

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy 2025

Introduction

Edmund Rice Education Australia Colleges Ltd (**EREAC**) is the governing body for 20 Colleges and Early Learning Centres across Queensland, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia, offering a Liberating Education based on a Gospel Spirituality, within an Inclusive Community committed to Justice and Solidarity.

Under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*, organisations and sole traders who run businesses in Queensland regulated by the Blue Card system must have a Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy (**Strategy**) to help create a safe and supportive environment for children. This strategy has been developed by EREAC as the governing body for Queensland Colleges and Early Learning Centres (**entities**), addressing the eight mandatory requirements of the Strategy. For the purposes of this document, references to entities, staff members, volunteers and contractors apply to those engaged in Queensland.

PART 1: COMMITMENT

Statement of Commitment (*mandatory requirement 1*)

EREAC is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students and children and values and respects the preciousness and uniqueness of each student and child. We embrace the Gospel values of freedom, justice, love and respect and the teachings of Jesus and Blessed Edmund Rice. All children are precious in the sight of God who calls all of us to care for children and to take action where those in need may not be able to protect themselves.

Creating and maintaining safe, supportive and nurturing educational environments is an essential part of the EREAC ethos and forms the basis of our commitment to the protection of students and children.

This commitment is reflected in EREAC Child Safeguarding Policy, which applies to all its entities, and sets out the requirement for entities to meet all legislative child protection requirements.

Code of Conduct (*mandatory requirement 2*)

The [EREA Code of Conduct](#) applies to all staff, volunteers (including parent volunteers) and contractors, and clarifies and affirms the standards of behaviour expected by EREAC.

The *Code of Conduct* is implemented to assist employees, volunteers and contractors to ensure that in their interactions with students/children they behave professionally at all times and observe appropriate boundaries, behaviour and conduct in accordance with EREAC's standards and expectations.

In addition the *Code of Conduct* addresses responsibilities in relation to risk management and duty of care obligations to students/children.

The Code of Conduct is available online. EREAC requires all staff, volunteers and contractors to complete annual training in the Code of Conduct.

The *Code of Conduct* is complemented by policies of EREAC and its entities, including child protection processes and child protection legislation. Further, child protection processes and child protection legislation (or other statutes) will apply if there is any inconsistency with the *Code of Conduct*.

Student Behaviour Support Plan

EREAC requires its entities to develop a Student Behaviour Support Plan, in consultation with all groups in their communities and to implement that plan to support student/child behaviour in the educational environment.

The Student Behaviour Support Plan must reflect the shared values and expectations of the entity in relation to student/child behaviour support and to maintain a supportive catholic school environment in the Edmund Rice Tradition.

A student/child code of behaviour must be included in the Support Plan. EREA Colleges Ltd requires all entities to make the Student Behaviour Support Plan readily accessible to students and parents/caregivers.

PART 2 - CAPABILITY

Procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff that enhance the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and the protection of children and young people from harm (*mandatory requirement 3*)

Recruitment and selection

EREAC's recruitment and selection processes aim to ensure that staff and volunteers who work with students/children are appropriately qualified and suitable.

Principals/Entity Leaders must comply with EREAC's policies and procedures in relation to recruitment, selection, training and managing of teaching staff, other personnel and volunteers. EREAC leads the recruitment processes for the positions of Principals, Deputy Principals and Business Managers in Colleges, and Directors of Early Learning Centres.

In advertising new positions, the EREAC advertising template states that "*All applications for this position will be submitted to screening procedures as detailed in the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) legislation and the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005. These checks are consistent with EREAC's commitment to the protection of children and young people in their care.*"

All recruitment processes for positions must involve a minimum of two referee reports, one of whom must be the applicant's current Principal or employer. The referee report must contain responses to the prescribed child protection questions detailed in the EREAC Queensland Referee Report template.

EREAC adheres to the requirements of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*, *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020*, *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 and Regulation 2017*, and the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005* with regards to employment, including the maintenance of a Blue Card Register.

EREAC requires all non-teaching staff, volunteers, trainee students and contractors who require a Blue Card under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*, to obtain a Blue Card and keep it current. All teachers are required to produce evidence of current teacher registration with the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) before they commence work and/or an Exemption Card if relevant. Where an exemption applies, for example where a staff member is a registered health practitioner, the entity must record this information in their Blue Card Register.

