

MERCY EDUCATION POLICY

6.11 SCHOOL CHILD SAFETY REGISTER

Introduction

Mercy Education Ltd (Mercy Education) has a governance responsibility and non-delegable duty to ensure that children and young people in our schools are safe and secure while fostering their growth in a faith-centred community. There is no tolerance for risks that may compromise the safety and wellbeing of our children and young people.

Mercy Education is responsible for, and committed to, creating, managing, and storing, secure, complete, and accurate records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including those related to child abuse. Good record-keeping practices are integral to preventing, identifying, and responding to suspected, alleged, and recognised incidents of child abuse. Records that are accurate, detailed, and appropriately accessible will be important in addressing the impact of child abuse for victims and their families. Records may also be required for historical, legal or community purposes. The keeping of school records, particularly those related to child safety, wellbeing and child abuse is highly regulated. State and/or Commonwealth legislation prescribes the preservation, management, and retention schedules applicable.

In preparing these operational instructions, Mercy Education takes direction from:

- *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited ACSL)*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*
- *Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises (Vic)*
- *National Redress Scheme (NRS)*
- *Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG)*
- *Mercy Ministry Companions (MMC)*

Purpose

Mercy Education Operational Instructions 6.11 School Child Safety Register
Approved by the MEL Executive – 20 NOV 2024
Version 1.0

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<https://mercyeducation.sharepoint.com/sites/MELExecutive/Shared Documents/Policy Review/Policy Approved/6.11 School Child Safety Register/6.11 School Child Safety Register.docx>

To provide guidance for the creation, management, retention, storage, and access to a secure Child Safety Register (including child abuse) held by a Mercy Education School

Definitions

Authorised Person: an individual who has been given permission or authority to do the specific work

Child/ren: individual(s) under the age of 18 years or as defined according to applicable legislation. Enrolled students over the age of 18 years are not included in the definition of a child.

Child abuse: includes

- a) any act committed against a child involving
 - i) a sexual offence; or
 - ii) an offence according to relevant State legislation
- b) the infliction, on a child, of—
 - i) physical violence; or
 - ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- c) the serious neglect of a child

Child safety: matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures, or allegations of child abuse.

File note: a record that captures the essence of what has been done or said at a particular time

Mercy Colleges/Schools: any of the 13 schools governed by Mercy Education.

National Redress Scheme (NRS): The NRS provides support to people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse and holds institutions accountable for this abuse

Record: information created, received, and maintained as evidence by Mercy Education, its schools, or a person, in pursuance of its legal obligations or in the transaction of business, regardless of medium, form or format

Recordkeeping: the creation and maintenance of complete, accurate and reliable evidence in the form of recorded information. Recordkeeping includes the construction of records occurring during business activity, the means to ensure the creation of adequate records, the design, establishment and operation of recordkeeping systems and the management of records used in business and as archives.

Retention period: minimum period that records must be kept before they can be legally destroyed, in accordance with the relevant Retention Guide or Disposal schedule

Policy Coverage

These Operational Instructions apply to Principals of Mercy Education schools.



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Instructions

1. The School Child Safety Register (the Register) will be used to record all current and historical enquiries, complaints, disclosures, allegations, incidents, file notes and referrals related to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people (including child abuse) reported to the school
2. The Register will include information related to
 - Historical records, including the National Redress Scheme
 - Reportable Conduct as advised by schools and reported to the relevant authority
 - Requests from Legal Counsel related to disclosure of documents and record of approval from ISMAPNG Legal, if relevant
 - Civil claims related to child safety and wellbeing (including child abuse) against Mercy Education
3. A separate Register should be maintained for Mandatory Reports made to relevant authorities
4. Any records created in the Register will be unambiguous, objective, and thorough. They will be created at, or as close as possible to, the time the enquiry, complaint, suspicion, disclosure, allegation, incident, or referral occurred
5. The Register will be updated whenever new or supplementary information is presented to the school and at least annually
6. The categories of the Register will include (but is not limited to):
 - Date of enquiry, complaint, disclosure, allegation, incident, file note or referral (if known)
 - Date of recording of incident or allegation by the school
 - Name and role of staff member entering data into the Register
 - Summary of incident or allegation
 - Action taken by the school
 - Reference to any follow up or review
 - File reference for further information and additional detail
7. Records will be rated according to the level of risk for the organisation and in line with the Mercy Education Risk Framework, i.e.:

Category	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Child Safety		Minor Child safety allegation and related to one individual and managed locally by school management	Child safety incident or allegation reported to MEL (Mercy Education Limited) and related to one individual and referred to Police and/or Child protection authorities	Child safety incident or allegation reported to MEL and related to more than one individual. School, MEL Employee, visitor, volunteer, or contractor implicated	Child safety incident investigated, and employee, volunteer, visitor, or contractor charged



8. Access to the Register will be restricted to the Principal or their authorised delegate and kept secure from unauthorised amendment
9. All records created, and maintained are the property of Mercy Education and may be accessed or shared on written request in accordance with applicable laws and relevant document release protocols
10. The Register will be kept digitally and stored on the School cloud platform
11. The Register must remain readable and accessible to authorised persons in perpetuity
12. Maintenance of the Register is consistent with applicable State record-keeping legislation.
13. Mercy Education may request information from the Register at any time

Related Documents and Resources

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL)

- <https://www.acsltd.org.au/>

Australian Human Rights Commission: (AHRC)

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

- <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/national-principles-child-safe-organisations>

The Australian Privacy Principles - Privacy Act (1988) Cth

Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG)

- <https://institute.mercy.org.au/>

Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Report Volume 8: Record Keeping and Information Sharing

- <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/recordkeeping-and-information-sharing>

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS)

- <https://www.acsltd.org.au/services/professional-and-safeguarding-standards/national-catholic-safeguarding-standards/>

National Redress Scheme

- <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/>

Mercy Education Limited

- *Mercy Education Limited Governance Statement*



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- 1.05 Policy: Records Management
- 1.06 Policy Complaints Management
- 6.09 Policy Child Safety and Wellbeing
- 6.10 Operational Instructions – Records and Recordkeeping- Child Safety
- 1.07 Policy: Privacy
- 1.15 Policy Cybersecurity
- MEL Code of Conduct

Review History

Version	Date Released	Next Review	Author	Approved
1.0	January 2025	November 2026	Head of People & Culture	MEL Executive

