Memorandum

To: Diocesan Directors
Principals of Congregational Schools

From: Brian Croke, Executive Director

Subject: Addressing anti-social and extremist behaviour in NSW schools

NSW schools provide safe learning environments for young people to learn and succeed. We achieve this by promoting positive social behaviour, providing support to vulnerable students and building strong links with parents, carers and school communities. In November 2015 the Premier announced the Government’s Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism in NSW, a coordinated interagency approach that aims to build resilience and promote harmony in the community. The NSW Department of Education, the Catholic Education Commission NSW and the Association of Independent Schools of NSW have collaborated to develop a strategy to address anti-social and extremist behaviour in all NSW schools. There are three key components to the strategy.

1. Incident reporting hotline for all schools
Principals of Catholic schools will be able report all concerns of anti-social and extremist behaviour to the Department of Education’s School Safety and Response Hotline: ph 1300 495 051, which is accessible to all schools 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Principals need to make sure staff are aware of the need to immediately report incidents to a school executive so the principal can promptly make the report.

2. Increasing awareness in schools
An information package has been developed to support schools in raising awareness and help you respond to issues if they arise. It includes online awareness training, fact sheets for teachers, parents and students, guidelines for principals and links to resources. The Fact Sheets and Guidelines are attached. The online training will be available from 15 February at http://elearning.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au.

3. Specialist Support Teams
Five Specialist Support Teams have been formed cross-sectorally to support all NSW schools. These teams will work in the Department of Education’s Case Management and Specialist Support Unit, 02 9707 6297 at Bankstown to address issues around anti-social and extremist behaviour, including looking at systems in schools, supporting vulnerable students, promoting inclusion and assisting schools respond to incidents. The Case Management and Specialist Support Unit can advise and support all principals from NSW schools with any questions or concerns.

Please bring this information to the attention of your staff and school communities.

If you have any questions please contact Tony McArthur by email: tony.mcarthur@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au, by phone: 02 9287 1533 or mobile: 0421 647 811.
SCHOOL COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES EXECUTIVE STAFF IN NSW CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Contents

1. Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 4
   How to use these Guidelines ............................................................................................... 4
   Who else is involved? ............................................................................................................ 4
2. Systems and Administrative Practices ............................................................................ 5
   2.1 IT Systems ...................................................................................................................... 5
   2.2 Cyber Safety Programs .................................................................................................. 5
   2.3 Supervision of students ................................................................................................. 5
   2.4 Discipline Policies ......................................................................................................... 6
   Anti-bullying and anti-racism programs ............................................................................. 6
   2.5 Resilience programs ...................................................................................................... 7
   2.6 Resilience programs ...................................................................................................... 7
   2.7 Having safe school environments ................................................................................. 7
   2.8 Emergency response systems ...................................................................................... 7
   2.12 Building partnerships ................................................................................................ 8
   2.13 Celebrating cultural diversity ..................................................................................... 9
   2.13 Refugee Support .......................................................................................................... 9
3. Supporting vulnerable students ......................................................................................... 10
   3.3 What to do when advised of concern for a student’s wellbeing ..................................... 11
      3.3.1 Step 1 – Clarify the Issue ....................................................................................... 11
      3.3.2 Step 2 – Explore support options .......................................................................... 12
      3.3.3 Step 3 – Offer a Support Plan ............................................................................... 13
      3.3.4 Step 4 – Monitor and Review ............................................................................... 13
   3.4 Reporting ....................................................................................................................... 13
   4.1 Reporting ....................................................................................................................... 14
   4.2 Case Management and Specialist Support Unit ............................................................ 15
4.2.1 Specialist Support Teams.................................................................................................................... 15
Case Management Service ................................................................................................................................. 16

4.3 Incident Management ............................................................................................................................... 16

4.4 Risk assessment ......................................................................................................................................... 17

4.5 Communication .......................................................................................................................................... 17
4.5.1 Communication with staff ...................................................................................................................... 17
4.5.2 Communication with students .................................................................................................................. 17
4.5.3 Communication with the parents or carers of the student/s involved ....................................................... 18
4.5.4 Communication with parents and other groups ...................................................................................... 18

4.6 The Wellbeing of Students and Staff ......................................................................................................... 18
4.6.1 Staff Welfare ............................................................................................................................................ 18
4.6.2 Student Support ...................................................................................................................................... 18

4.7 Managing the Media .................................................................................................................................... 18

4.8 Privacy and Confidentiality ......................................................................................................................... 19

4.9 Working with the NSW Police Force ......................................................................................................... 19
4.9.1 Interviews with students at school .......................................................................................................... 19
4.9.2 Interviews with staff .................................................................................................................................. 20
4.9.3 Providing police with Information .......................................................................................................... 20

4.10 Recovery Plans ......................................................................................................................................... 20

5. Scenarios ..................................................................................................................................................... 21
1. Introduction

The aim of these guidelines is to augment the School Communities Working Together E-learning Awareness Module and provide practical guidance to NSW Catholic School executive team members on how to manage anti-social and extremist behaviour in NSW Schools. These guidelines have been developed specifically for executive staff in NSW Catholic Schools. The other NSW education sectors also have their own specific guidelines for managing anti-social and extremist behaviour in their schools.

There are three ways that schools can prepare for and respond to issues of anti-social and extremist behaviour:

1. Fostering resilient and inclusive school communities to help reduce the opportunity for extremist organisations to encourage young people to engage in their cause. Resilient communities are also an essential part of responding to tragic events which sometimes impact schools;

2. Identifying and supporting young people who require additional assistance to help protect them from becoming vulnerable to extremist influences; and

3. Having effective incident management and support systems in place to assist schools to manage anti-social and extremist behaviour impacting the school community.

