

# De La Salle Brothers ANZPPNG

## Disclosure of Abuse or Harm Policy

### Introduction

*"The children in your care are a letter which Christ dictates to you, which you write each day in their hearts, not with ink, but by the Spirit of God."* – St John Baptist De La Salle

The De La Salle Brothers have devoted their lives to assisting youth, especially the poor. As such the De La Salle Brothers are committed to ensuring that all children and young people are afforded the highest levels of care and protection.

The De La Salle Institute ensures that all their works fully comply with all relevant Government Legislation and requirements of the Catholic Church. In the absence of either having procedures established, this policy forms the practice of the Institute.

### Policy Purpose

This policy informs procedures by which the management of and response to allegations of serious breaches of professional behaviour are undertaken.

The policy:

- informs how those making allegations and those against whom allegations are made are supported and dealt with during the conduct of an investigation;
- provides a framework for the conduct of investigation including roles and responsibilities; and
- Informs and guides internal and external reporting.

This policy applies to all members of the De La Salle Congregation.

### Receiving Complaints

All complaints or matters of concern will be dealt with compassionately and promptly. It is recognised that complaints may come via third parties, including legal representatives, Child Safety Officers, or the Police.

Complaints or matters of concern should be directed to the Professional Standards Officer in the first instance. The Professional Standards Officer is responsible for advising the Brother Visitor and for reporting to the relevant authorities, including the Police if it is suspected that the matter relates to any possible criminal behaviour.

### Responding

In matters that are directly reported by the complainant key details will be obtained i.e. name, address, date of birth, contact details, particulars of the allegation and who it is against.

As much as reasonably possible the matters will be treated as confidential, respecting the rights of all individuals involved for privacy.

If the complaint relates to sexual abuse, other criminal behaviour and/or child protection issue individuals are to be informed that the matter will be referred to the Police and/or statutory child protection authority. Additionally, in accordance with the protocols of Towards Healing, every complaint will be reported to the State Office for Professional Standards of the Catholic Church.

External specialist support i.e. counselling is to be made available to individuals, and in the case of children, the child and their family.

### **Risk Assessment**

An internal risk assessment will be completed as a priority and will be reviewed by the Consultative Committee (External Reference Group) at the next scheduled meeting.

Actions as a result of the risk analysis are to be implemented as soon as possible, including the undertaking of an independent investigation.

Where the allegation relates to sexual abuse, other serious issues of professional misconduct and/or child protection issues, action will be taken to immediately stand down the individual from Ministry. It is also expected that specialist support will be provided to the subject of the complaint.

### **Investigation**

The De La Salle Institute is committed to ensuring that all investigations are undertaken transparently and honestly.

All complaints or matters of concern will be independently investigated, unless the matter is being investigated by the Police, State Child Protection Agency or Professional Standards Office of the Catholic Church. Where a Police or State Child Protection Agency investigation is underway, no other investigation will commence until that process is completed and/or clearance is given to proceed from such authorities. Full co-operation with investigation processes will be extended at all times.

Investigations will be undertaken in accordance with confidentiality and information-sharing protocols and in a manner which maintains full compliance with Privacy Standards.

Independent investigators will be engaged by the Professional Standards Officer and all relevant information is to be disclosed to the Investigator. The investigation report is to be provided to the Professional Standards Officer who will in turn table it for review by the Consultative Committee.

Following review by the Consultative Committee a finding will be submitted for independent judicial review.

The Professional Standards Officer will be the point of contact for all parties and is responsible for keeping the Brother Visitor informed.

### **Outcomes**

At the completion of the judicial review process a full report will be completed by the Professional Standards Officer and presented to the Consultative Committee and Brother Visitor. The Brother Visitor as the Church Authority is required to observe the protocols as set out in Towards Healing.

### **Contact**

Professional Standards Officer, De La Salle Brothers  
PO Box 3485, Bankstown NSW 2200  
Telephone: 02 9795 6400

Associated Documents:      Towards Healing  
   Investigation Procedure  
   Risk Assessment Framework  
   External Consultative Committee Charter  
   Complaint or Matter of Concern Form