Training and Management of Employees

EREAC requires all staff, volunteers and contractors to complete induction training. This training addresses specific requirements in relation to child protection and the Code of Conduct.

All staff members, volunteers and contractors must then complete annual refresher training in relation to child protection and the Code of Conduct. A register of all employees and volunteers who complete the training is retained through the EREAC Learning Management System and audits are conducted as required.

Annual Child Protection training addresses the EREAC Student Processes and Guidelines in relation to mandatory reporting, including:

- sexual abuse/likely sexual abuse of students/children;
- harm or risk of harm to students/children caused by physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect; and
- inappropriate behaviour of staff to students.

This training provides staff members with the skills to effectively identify, respond to and report suspicions or allegations of abuse, harm, and inappropriate behaviour towards students.

Additional ongoing training is provided by EREAC and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and employees are encouraged to attend. EREAC safeguarding staff coordinate learning opportunities for EREAC employees to enhance their professional or personal knowledge and skills.

Where there is a complaint or allegation in relation to a staff member, volunteer or contractor of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct, EREAC takes appropriate management action which includes following the requirements of *Child Protection Act 1999*, *Criminal Code 1889*, *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, *Queensland College of Teacher's Act 2005*, the EREA Code of Conduct and the EREAC Student Protection Processes and Guidelines.

EREAC provides an Employee Assistance program to give free and confidential counselling to employees who require support.

Other EREA Colleges Ltd Support for the wellbeing of students/children

EREAC acknowledges that students learn best in school environments in which they feel safe, physically and emotionally, free from bullying and intimidation. EREAC's entities have developed policies, processes and resources to support the care and wellbeing of students. Staff members are made aware of these policies, processes and resources from time to time at staff meetings, 'in-service' days and staff notices.

These policies and processes may include and address:

- Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying
- Management of Drugs and Other Prohibited Substances incidents in schools
- Management of Police Intervention and Interviews Conducted with Students on School Premises
- Management of Weapons in Schools guidelines
- Suicide Prevention guidelines
- Students with Disabilities
- Student Attendance
- Acceptable Use of Technology
- Public Transport Use
- Administration of Medicine to Students
- Critical Incident Management

Colleges employ counsellors to work with students, parents and staff and provide pastoral care, personal safety strategies, and support for marginalised students and students who may be at risk of being harmed. Each student is allocated to a pastoral care group with a pastoral care coordinator who provides support and guidance throughout years 4 -12. In Early Learning Centres, educators develop appropriate caring relationships with each child to enable them to feel safe, secure and supported.

PART 3 – CONCERNS

Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm (*mandatory requirement 4*)

Student Protection Processes and Guidelines

The EREAC Queensland Student Protection Processes and Guidelines detail the process for all staff who work in EREAC and entities to recognise, respond and report allegations or suspicions of:

- sexual abuse/likely sexual abuse of students/children;
- harm or risk of harm to students/children caused by physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect; and
- inappropriate behaviour of staff/volunteers to students/children.

The Student Protection Processes and Guidelines reflect mandatory reporting requirements in Queensland and have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the:

- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act and Regulation 2017*;
- *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 and Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017*;
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 and Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020*;
- *Child Protection Act 1999*;
- *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005*; and
- Non-State Schools Accreditation Board.

In compliance with legislation, reports are made to the Queensland Police Service in relation to allegations or reasonable suspicions of sexual abuse/likely sexual abuse of a student/child or to the Department responsible for Child Safety for harm/risk of harm to a student/child caused by sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect.

If a report is made in relation to inappropriate behaviour of a staff member, volunteer or contractor, it will be managed by the Principal or Entity Leader, with support from the EREAC Director of Safeguarding & Professional Standards or Manager of Safeguarding & Professional Standards. When required advice will be sought from relevant external professionals and legal requirements will be complied with.

The EREAC Student Protection Processes and Guidelines are readily available for staff, volunteers, parents, students and carers, and EREACC requires that all entities upload the Student Protection Processes and Guidelines to their school/entity website.

EREAC has developed a system to enable central management and monitoring of all child protection concerns, including that all mandatory reports are reviewed by the Manager of Safeguarding and Professional Standards to ensure both compliance with mandatory reporting requirements and the appropriate support of students.