Anti-social and extremist behaviour is essentially a combination of two behaviours:

1. Anti-social behaviour – which threatens the safe and secure atmosphere of the school and includes but is not restricted to behaviours such as bullying, harassment, discrimination, racism, illegal or criminal behaviour, physical violence or damaging school or other property; and

2. Extremist Behaviour – which is demonstrated when a person believes that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change.

These behaviours are unacceptable in NSW schools and appropriate action must be taken relevant to each unique situation. These guidelines will assist schools to foster an environment which may help deter this type of behaviour in students and provide guidance on how to manage this behaviour at school.

How to use these Guidelines

These guidelines have been designed as a reference document. Each section refers to one of the three ways schools can prepare for and respond to issues of anti-social and extremist behaviour.

Section 2 provides important information on how to foster resilient and inclusive school communities and lists some useful resources.

Section 3 provides important information on how to identify and support young people and lists resources that may be able to assist.

Section 4 provides important information on how to report and manage incidents of anti-social and extremist behaviour in schools and the steps that should be followed if an incident occurs.

Who else is involved?

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) is a whole of government and whole of community responsibility. As well as relevant local community organisations, there are several government agencies with a direct role in CVE. These are the NSW Police Force, Multicultural NSW, Department of Justice, Department of Family and Community Services, Ministry of Health, and Juvenile Justice.

There may be times when you will liaise and work with these agencies to address issues in relation to CVE within your school. This may be from a preventative perspective such as enhancing resilience in your school community or from a response perspective if an anti-social and extremist behaviour incident occurs.
2. Systems and Administrative Practices

When we foster resilient, respectful and inclusive learning environments we help make our schools safe and positive places for students to learn and grow.

We achieve this by having sound administrative practices in our schools as well as championing the values of respect, responsibility, participation, care, fairness and democracy.

Schools help foster student resilience through the provision of a quality education that equips students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in life.

Reviewing and strengthening the school systems and administrative practices, as outlined in the next section, can assist with fostering a positive school culture and enhance respectful and inclusive school environments. These systems will be vital in the event that the school is required to manage a critical incident.

2.1 IT Systems

Schools need to remind students that their use of internet and online communication services provided by the school must comply with the Acceptable Usage Policies.

Schools are advised to actively monitor students’ use of internet and online communication services at school, to the extent this is practicable. This may include access controls (e.g. blocking of sites), supervision during lessons where feasible and reminding students that their use of the Internet and online communication services provided by the school are monitored and can be searched (through archiving of emails and searches and logs of web browsing) which is outlined in the Acceptable Use Policy.

2.2 Cyber Safety Programs

Schools should encourage students to use the internet in a positive and safe way that protects them and reduces the risk of becoming a victim of unwanted communication or inappropriate materials online. This includes offering advice to parents to help them monitor their child’s access and usage in the home.

There are a number of websites schools can refer to students and parents, including:

- The Office of the Children’s eSafety Commissioner’s Enhancing Online Safety website
- The NSW Police Force’s Parent’s Guide to Internet Safety
- Cyber Safety program: ThinkUKnow
- School Authority Programs

2.3 Supervision of students

Schools play an important role in supporting students. This includes doing what they reasonably can to protect students from foreseeable risk of harm arising from school related activities. Appropriate supervision of students plays an important role in achieving this. In addition, reaching out to students and noticing changes in behaviour can assist in identifying the early signs of when a student may be vulnerable to anti-social and extremist influences.

 Principals need to encourage their staff to complete the School Communities Working Together online module or equivalent and require staff to report all instances of anti-social and extremist behaviour to either themselves or a nominee so consideration can be given to a report being made to the School Safety Reporting Unit (SSRU) hotline.
2.4 Discipline Policies

Good student behaviour is fundamental to the achievement of the aims of Catholic schooling. In line with this, schools must have a school discipline policy which is understood by school community members and is a BOSTES school registration requirement. Advice on problematic behaviour management options can be sought from each school's governing body.

Expectations of student behaviour in Catholic schools focus on at least these three areas: Respect, Safety and Engagement.

Signs of anti-social and extremist behaviour may include breaches of the expectations (e.g., not valuing the interests, abilities and cultures of others, engaging in dangerous behaviour or non-attendance).

Principals should seek appropriate advice and support to manage these situations.

The Principal and school staff, using their professional judgment, are best placed to maintain satisfactory behaviour at school and provide safe, supportive and responsive learning environments.

2.5 Anti-bullying and anti-racism programs

Schools should encourage students to behave appropriately. This includes respecting individual differences and diversity; behaving as responsible digital citizens; following the school anti-bullying plan; and behaving as responsible bystanders.

Schools are required to develop protection, prevention, early intervention and response strategies for student bullying and to review their anti-bullying plan at least every three years. Some useful resources to support students include:

- Kidsmatter
- Cybersmart
- National Coalition Against Bullying
- Bullying. No Way!
- Racism. No way!
- National Safe Schools Framework
- Relevant school authority policies and procedures

2.6 Resilience programs – students

Schools can support the development of resilience in students through quality teaching practices, curriculum (e.g., Personal and Social Capabilities, PDHPE syllabus) and evidence-based approaches such as Positive Behaviour for Learning and KidsMatter.

Formal measurements can provide school principals and leaders with insight into student engagement and wellbeing, and the impact of teaching practices at their school, from the perspective of students, teachers and parents.
2.7 Resilience programs – staff

Resilience in staff will be needed when handling instances of anti-social and extremist behaviour in schools.

Schools can foster staff resilience through effective leadership practices demonstrating inclusion, empathy, care, compassion.

When Principals and members of the School Executive build positive relationships with employees, staff feel supported, valued and trusted.

Practical steps include:
- Good communication between staff and the school executive
- Respecting staff diversity
- Offering relevant professional development opportunities
- Promoting staff wellbeing and work life balance – taking care of yourself and others
- Building awareness and promotion of external agencies and supports such as having an expectation of dignity and respect in the workplace
- Reminding all staff of their obligation to know and respect the school's ethos and expectations of staff behaviour.

