Circular to principals of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

Updated Policy 2.19 Child Protection – Reporting Obligations

Main Points
• Catholic schools must comply with legal obligations related to mandatory reporting and managing the risk of child abuse to ensure that all school policies and procedures are continually reviewed and updated to reflect Victorian legislative requirements.
• Catholic Education Melbourne’s Policy 2.19 Child Protection – Reporting Obligations has been updated and endorsed by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) as meeting the current compliance requirements.
• Revised Policy 2.19 includes mandatory reporting obligations documented in the joint protocol Protecting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People and reflects recently introduced criminal law offences including ‘Grooming’, ‘Failure to Protect’ and ‘Failure to Disclose’ which requires the reporting of child sexual offences to the Victoria Police. Policy 2.19 will be further reviewed over the course of 2016 as the new Victorian Child Safe Standards are fully implemented.
• School Guidelines 2.19a Police and DHHS Interview Protocols are now available on the CEVN website to assist principals to understand their legal requirements when a request is made by Victoria Police or Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to interview a student without parental consent.

Critical Dates
• Updated school policies on the reporting of child physical and sexual abuse should be published on school websites by Monday 1 February 2016.

Actions Required
• Principals must ensure that school policies and procedures related to the reporting of child physical and sexual abuse are updated and compliant with the requirements of current Victorian legislation.
• Principals are strongly encouraged to use and adopt Catholic Education Melbourne’s updated Policy 2.19 Child Protection – Reporting Obligations to review and update their school policies.
• Principals should refer to the School Guidelines 2.19a Police and DHHS Interview Protocols to inform interview process and procedures, and communicate these changes to Policy 2.19 and the associated interview protocols to staff.

Additional Information
• Please refer to the circular on 31 July 2015 regarding the Updated eLearning Module: Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations.
• Catholic Education Melbourne operates the Student Wellbeing Information Line between 9am–5pm on 9267 0228 to assist principals and teachers in matters related to the wellbeing of young people.
• Feedback regarding Policy 2.19 and associated interview guidelines can be forwarded to Ms Elina Raso, Senior Project Lead: Child Safety, on 9267 0228 or eraso@cem.edu.au.

Contact/Enquiries
• For all enquiries, please contact Mr Dennis Torpy, Manager, Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Unit on 03 9267 0228 or dtorpy@cem.edu.au.