EREAC has developed a complaints procedure to enable teaching staff, other personnel, volunteers, parents or students to make a complaint that the College or entity has not complied with the Student Protection Processes and Guidelines. Complaints may be made using Record of Complaint ([Form B](#)) about non-compliance with EREAC Student Protection Processes and Guidelines. Principals and Entity Leaders are required to manage these complaints in accordance with EREAC's Procedure for Handling Complaints about non-compliance with EREAC Student Protection Processes and Guidelines.

Student Protection Contacts

In accordance with the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017* each EREAC school must have at least two stated staff members to whom a student/child can report behaviour of another staff member that the student/child considers to be inappropriate.

These roles are referred to as Student Protection Contacts.

The Principal can nominate to be a Student Protection Contact.

The role of the Student Protection Contact is to assist staff, parents, students and volunteers in student protection matters and to assist staff to make a report when a complaint or allegation of harm to a student is received as outlined in the EREAC Student Protection Processes and Guidelines.

EREAC requires Colleges to make staff, volunteers, parents and students aware of the Student Protection Contacts, through newsletters, posters prominently displayed in the College and other ways specific to and chosen by the College, e.g. daily student notices.

Information about the Student Protection Contacts and requirements for their appointment is detailed within the EREAC Student Protection Processes and Guidelines.

EREAC provides annual supplementary training for Student Protection Contacts with a specific focus on skills development relevant to the role.

Safeguarding Director and Manager

EREAC has appointed a Director of Safeguarding and Professional Standards and a Manager of Safeguarding and Professional Standards who assist the Chief Executive Officer in providing oversight of safeguarding practices to the EREAC Board, and provide direct practical assistance and support to entities in managing any safeguarding concern.

A plan for managing breaches of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy (*mandatory requirement 5*)

EREAC takes any breach of its Strategy seriously. Breaches may be dealt with as follows:

- if the alleged breach relates to the actions of an employee, the Principal/Entity Leader in consultation with EREAC will manage this, as appropriate, in accordance with its Employee Misconduct Processes and Unsatisfactory Performance Process;
- if the alleged breach relates to a report of inappropriate behaviour of a staff member, other personnel or volunteer to a student/child, the Principal/Entity Leader in consultation with EREAC will manage this process in accordance with the EREAC Student Protection Processes and Guidelines;
- if the breach relates to a complaint made via the Record of Complaint about Non-Compliance with EREAC Student Protection Processes and Guidelines, the complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the Procedure for Handling Complaints about Non-Compliance with EREAC Student Protection Processes and Guidelines and legislative requirements;
- if the breach relates to the action of a contractor, EREAC will take appropriate action under the College, Entity or EREAC contract with the contractor.

A risk management plan for high-risk activities and special events (*mandatory requirement 7*)

Risk Management Tools

EREAC requires Colleges and Entities to consider all curriculum and non-curriculum activities in terms of their level of risk. When undertaking all activities or special events (i.e. low, medium or high) Colleges and Entities undertake responsibility for identifying potential risks and considering the safety and wellbeing of students/children and the risk of harm to students/children.

EREAC requires Colleges and Entities to develop and implement a risk management plan to remove or minimise the risk of harm to students/children. The plan includes risk management assessment and risk mitigation which is carried out for activities undertaken both within and outside the entity.

Colleges and Entities are encouraged to access the Queensland Government *Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy* [Toolkit](#) and *Blue Card Services Learning Portal – Risk Management* to assist them in relation to risk

assessments and risk management plans. The EREAC Director of Risk and Compliance assists entities with the development and implementation of risk management plans. There are Health and Safety teams and a dedicated Workplace Health and Safety Officer at each entity who provide support, if requested, to carry out risk assessments and develop and implement a risk management plan. Internal audits are conducted to ensure that entities are complying with legislative requirements.

Risk Management for Excursions and other Activities

Principals and Entity Leaders are responsible for approving all excursions, retreats, immersion programs and school and outside school activities, with additional approvals required for interstate and overseas travel. Entities have developed parent/carer permission forms and documentation covering excursions (including WHS standards and Risk Management Plans). A Risk Management Plan and a Risk Assessment Form is used by Principals/Entity Directors to identify, assess and manage risks associated with excursions, camps, retreats, immersion programs and other activities particular to the College/Entity. College/Entities staff, in carrying out a Risk Assessment and formulating a Risk Management Plan, are required to specify on the forms and templates used that student protection risks must be assessed and managed.