2.8 Having safe school environments

Safe, supportive and respectful school communities are a prerequisite for effective learning and student wellbeing. All school community members are to be encouraged to develop and maintain a safe school community where diversity is valued and young people are actively supported to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe.

Schools can develop a safer school community through whole-school and evidence-based approaches.

The National Safe School Framework defines the following nine key elements of a safe and supportive learning community:
1. Leadership commitment to a safe school
2. A supportive and connected school culture
3. Policies and procedures as required by BOSTES and the school's authority
4. Professional learning
5. Positive behaviour management
6. Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
7. A focus on student pastoral care, wellbeing and student ownership
8. Early intervention and targeted support
9. Partnerships with families and community
10. Partnerships with Church agencies such as Catholic Care

2.9 Emergency response systems

Schools must have tested emergency response systems in place to respond to emergency situations both on the school grounds and when staff and students are off-site.

These must be practiced so that staff know what they are responsible for and students know what is expected from them. This can alleviate the fear of not knowing what to do should a real-life situation arise.

Each school must have its plans in place for alerts, evacuations, lockouts and lockdowns.

Alert – An alert informs staff to keep all students inside buildings until further notice. Individual schools can determine what signal is used to inform staff of an alert. Examples of where an alert could be used instead of lockdown include an aggressive person in the front office, or a wild dog or other animal(s) in the school grounds. Lessons can continue as normal, there is no need to secure doors and windows or have students seated out of sight. During an alert, classes on playing fields or other outside areas should immediately move to a classroom or predetermined indoor area such as the assembly hall or library.

Lockout – Lockout is a procedure which prevents unauthorised entry to the school and is commonly used when there is a general threat or an incident is occurring off school property. This procedure allows school activities to continue as normal during the external disruption. Lockout generally occurs when there is a risk of intruders coming onto the school premises or a police operation is in progress in the vicinity.
Lockdown – Lockdown minimises access to the school and secures staff and students in rooms. Lockdown should only be used when there is an imminent and serious threat to the safety of students and staff such as violent intruders on school grounds. If schools regularly go into lockdown in response to minor incidents, staff and students may become complacent and put themselves at risk when a more serious incident occurs. As part of implementing a lockdown, everyone must remain in the room until the situation has been declared safe by an authorised person such as the Principal, emergency warden or police. All staff, including casual teachers and school counsellors, must be familiar with the school’s lockdown procedures.

Drills - Principals should periodically conduct lockdown/lockout drills at the school. It is recommended that schools conduct lockdown drills at least once each year. Local police should also be notified prior to conducting a lockdown drill as there may be overreaction by members of the community who contact police to find out why the school is in lockdown. Local specialist police such as the youth liaison officer (YLO), school liaison police officer (SLP) or crime prevention officer are often able to assist and provide advice to improve lockdown procedures.

2.11 Reporting of incidents

Schools have a number of reporting obligations. These vary from diocese to diocese and among congregational schools. BOSTES’ School Registration “Safe and Supportive Environment” requirements are highly relevant.

A number are mandated under legislation, e.g. child protection. For further information, refer to the Australian Government’s Safe Schools Toolkit.

For advice and support on what is reportable please do not hesitate to contact the Catholic Education or Schools Office (CE/So). Congregational schools can seek advice from the Catholic Education Commission NSW (CECNSW).

2.12 Working with NSW Police

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NSW Police and the government and non-government school sectors is available from CE/So or from CECNSW. It outlines a commitment to working closely together with Police to prevent and reduce crime and ensure schools remain safe places in which to work and learn.

The MoU outlines a commitment to sharing information. Principals are expected to attend bi-annual meetings with the NSW Police Local Area Commanders and all other Principals within their Command. These forums provide an overview of what is happening in the area and will inform emergency response planning processes. This is also an opportunity to ask questions and build relationships with local police.

Details of dealing with NSW Police during and after an incident are covered in Section 4.

2.12 Building partnerships

Community harmony is promoted through school policies and practices which counter racism and intolerance and develop intercultural understanding. Welcoming and positive school environments focus on building partnerships with internal and external stakeholders. Parent and community partnerships can be developed through:

- Parent and Friends’ associations and other parent groups
- Parent volunteering
- Multicultural community activities and events
- Engagement with broader community members
- Community liaison officers
- Parish outreach activities
- Aboriginal community liaison officers
- Police school and youth liaison officers.
Other considerations include:

- promoting democratic and inclusive practices across the school and in classrooms, including consultation, collaboration, representation and appropriate decision making
- encouraging parents from all backgrounds and communities to become involved in parent forums and groups
- providing interpreters where required to facilitate the participation of parents and community members with limited English language proficiency.

Promoting strong cultural links can help community members feel welcomed into the school, which can further assist students and families to feel included. If an incident arises, it is these relationships that will assist.

### 2.13 Celebrating cultural diversity

NSW Catholic schools reflect the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the communities they serve.

An understanding of the diverse cultural practices of students can be used to inform school planning and assist schools in catering for the needs of their students.

Promoting culturally inclusive school practices supports the development of teaching materials that avoid bias and prejudice and challenge stereotypes. It also provides all students with opportunities to learn, share experiences and succeed at school.

There are a number of online resources that may assist schools:

- Cultural Exchange NSW
- Cooling Conflicts
- Making Multicultural Australia
- Racism. No way!
- Rethinking Multiculturalism, Reassessing Multicultural Education
- Opening-the-school-gate
- Local CE/SC resources

### 2.13 Refugee Support

In general, refugees have greater educational and support needs than most other newly arrived migrant students.

Refugees have usually escaped from war or civil unrest and have often experienced trauma as a witness to violence or loss of family members and/or long periods spent in refugee camps.

School-aged refugee students, in particular high school students, generally require high levels of support to enable them to settle successfully in school, learn English and acquire literacy in order to access the full curriculum.

