

CHILD PROTECTION

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an absolute and abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children. As a parent sending your child or children to a Diocesan school, you should be aware of your rights and obligations in protecting your child and all children in our schools.

The Children and Young Person's (Care and Protection) Act 1998

In NSW we are able to report certain information to Family and Community Services (FaCs). If we are concerned for one of more of the children in the school, we can discuss our concerns with a teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal. We can report our concerns to the FaCS Child Protection Helpline (Ph. 133 627, 24 hrs/7 days) if we have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and our concerns are current. Risk of significant harm may occur from a single act or omission or to a series of acts or omissions.

It is better to be safe than sorry, so if we're uncertain, talk to a staff member at the school.

Part 3A of the Ombudsman Act 1974

Part 3A Ombudsman Act 1974, defines Diocesan schools as a 'designated non-government agency' and as such we must have systems for preventing, reporting (to the Ombudsman) and investigating reportable conduct.

All staff and volunteers in Diocesan schools fall within the scope of Part 3A and may be investigated for alleged 'reportable conduct' which includes sexual offenses, misconduct, assault, ill-treatment, neglect and behaviour that causes psychological harm to children.

Zimmerman Services is the Diocese's specialist child protection service who works with the Ombudsman to ensure the Diocese meets its obligations under Part 3A.

The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

Under this legislation people who work in a paid or volunteer capacity in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle are required by law to have a Working with Children Check Clearance. This 'Clearance' can be obtained from applying online at check@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au.

As a parent, if we learn about a staff member or a volunteer working in the school without a Clearance, we should talk with the Principal or Assistant Principal as soon as possible. If we believe that nothing is being done about our concerns, we can contact Zimmerman Services directly (Ph. 4979 1390 Mon-Fri 08:30 to 5pm).

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Reporting Policy

As a parent we can report any concerns we have for a student, or group of students, to our principal, assistant principal or directly to Zimmerman Services (Ph. 4979 1390 Mon-Fri 08:30 to 5pm). The Diocese's reporting policy and procedures are available to everyone on the Diocesan website:

[Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Reporting Child Protection Concerns](#)

As parents we are entitled to contact Zimmerman Services directly about any concerns we have about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or if we are concerned that the school isn't addressing allegations of reportable conduct or abuse. (Ph. 4979 1390 Mon-Fri, 08:30 to 5pm).