Volunteer Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

The contribution of volunteers is highly valued by the Catholic Education Office in the Diocese of Toowoomba, enhancing the safe, productive and positive environment within our schools. This Code of Conduct seeks to affirm the standards of behaviour that are expected of our volunteers, in order to ensure a continuing safe and supportive environment.

2. Applicability

This Code of Conduct applies to all volunteers engaging in volunteer duties within Toowoomba Catholic Education, including the Catholic Education Office and all schools within the Diocese.

3. Principles

It is expected that volunteers abide by the following principles:

- ensuring that the safety and well-being of students is met at all times
- engaging in respectful and supportive relationships with students, families, staff members and other volunteers
- ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of students, families, staff members and other volunteers is met at all times
- being committed to the educational, religious and social values of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Toowoomba
- carrying out all volunteer duties in a conscientious and ethical manner.

4. Standards of Behaviour

It is expected that volunteers will behave in a manner that is consistent with the principles outlined in this Code of Conduct. Volunteers must also:

- participate in an induction program prior to commencing volunteer duties. This induction will cover a number of areas, including student protection
- consider safety as a priority in all volunteer activities, following all school and/or Catholic Education safety procedures. For example, volunteers must be aware of evacuation processes within schools
- work only within the limitations of the volunteer role, acknowledging the requirement to seek guidance from, and report any issues to, school and/or Catholic Education Office Administration
- follow the instruction of staff members in order to ensure that correct procedures are implemented within schools/at the Catholic Education Office
- report all concerns to an appropriate staff member, such as the Principal or a Student Protection Contact. For example, a suspicion of illegal activity should be reported immediately
- exercise due care and diligence in the performance of volunteering work at the school.
5. Volunteers must not:

- smoke or use tobacco products whilst volunteering or on the Catholic Education Office or school grounds
- possess, consume, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs whilst volunteering within schools or at the Catholic Education Office
- supply tobacco products, alcohol or illegal drugs to students
- engage in any behaviour that may cause harm to a student
- engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards a student. Examples of inappropriate behaviour include, however are not limited to:
  - swearing at, or in front of, students
  - pushing, shoving or grabbing a student
  - using threats or instilling fear in a student
  - using sarcasm towards or demeaning a student
  - showing favouritism towards specific students, including giving gifts or showing special favours
  - any and all forms of sexual behaviour, including sexual jokes or innuendo.

6. Communication

Volunteers must use appropriate communication skills with students in order to maintain a safe and supportive environment. Such communication includes:

- listening to and supporting the student
- being aware of physical boundaries and personal space, including your own body language
- being visible when interacting with students, ensuring the presence of other staff members or volunteers
- being clear, calm and positive in verbal interactions with students and families
- avoiding any discriminatory, offensive or inappropriate language when interacting with students and families.

7. What should I do if I have a concern about a student or the behaviour of a staff member or other volunteer?

All staff members within the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Toowoomba and within Diocesan schools are required to follow the Student Protection Policy and Procedure in relation to the reporting of abuse and harm to students, and inappropriate behaviour by staff or volunteers.

If a volunteer has a concern regarding a student, or the behaviour of a staff member or volunteer, then this must be raised immediately with the School Principal or School Student Protection Contact. If in doubt, a volunteer should always report the concern. More detailed information can be found in the Student Protection – Information for Volunteers document.

If the School Principal, the School Student Protection Contact or any other staff member receives information from a volunteer about harm or suspected harm or the risk of harm or inappropriate behaviour to a student, that person is required to follow the appropriate student protection process to ensure the safety and well-being of the student(s).
8. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Any allegations of breaches of this Code of Conduct are treated seriously by the Catholic Education Office, and will be investigated accordingly with due regard to the principles of natural justice. If necessary, the appropriate authorities will be notified.

9. How can I access more information about student safety and well-being?

Student protection is a high priority for the Diocese of Toowoomba. Information regarding the policies and procedures that schools are required to follow can be found on the Catholic Education Office website at: [http://www.twb.catholic.edu.au/Board/Pages/GuidelinesSP.aspx](http://www.twb.catholic.edu.au/Board/Pages/GuidelinesSP.aspx).

Alternatively, volunteers can seek further information from School Administration or by contacting the Catholic Education Office, 73 Margaret Street, Toowoomba, phone (07) 4637 1400.

10. How can I access support?

Volunteers are highly regarded by the Catholic Education Office in the Diocese of Toowoomba. To access any support or guidance, please do not hesitate to approach school or Catholic Education Office Administration.