Additional support for students may also be required to help them adjust to perceptions from members of the school community. Good inclusive communication with parents and carers will be important to facilitate a safe and supportive environment to assist them to adjust.

There are a number of online resources that may assist schools:

- Roads to Refuge
- Refugee Council of Australia
- The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)
- The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
3. Supporting vulnerable students

There are many factors that could contribute to the likelihood of a student becoming vulnerable to anti-social and extremist behaviour. Wanting to fit in, pressure from peers and seeking attention are some elements. Other factors could include:

- Dealing with personal disappointment
- Exposure to criminal activity
- Exposure to extremist ideologies
- Lack of identity or self-esteem
- Feeling isolated and excluded
- Looking for a thrill or excitement
- Mental health issues.

3.7 Signs that a student may be vulnerable to adopting anti-social and extremist behaviour.

While there are no definitive indicators that a student is vulnerable to adopting anti-social and extremist behaviour, the following signs may suggest that something is wrong. Most of these signs could be interpreted as typical teenage behaviour. However, if there is a pattern to the behaviour, a sudden significant change in behaviour, or if the student displays a number of the following signs, further consideration and inquiry is required. These signs include:

- Decreased attendance at school
- Distancing from usual friends or a change in friendship groups
- Decreased interest in usual sport or social networks
- Significant change in appearance
- Significant change in behaviour or language in line with an extreme ideology
- Dialogue that may try to justify violence as a solution to an issue
- Displaying attitudes that justify criminal behaviour
- History of violence
- Possession of extremist material, or hoarding and/or disseminating this material
- Aggressive statements of moral superiority; or
- Searching for answers about faith, identity, ancestry and/or belonging in an inappropriate way.

3.8 Becoming aware of anti-social and extremist behaviour

There are several ways that a school may become aware that there are concerns about a potential or an actual incident of anti-social and extremist behaviour. These include:

- A report from an external source, such as a parent or carer, peer, police, or a member of the community;
- A student displays anti-social and extremist behaviour while at school or during an off-site school activity;
- Posts on a social media site linking a student to anti-social and extremist behaviour; or
- There is a notable and sudden change in a student’s behaviour, which upon further enquiry reveals that the student is associating with people involved in or is themselves engaging in anti-social and extremist behaviour, either in the school or in the community.

If you become aware of an issue under any of these circumstances, you must report it to the Department of Education School Safety and Response Hotline on ph: 1300 495 051. (Government schools use a different number). All reports must also be advised to your school’s governing body, i.e. CE/SO, school council, religious order/congregation.
3.9 What to do when advised of concern for a student’s wellbeing

Teachers are conscious of, and sensitive to, the wellbeing of their students. They may directly observe changes in a student’s behaviour that may cause them concern, or sense that something is wrong. You should encourage your staff to raise these concerns with a nominated member of your school executive.

Once escalated, you or your executive team member can make a decision as to whether the situation warrants further action. Steps you can take to assist a student in need include:

1. Clarify the Issue
2. Explore support options
3. Offer a support plan
4. Monitor and Review.
5. Seek Specialist counselling.

3.3.1 Step 1 – Clarify the Issue

As mentioned in the module, it is important to clarify what may be impacting on a student’s wellbeing as this may affect their vulnerability to adopting risk taking behaviour, such as anti-social and extremist behaviour. As a principal you may choose to do this yourself or delegate to another staff member, such as another executive team member or to a member of staff with a welfare and support focus such as the Year Advisor and Pastoral Care Coordinator or school counsellor.

The privacy of the student should be considered when clarifying a wellbeing concern. For further information regarding Privacy, refer to Section 4.14.

Discretion and sensitivity are essential when making inquiries. There may be several people who are able to assist with your inquiries, depending on the circumstances:

- The student
- Parents/carers
- Friends of the student
- Year Coordinator
- Pastoral Care Coordinator
- School counsellor
- Other trusted staff who know the student, or Other agencies who may be working with the student’s family.

Questions that should be considered to clarify the issue include:

- Is this a potential child protection (FACS) issue (e.g. abuse, neglect, homelessness, drug and alcohol issues)?
- Is the child or young person unwell?
- Is there a change in the child’s environment (e.g. parent separation, moved house, death or sickness in the family)?
- Is the child having difficulties in social relationships (e.g. broken up with boyfriend/girlfriend, had a fight with a friend, etc.)
- Is there involvement with anti-social and extremist behaviour or groups?

Once you have the relevant information, a risk assessment should be conducted. As the principal, you will need to be satisfied with the assessment and subsequent management plan. Issues to be considered in the risk assessment should include:

- Those at risk including staff, students, the family and school community
- The school environment
- Risks to planned offsite activities conducted by the school
- What reasonable controls should be adopted to eliminate or control the risk
- Who needs to be consulted during the development of the risk management plan

If there is any risk of anti-social and extremist behaviour, then the School Safety and Response Hotline should be called on 1300 495 051.

Upon clarifying the situation, you may need to report to one or more of the following as appropriate:

- If there is imminent danger call 000 (triple zero)
- Family and Community Services (FACS) as indicated by the Mandatory Reporters Guide
- Diocesan Director or, for Congregational schools, the appropriate school authority.
- Case Management and Specialist Support Unit (ph: 02 9707 6297)
3.3.2 Step 2 – Explore support options

Once the situation has been clarified, it will be important to seek advice from relevant areas in the Diocese. Depending on the situation this could include:

- Work Health & Safety Consultant
- School Counsellor
- Diocesan Educational Services
- Catholiccare
- Diocesan Legal Services.

If appropriate, it will be important to engage with the student’s parents/carers as early as possible so they can assist with the development of the support plan. Examples of when it may be inappropriate to contact parents or carers include where NSW Police have advised contact should not be made and where a court has limited the contact a parent can have with their child. Schools must comply with family court orders which apply to the care of any child.

