond to student needs as they arise.

Standard 3: Family and community

At St Patrick's, families are actively invited to participate in planning and decision-making processes that affect their child. This includes involvement in personalised learning plans, behaviour support planning, re-entry meetings following absence, and safety or wellbeing planning where required.



When working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, we recognise that decisions may involve extended family members or trusted community representatives. Staff ask families who they would like involved and make space for those voices.

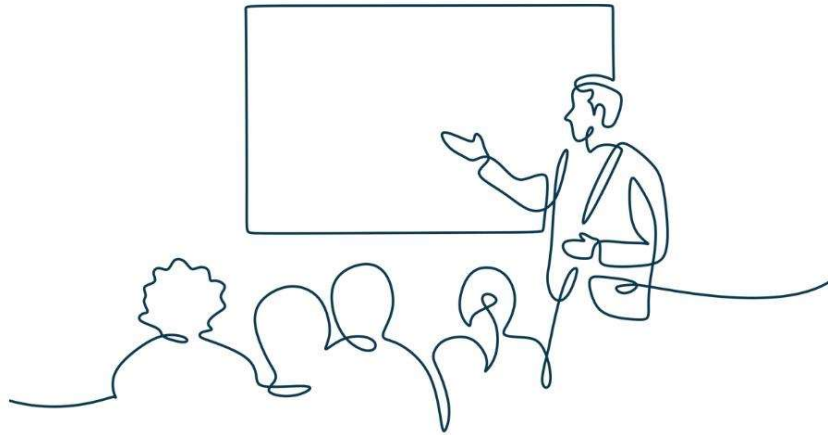
St Patrick's includes First Nations families and community representatives on our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and other consultative groups across the school.

At St Patrick's, safeguarding-related operational decisions are shared clearly with families through accessible methods including social media, flyers, newsletters and community meetings.

Our school maintains partnerships with local organisations and community services, such as St Vincent de Paul, to support children and families, strengthening shared responsibility for safety and wellbeing.

Standard 4: Equity and diversity

At St Patrick's, staff are committed to considering each student's unique circumstances before addressing issues related to behaviour, learning, or wellbeing. Routines, expectations, and supports are adjusted when needed and modifications are documented in individual support plans and reviewed with the student, family and relevant supports.



St Patrick's recognises that some students experience additional barriers to feeling safe, included and heard. We respond in ways that are culturally safe, inclusive and trauma-informed, tailored to the student and their individual context.

At St Patrick's we understand and value different knowledge systems and perspectives about student safety, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing. Feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and community members is actively sought and used to inform continuous improvement.

At St Patrick's, students are regularly reminded who they can talk to if they feel worried or unsafe through classroom discussions, assemblies, visual resources and informal conversations. All students have access to one of the College's Guidance Counsellors through a self-referral process button on the College intranet.

Standard 5: People

In line with our implementation plan, at the end of Term 4 we will explain:

- How we screen and onboard employees, volunteers and third parties
- How we ensure safe supervision and conduct
- How we apply BCE recruitment and HR procedures
- How we track and keep safeguarding screening requirements current
- Evidence of practice and planned improvements



Standard 6: Complaints management



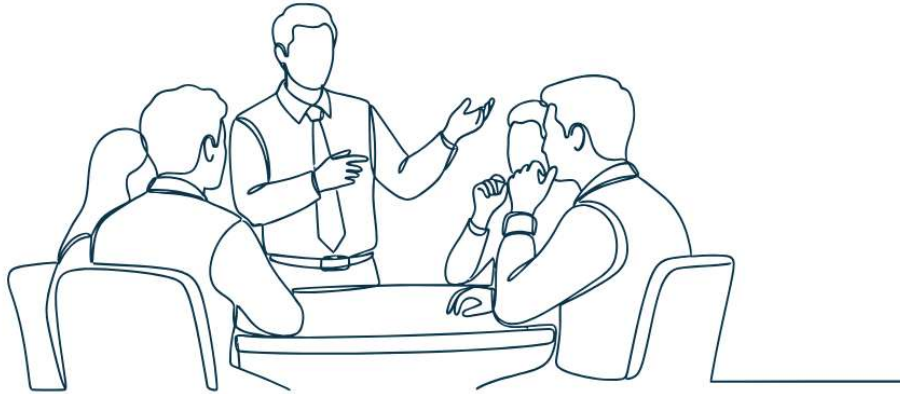
At St Patrick's Catholic College, students and families are encouraged to raise concerns or complaints early. Students are regularly reminded who they can speak to, including home room teachers, classroom teachers, pastoral leaders, Guidance Counsellors, Student Protection Contacts and school leadership.

Once each term, time is allocated at a staff meeting to remind all staff of the relevant complaints management processes. Practical case studies are shared and discussed so that staff can identify the appropriate steps to take when receiving, documenting, escalating and responding to a complaint, helping to build confidence and consistency in the College's approach.

Where a complaint or concern involves a student, staff respond in a child-focused, trauma-informed and culturally safe way, limiting repeated retelling and questioning and involving trusted adults where appropriate.

When concerns are raised, our leadership team and Student Protection Contacts use BCE complaints, student protection and behaviour procedures to guide how matters are received, escalated, documented and responded to.

Standard 7: Knowledge and skills



In line with our implementation plan, at the end of Term 4 we will explain:

- How employees, volunteers and third parties complete required safeguarding training
- How the school reinforces safeguarding practice throughout the year
- How cultural capability is embedded in training
- How the school monitors and supports completion of mandatory training
- Evidence of practice and planned improvements