Entities may conduct other outside of hours activities such as College Productions, Art Festivals, and community support e.g. visits to retirement villages and breakfast vans for the homeless. Risk Management Assessments and Risk Management Plans are carried out for these events and staff responsible for these assessments and plans specify that student protection risks must be assessed and managed.

All overseas travel programs and activities have comprehensive and current risk management procedures in place which have the approval of the EREAC Chief Executive Officer prior to departure. Each College/Entity has access to the policy, procedures and form in their online policy and assurance system.

Other Strategies to Minimise Risks of Harm

- **Supervision of children and students** – EREAC entities must manage the supervision of students/children appropriately to ensure that there is adequate supervision of students/children as detailed in the EREA Code of Conduct and each College/Entity Position Statement.
- **Emergency/Critical Incident situations** – EREAC entities have in place procedures to handle emergency situations and critical incidents and are briefed to appropriately handle such situations.
- **Fire/Lockdown** – EREAC entities have procedures to address such situations and must ensure that all employees and volunteers are made aware of fire evacuation and lockdown procedures at their College/Entity.
- **Visitors** – EREAC entities must have procedures in place for the management of visitors, including relevant signage and directions together with a visitor sign in register and procedures for signing in and out of the College/Entity. These procedures include the wearing of a visitor's pass.
- **Media/Communications strategies** - EREAC Colleges/Entities must have permission from parents/carers captured on forms available for approving the use of student/child photographs and names in any materials issued to the public in printed or electronic form. Identifying information of students/children must not be used in promotional material without the specific permission of the parents/carers and the students concerned.
- **Computer/Internet use** - All employees and students/children are required to observe the EREAC/entity Acceptable Use Policy and a Consent Form is implemented where required in relation to student use of technology.
- **Travel** – Travel guidelines for students/children have been developed by EREAC. These guidelines are accessible to staff, parents/carers and students are regularly reminded of these guidelines.

PART 4: CONSISTENCY

Policies and procedures for compliance with Chapter 8 of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (which regulates the Blue Card system) (mandatory requirement 6)

Blue Card Requirements and Employee Register

EREAC Colleges/Entities comply with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* to ensure that the required staff, volunteers, trainees and contractors hold a Blue Card (unless an exemption applies), including:

- All Directors of the Governing Body
- all College/Entity employees who are not registered with either the QCT or the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency;
- all employees of the office of EREA Colleges Ltd, Queensland
- volunteers (who are not parents of enrolled children);
- preservice teachers undertaking practical teaching sessions as part of compulsory academic course requirements;
- self-employed people, paid employees other than EREAC employees, and volunteers whose usual duties include, or are likely to include, the teaching, coaching or tutoring of a child, individually on a commercial basis;
- students who undertake formal traineeships as part of their studies which involve work in child related employment, including conducting sport and recreation activities directed at children; and
- College/Entity Advisory Council members

EREAC requires entities to maintain a Blue Card Register for all eligible employees, volunteers, trainee student teachers and preservice teachers. Each entity has a Screening Contact Person who is appointed by the Principal/Entity Leader. The Blue Card Register and details must be available to the EREAC Chief Executive Officer or delegate when requested. The EREAC Chief Executive Officer may request internal or external audits of the College's/Entities' Blue Card Register and other relevant details/information.

All teachers employed in Queensland by EREAC must be registered with the QCT. Principals/Entities Leaders are required by EREA Colleges Ltd to confirm registration and qualifications before employment commences. New non-teaching staff, volunteers and contractors must have a Blue Card (or Exemption notice) prior to commencing work.

Procedures for reviewing the Child and Youth Management Strategy

To ensure that the EREAC Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy remains current and effective, this Strategy will be monitored and reviewed annually, or earlier if required.

The review process may involve:

- The application of EREAC policies and procedures within entities;
- the effectiveness of EREAC's policies, procedures and guidelines in preventing or minimising harm to students/children;
- whether any child-related incidents/issues have occurred in the review period and how they have been managed;
- the content and frequency of training in relation to EREAC's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy.

On completion of the review, Colleges/Entities will be advised of any changes to EREAC's policies and procedures as a result of the review and, where appropriate, training will be provided.

Strategies for communication and support (*mandatory requirement 8*)

Student Protection Training

As discussed previously in this document, EREAC staff, volunteers and contractors must complete annual training in relation to child protection and the EREAC Code of Conduct.

This training includes information regarding the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy.

Communication to community members

EREAC Colleges/Entities make this Strategy available to community members through College/Entity websites and any local contextual methods.