Potential Support Services and resources include:

- Parents, as appropriate - see 3.3.4
- Year Coordinator – support learning and wellbeing of students in a year at secondary school, or a member of staff with a pastoral care focus
- School Counsellor – psychological support and assessment
- Diocesan Educational Services Team – supports schools in learning, teaching and wellbeing of students
- Diocesan Director or other school authority – provides advice and support to the school. They may refer the matter further as appropriate
- Catholiccare staff and student counselling and related activities.
- Specialist Support Unit – to provide advice on anti-social and extremist behaviour concerns
- Police School or Youth Liaison Officer – provide advice and information to the school. This is the local school contact for NSW Police
- Family Referral Service – This service connects families with support services for children’s safety and wellbeing
- HS Net – directory of professional services available in the human services and justice sector
- STARTTS / NSW Refugee Health Service – provides links to services for refugees in the community
- NSW PCYC – provides services to Youth at Risk in the local community

Strategies to support a student could include:

- Mentoring programs - to support students to develop connections and purposeful goals for school and life - Mentoring guidelines
- Student leadership – programs also promote positive role modelling and connection to school and community. Students also develop stronger connections in their schools and communities through peer support programs, collaborative approaches to learning and opportunities for volunteering
- School authority Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Programs
- School Engagement Programs – engaging students in local school activities in line with their areas of interest should be encouraged. By including them in activities it promotes positive engagement in the school community and encourages them to maintain positive relationships with their peers and staff members at the school.
- Counselling services – there is a range of counselling options that should be considered. For advice please talk to the Specialist Support Team who have Senior Psychologists who are up to date with relevant information in this area.
3.3.3 Step 3 – Offer a Support Plan

After exploring all the potential options of support, it is important for all concerned parties to discuss the following:

- The support to be provided
- Who is providing support, including a suitable staff member who will oversee the plan (e.g. Year Coordinator, School Counsellor or Homeroom Teacher)
- The timeframe for the support plan
- How often meetings will occur to review progress
- Whether other avenues of support may be required; and
- The counselling options available.

A plan to support the student should be implemented in line with the Diocese’s policies and advice from relevant areas. The support plan should be drafted and a copy given to the student and the student’s parents to consider. Upon agreement, the plan should be signed by all parties, including parents, and implemented.

3.3.4 Step 4 – Monitor and Review

It is important to keep monitoring and supervising the implementation of the support plan. An appropriate staff member should be identified to work with the student and monitor progress against the plan. Ideally the person is someone with whom the student has a positive relationship.

Periodic reviews of the plan are important to check it is having a positive effect and to have a process established to identify if a student’s situation has changed. Adjustments may need to be made or a new plan developed depending on the circumstances.

Remember, advice and support is available from the CS/EO and from CECNSW (ph: 02 9287 1555).

Communicating with parents

Before communicating with parents, consider whether this would place the child or young person at risk. If in doubt, principals should seek clarification from the Diocesan resources or from CECNSW.

When communicating with parents the principal or executive member should consider:

- Sensitive and respectful communications
- An appropriate meeting space
- Use of interpreters if required
- A support person
- Developing a script for the meeting
- Recording the actions arising from the meeting.

If parents do not want to engage, the principal should:

- Provide other ways and opportunity for the communication at a later stage and continue to support and monitor the student at school as best you can
- Seek advice from the CE/SO if an unwillingness to access support is detrimental to the child or young person’s safety and wellbeing.
- Consider the possible application of Part 5A of the NSW Education Act which relates to the management of students who pose a risk of harm to themselves or others because of violent behaviour, refer Section 4.8 below.

3.4 Reporting

In cases where there is a concern regarding anti-social and extremist behaviour, you should contact:

- School Safety and Response Unit Reporting Hotline (ph: 1300 495 051)
- Diocesan Director or School Authority (congregational schools), and
- Specialist Support Unit (ph: 02 9707 6297).

Consider whether a report of risk of significant harm is required to FACS. Further information on the management of anti-social and extremist behaviour is covered in Section 4.
4. Managing *anti-social and extremist behaviour*

The role of the principal and school executive is crucial should an incident of *anti-social and extremist behaviour* occur. This section will outline what is required, how to report an incident of *anti-social and extremist behaviour* and what support and resources are available to manage this type of incident. Your role will be vital – but you will not be on your own.

It should be clear that at all times the principal of the school will remain responsible for the local management of the situation unless the police have established a crime scene or are conducting an investigation. If a school staff member, student, parent or other member of the school community reports an incident or suspicion of *anti-social and extremist behaviour* to you it is important to act promptly.

### 4.1 Reporting

As discussed in section 3.2, there are several ways that school staff may become aware that there are concerns about a potential or an actual incident of *anti-social and extremist behaviour*. These include:

- A report from an external source, such as a parent or carer, peer, police, or a member of the community;
- School Counsellor’s briefing
- A student displays *anti-social and extremist behaviour* while at school or during an off-site school activity;
- Posts on a social media site linking a student to *anti-social and extremist behaviour*; or
- There is a notable and sudden change in a student’s behaviour, which upon further enquiry reveals that the student is engaging in, or is associating with people involved in *anti-social and extremist behaviour*, either in the school or in the community.

If you become aware of an issue under any of these circumstances you must report to the School Safety and Response Hotline on 1300 495 051.

**Examples of incidents that are reportable as *anti-social and extremist behaviour* are:**

- Threats made to a school via the school’s website or social media site. An example may be ‘ISIS is coming’ or other inappropriate language.
- Graffiti in the school relating to extremist or terrorist organisations.
- A student threatening other students, in regard to religious practices or beliefs.
- A noticeable change in a student’s behaviour, including the student posting pro-terrorist related information on their own or other’s social media site.
- A student writing and sharing violent or threatening racist comments.
- Allegations or information provided that a student is being encouraged by another person or group to support or engage in anti-social and extremist activity.
- A student bragging about a plot or plans to harm others or damage property in support of extreme beliefs.
- A student disclosure to a member of the school staff.
- A student or group of students is wearing or carrying paraphernalia which supports an extremist organisation.
- A student who says they want to travel to a country where there is conflict and fighting occurring.
- Concerns raised with a school about an ex-student’s activities whose sibling still attends the school.

