



St Pius X High School

Safeguarding Policy

Updated February 2023

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle are committed to providing safe environments for students. Whilst we have a legal obligation to protect children, this commitment is central to our Catholic beliefs.

At St Pius X High School, Adamstown, we believe that all children have a right to a safe environment which is free from any form of abuse or harm.

At St Pius X High School, Adamstown, relationships between adults and children are governed by trust and Gospel values.

Schools in NSW are required to meet the statutory obligations of legislation relating to safeguarding. Schools in this diocese are required to uphold the policies and guidelines set out by the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and the Catholic Schools Office.

This legislation includes:

- The Children's Guardian Act 2019
- The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act, 1998
- The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act, 2012
- The Crimes Act 1900

Diocesan and CSO documents include:

- Safeguarding Framework Policy
- Code of Conduct - Diocesan (approved 2021)
- Code of Conduct for School Staff (approved 2017, amended May 2018)

Reporting Risk of Significant Harm

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act

This legislation establishes a shared responsibility for the protection of children. Teachers have a legal responsibility to report a child or young person who is believed to be at risk of significant harm.

This means that staff at St Pius X High School, Adamstown, are required by law to make a report to the Department of Communities & Justice when they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm.

This includes harm due to neglect, physical, sexual and psychological abuse, exposure to domestic/family violence and homelessness.

Working in Child-Related Employment

The legislation that applies specifically to people who work in child-related employment, including volunteers and self-employed people, includes:

- The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- The Children's Guardian Act 2019

The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act

This legislation requires that all employers confirm that all employees, both paid and unpaid, obtain a clearance to work with children. This clearance is to ensure only people with valid clearances work with children.

On 15 June 2013, The Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 made under The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 came into force. The **Regulation** applies to any person working in child-related employment including both paid and volunteer work.

- A person starting a new paid job in child-related work at St Pius must apply for a **Working with Children Check (WWCC)** before they start work. Diocesan employment procedures will ensure that this occurs.
- All current employees of the school must have a current **WWCC**.
- A self-employed person intending to work at St Pius in child-related work must have a current **WWCC** and submit their WWCC number to the Principal, along with their full name and date of birth to enable their WWCC to be verified by the Human Resources (HR) Team of the Diocese. This ruling for self-employed people would apply for example to external Music Tutors who are not employed by the school but who use the school facilities to earn money by tutoring our students.
- All volunteers commencing work at St Pius, or a volunteer continuing work at St Pius, will usually need to apply for a WWCC before they can commence their voluntary work for the year. Please refer to the notes below under the "Requirements for Volunteers" heading. Note that for volunteers there is no cost for the WWCC.

Information relating to the **Working with Children Check** can be found at the following address:

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-for-a-working-with-children-check>

Requirements for Volunteers

Potential volunteers must follow the application procedures outlined in the document: **Safeguarding Procedures - St Pius** to become a volunteer at the school. This document is available on the [School Policies](#) page of the school website. These procedures can also be accessed on the [Safeguarding page](#) of the school website.

From 2017 most volunteers have been required to obtain a **Working with Children Check (WWCC)** before commencing volunteer work at the school and all volunteers must be registered with the Diocese as a volunteer. All active, registered volunteers, permitted to work at St Pius, will be listed in the **Volunteer List – St Pius X Adamstown** that is updated and supplied to St Pius on a regular basis by the Diocesan HR Team.

To apply to become a volunteer at the school, please follow the link to the [Volunteer page](#) of the Diocesan website and complete a Volunteer Registration Form. Thank you for your interest and generosity.

Reporting Allegations of Reportable Conduct

The Children’s Guardian Act 2019

This Act guides the Catholic Schools Office and school’s response when an allegation of reportable conduct has been made against an employee. It applies to paid and unpaid employees (volunteers) in schools.

The Act requires the school to notify allegations that constitute sexual offences, misconduct, assault, ill-treatment, neglect and behaviour that causes psychological harm to children to the Office of the Children’s Guardian. This is done by the school reporting the allegation to the Prevention and Response Team of The Office of Safeguarding.

Once the allegation is received by the Prevention and Response Team of The Office of Safeguarding, the Team reports it to the Office of the Children’s Guardian, and then investigates the allegation. The investigation gathers facts relevant to the allegation and arrives at a finding at its conclusion. The process of investigation provides the employee with an opportunity to respond to the allegation and have the response heard. All evidence is considered before a decision is made regarding the finding.

Further information about this process is available from the Prevention and Response Team of The Office of Safeguarding – phone: 49 791 390.

Safeguarding Procedures

These are set out in a separate document called **Safeguarding Procedures - St Pius**. This document provides the specific procedures to be followed by staff in implementing the safeguarding policy at the school. It is available on the [School Policies](#) page of the school website. These procedures can also be accessed on the [Safeguarding page](#) of the school website.

Other Sources of Information

Other sources that provide relevant safeguarding information include:

- [Safeguarding](#) page of our school website under the Student Support tab.
- [Volunteer](#) page of the Diocesan website. This page includes a link to the Volunteer Registration Form.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed and updated at least every four years unless an earlier review becomes necessary because of changes in legislation or CSO/Diocesan requirements.