Making a report is simple. The SSRU Hotline is open 24/7, 365 days per year. Calls related to *anti-social and extremist behaviour* are taken from all NSW government, Catholic and independent schools.

Concerns about staff or members of the community who are displaying *anti-social and extremist*
behaviour should also be reported to the SSRU. Where the actions of a staff member may also constitute a breach of the expectations of staff behaviour, that should be reported to the CE/SO or to the School Authority (congregational school).

You will need to provide as much information as possible. This will include:

- Factual information on what has led to your report e.g. what has occurred/been reported/been witnessed
- Details of the staff/student(s) involved
- Details of any other persons that may be linked to the situation
- Any other relevant information about the staff/student(s) e.g. other police history, other relevant information regarding any issues at home or suspensions/expulsions history.

The more information you can provide when reporting, the better. The person making the report should have the staff member who raised the issue with them, if possible, when making the report, in case they are able to provide additional information in response to the questions the incident support officer will ask.

Once the information has been taken it will be assessed and a decision made about who will need a copy of the report. A copy of all incidents will be provided to NSW Police at least monthly and depending on the circumstances it may be escalated immediately for appropriate consideration and action.

Relevant senior management at the CE/SO or School Authority should also receive a report. Confidentiality and Privacy obligations relating to each report must be met. Advice on Confidentiality and Privacy can be obtained from CECNSW or from each school authority.

Remember – you must advise your Diocesan Director or school authority immediately.

### 4.2 Case Management and Specialist Support Unit

After reporting to all the relevant stakeholders, advice should always be obtained from the Case Management and Specialist Support Unit. The Case Management and Specialist Support Unit has two key functions:

1. Specialist Support Teams
2. Case Management Service.

#### 4.2.1 Specialist Support Teams

In addition to existing support resources, the NSW Government has funded the establishment of five Specialist Support Teams. These teams are available to all schools – government and non-government to give additional assistance and support as required.

The team members will be from both government and non-government sector schools and will include:

- Seconded Principal or Deputy Principal
- Senior psychologists
- Student support officers
- Community liaison officers
- IT Specialists, and
- Administration support.
The teams will have both a proactive role and a response role.

**Proactive role**

The teams will work with schools to conduct an environmental scan to identify areas where policies, programs and strategies can be strengthened or established to create and maintain resilient, inclusive and cohesive learning environments.

The teams will assist schools to:

- Assess and strengthen systems in the school to provide a safe and supportive working and learning environment
- Strengthen processes which promote acceptance and inclusiveness
- Check there are robust processes in place to reduce the opportunity for anti-social and extremist behaviour to develop within the school’s environment
- Provide advice on issues relating to anti-social and extremist behaviour.

This could be done applying strategies such as:

- working with the school to review policies and procedures
- promoting positive engagement with parents and the local community
- linking the school to local support services
- ensuring good IT policies and practices are in place to protect students
- developing strategic plans for building resilience through delivery of specific programs.

**Response Role**

The teams will also have a response role. If a school experiences a critical incident related to anti-social and extremist behaviour, a team may be deployed to the school to assist the Principal to manage the response to the situation. Depending on the situation, this assistance could include:

- Providing specialist advice and guidance
- Engaging stakeholders
- Co-ordinating requests from NSW Police or other government agencies
- Identifying and implementing support strategies for impacted students or staff
- Reviewing the school’s systems with the aim of strengthening them.

**4.22 Case Management Service**

The case management service will provide a holistic approach to the management of relevant staff and students. The case manager will contact the school and where appropriate NSW Police to validate the information available. They will assess the circumstances based on all available information and determine if the incident is of low risk and can be managed locally with periodic follow up and monitoring from the case management team or if specialist advice and case management support is required.

Specialist case management support will include advice and assistance to conduct risk assessments, co-ordination of information with external agencies including NSW Police, assistance in managing staff concerns and assistance and co-ordination of student support plans. Cases will be monitored and reviewed regularly in consultation with the appropriate school contact person.

The team will collaborate with all relevant stakeholders and facilitate the sharing of relevant information. Expert assessment and other external programs of support will be coordinated through this service. New programs and services developed at the national and state level will be incorporated into this service.

Principals can contact the case management team for advice and support on 9707 6297.

**4.3 Incident Management**

The school should always rely on their emergency management plans. These plans are developed in advance in consultation with staff so that if a major incident occurs there is a pre-organised process that can be implemented.

Emergency Management Plans should be reviewed every 12 months or following the occurrence of an incident in accordance with the Diocese’s Emergency Management Guidelines. If you have not updated or tested your emergency response plan recently or if your plan does not include a major disruption to services like an incident of anti-social and extremist behaviour, it is recommended that you review and test it as soon as possible. For more information, please refer to Section 2.10.
4.4 Risk assessment

In any incident it is vital that a risk assessment is conducted to provide a safe working and learning environment for everyone as far as is reasonably practicable. It is important to think broadly and take into account the following considerations:

- Those at risk including staff, students, the family and school community.
- The school environment
- Risks to planned offsite activities
- What controls should be adopted to eliminate or control the risk?
- Who needs to be consulted on the risk management plan.

As the principal you will need to be satisfied with the assessment and subsequent management plans. You should seek advice and support as required including consideration of Privacy requirements and exceptions.

Contact the Case Management and Specialist Support Unit on 9707 6297 for risk management advice and support in managing incidents relating to anti-social and extremist behaviour.

4.5 Communication

If an incident arises, the Case Management and Specialist Support Unit will be able to provide advice on how to communicate with relevant stakeholders. In some instances, you may receive advice from NSW Police that an investigation is ongoing and that the matter is confidential; it is appropriate to discuss the matter with your direct supervisor, the SSRU and the Case Management and Specialist Support Unit – who will advise you on what to do.

When developing a communications strategy, you should consider:

- Clear, factual and concise statements that provide information that is useful
- Your audiences: messages should be tailored to your different audiences. The way you communicate with students will be different to the tone of the messages provided to stakeholders
- Making the message accessible (e.g. consider whether translations are needed, the medium of delivery – e.g. phone calls, text messages, social media, letters home with students, etc.); and
- Providing opportunities for clarification or further questions.

4.5.1 Communication with staff

Communication with staff should be open yet focused on what you are able to confirm with them and what they need to know to keep themselves and students safe. School protocols for any lock down, lock out or evacuation process should be followed in conjunction with directions from Police.

Speculation must be discouraged. It is important to provide information to staff unless police advise this is not appropriate.

Staff should be reminded about the confidentiality of the information and related Privacy requirements when they are briefed.

If Police ask you not to communicate information to staff it is important to follow their directions.

Confirm with the Case Management and Specialist Support Unit (9707 6297) what information you can share about the situation and brief the staff. If appropriate and possible, advising staff of a situation, before they hear of it in the media or through other sources, will help maintain an environment of trust and may assist them to understand the situation better. This may eliminate the risk of staff feeling frustrated at a time when it is important they follow your direction.

4.5.2 Communication with students

If an incident occurs, keeping staff and students safe is our primary concern. Whether an incident has occurred or there are rumours, students should be encouraged to avoid speculation and to follow directions of staff. Students should be advised that school protocols for any lock down, lock out or evacuation process should be followed in conjunction with directions from Police.

Communication with students will vary depending on their age. Most importantly, communication should be focused on keeping students calm and able to follow directions. Smart devices may mean students become aware of media reports. In this instance, dealing in facts and keeping students focused on lock down, lock out and evacuation processes they will have practiced in the past, is key. School staff modelling calm behaviour and avoiding speculation will also assist.

The privacy of individual students must be addressed in accordance with each school’s Privacy Policy.
4.5.3 Communication with the parents or carers of the student/s involved

Principals are experienced in handling sensitive situations. Communicating with the parents of the students involved will be quite sensitive. It is important to seek advice from the relevant areas of the CE/SO, the Case Management and Specialist Support Unit, in some cases NSW Police and any other person involved in the incident before engaging with the parents or carers involved. The provisions of each school's Privacy Policy must be addressed.

4.5.4 Communication with parents and other groups

The main priority with parent/carer communication is to reassure them about the safety of their children. Dealing in factual information rather than speculation is critical.

Parent and community groups may have questions. The priority for the school Principal and Executive team is keeping staff and students safe and providing information that is accurate and appropriate in the circumstances. Following advice from police on what information can be communicated is essential. The Specialist Support Unit is available to provide assistance. Legal advice about issues arising can be obtained from the CE/SO or from CECNSW. The provisions of each school's Privacy Policy must be addressed.

4.6 The Wellbeing of Students and Staff

4.6.1 Staff Welfare

Checking staff have access to appropriate support should an incident occur is vital. This includes during an incident and following an incident. The Case Management and Specialist Support Unit can assist with this.

Following an incident, staff may be affected differently. Some will want to talk about what happened; others will be quiet. It is important to understand that it is OK to react differently and no way of reacting is better than another. The key is to be aware, show concern, and to provide information to staff about who they can talk to – both within the school and externally.

4.7 Managing the Media

If an incident arises, news representatives from the media may telephone or email the school for comment; or may even arrive at the school seeking interviews. Normal incident reporting and media protocols should be followed that is:

- With principals and executive staff concentrating on dealing with the incident, media requests for comment should be referred by office staff to the CE/SO’s Media Unit.

- If questioned by media on site or asked questions by the media, Catholic school staff should direct any media person including reporters to contact the Diocese’s or congregational school's media officer or Jim Hanna, Senior Manager - Government Relations and Media at CECNSW on 0414 828 629.

Aside from providing the Media officer's phone number, it is not appropriate to make any other comment, as this may affect police operations. The Media Officer is skilled at handling such situations and will consult with the principal before publicly commenting about what is occurring at the school.

4.62 Student Support

Like staff, students may be affected differently so it will be important to have a range of support options available at different stages for students.

Student counselling services should be promoted. If you or your staff notice changes in a student's behaviour during this time it will be important to check on their wellbeing to see if they are coping or if additional support may be of assistance.

Some support options that you may like to promote to students include:

- Talk to your parents
- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- headspace – http://www.headspace.org.au
- 1800 RESPECT – http://www.1800respect.org.au
- Local diocesan Catholic Care office.

Remember, if you or a student feel unsafe or in danger, call 000 (triple zero) for assistance.
The school executive’s main focus should be on the safety and security of students and staff. Have a strategy to enable students and staff to safely enter and exit the school grounds – for example asking media to keep clear of entrances and exits or remain away from the school perimeter in general. If the situation escalates, and the media are adversely affecting the safety or security of staff or students, contact the Media Officer for assistance. If further help is needed, NSW Police can be called to provide assistance.

Another important point to remember is that Media reports can also increase concern in the school community. Maintaining effective communication with parents is therefore important. The Case Management and Specialist Support Unit can assist with preparing speaking points. Remember to always communicate facts – not speculation, and any information provided should be cleared with the Media Unit to ensure it does not jeopardise any police operations.

It is likely that the Diocese’s Media Officer will contact you at some point seeking information, so it is a good idea to start preparing this in advance, so when you get the call, you can hand it over quickly. The type of information you may want to collect includes:

- A concise summary of what has happened
- Is the threat still imminent?
- Have Police been informed?
- Information on whether there were any injuries
- Has the Principal’s Consultant been informed?
- Detail of all actions taken to inform parents.

### 4.8 Privacy and Confidentiality

The Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988, amended by the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012, is a Commonwealth Act that regulates the collection, storage, use and disclosure of different types of personal information by private sector organisations including non-governments schools’ CE/SOs with turnovers of over $3 million. The Privacy Act sets out the basis upon which a student’s personal or health information is collected, used, disclosed and secured. The privacy manual for Catholic schools is available on the CECNSW website: [http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au/dbpage.php?pg=view&dbase=programs&id=39](http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au/dbpage.php?pg=view&dbase=programs&id=39).

Advice about when information can be shared between the schools and NSW Police is found in the Memorandum of Understanding for Information Exchange Between Schools and Police. A copy of the MOU can be obtained from CECNSW.

Information about a student exhibiting anti-social and extremist behaviour can also be exchanged with other agencies:

- with the consent of the student/their parent or carer;
- where an exception to privacy legislation applies (for example where there is a serious and imminent threat). If legal advice is required about the exchange of information between schools and other agencies or organisations contact should be made with the Diocese’s legal services or with CECNSW. The relevant CECNSW advice is to be found here: [http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au/dbpage.php?pg=view&dbase=programs&id=39](http://www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au/dbpage.php?pg=view&dbase=programs&id=39).

### 4.9 Working with the NSW Police Force

NSW Police and the government and non-government school sectors are committed to working together to effectively respond to a student’s anti-social and extremist behaviour.

#### 4.9.1 Interviews with students at school

Unless special circumstances exist students should not be interviewed by the police at school. If it is necessary to interview a student at school:

- the student must be told he or she does not have to speak with the police;
- the student’s parents or carers should be notified before the interview takes place and given an opportunity to attend unless there is an exceptional reason why they should not be informed;
· if the police advise it is inappropriate to have a parent or carer present during the interview the student must be given the right to have another adult present. This can be a trusted member of the school staff;

· if the principal believes the student is not capable of making a decision about whether or not he or she should have a support person the principal is to make that decision on the student’s behalf; and

· the principal should confirm with the police they will tell the student’s parents/carers about the interview and obtain the police officer’s contact details so any inquiries made by parents/carers about the interview can be directed to the police.

If the police do not agree to these steps being taken the interview should not take place at school. Further information about police interviews of students can be found in Legal Issues Bulletin 13: https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-us/how-we-operate/legal-issues-bulletins/number_13.pdf.

4.9.2 Interviews with staff
Staff cannot be compelled to provide a statement to the police. However, staff are encouraged to give police a high degree of cooperation during investigations of anti-social and extremist behaviour.

4.9.3 Providing police with Information
Consistent with Section 316 of the NSW Crimes Act (http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/ca190082/s316.html) staff or any other person must provide the police with information that might be of material assistance in securing the apprehension of a person who has committed a serious indictable offence (an offence punishable by at least 5 years imprisonment).

Staff are able to provide the police with information about a student who has exhibited anti-social and extremist behaviour:

· with the consent of the student and/or his or her parents or carers;

· when disclosure of the information is necessary to assist the police to investigate an offence;

· when disclosure is necessary to maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment;

· when disclosure would assist the police to make any decision, assessment or plan or initiate or conduct any investigation relating to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person.

For further information about the circumstances in which staff can provide information to the police please refer to the Memorandum of Understanding for Information Exchange Between Schools and Police. This MOU can be obtained from CECNSW.

4.10 Recovery Plans
Schools will need to develop a recovery plan for the situation. Your school emergency management plan, which includes situations that impact on normal school operations, may be a useful source of assistance. Planning will need to be done as soon as possible to put arrangements in place for the days ahead. Schools should draw upon the advice and support available to assist with forward thinking while managing the incident that is unfolding. Some key issues to consider include:

· Obtaining advice and direction from the school’s authority, e.g. CE/SO

· Staffing requirements for the following days

· Communication with parents and carers regarding arrangements for the following days

· Arrangements for relocating educational delivery if required

· Cancelling or postponing other planned school based or offsite activities for the following days

· Post incident support services for staff and students.

Information and support will be available through the Case Management and Specialist Support Unit (9707 6297).
5. Scenarios

All incidents are unique and need to be responded to based on the situation at the time. The information provided under Section 4 provides the key steps to be taken to manage an incident as it is unfolding. The table below outlines key actions to consider if you are confronted with a similar situation in your school.

For these types of scenarios, the Case Management and Specialist Support Unit will contact the school once they have been advised that a report has been made. The Unit’s phone number is 9707 6297.

The types of situation covered in these examples include:

- Schoolyard situation
- Threats made to the school to harm staff or students
- Media reported incident or interest in a member of staff or student attending the school
- Police notification of a confidential investigation or monitoring of a staff member or student attending the school
- Major incident where there are injuries to school members or direct police involvement which may include arrests being made
- External incident which is outside of school’s control, this may include an incident in the local community or where students are attending an external site for a school based activity.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Incident</th>
<th>Key actions to consider</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A schoolyard situation - this would include students sharing or viewing inappropriate material of an extremist nature at school, having inappropriate conversations. This does not include direct threats that are made about any person.</td>
<td>- Report the incident to the SSRU Hotline – 1300 495 051</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Advise Diocesan Director or School Authority</td>
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<td>- Discussion with the students to determine their reasons for the behaviour</td>
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<td>- Application of the school’s discipline policy</td>
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<td>- Communication with staff reminding them to remain vigilant</td>
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<td>- Risk assessment – strengthen systems to minimise further instances of anti-social and extremist behaviour</td>
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<td>- Inform the Diocesan Media Officer or school’s Media Officer of the event and action taken by the school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of Incident</td>
<td>Key actions to consider</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Threats of an extremist nature made to the school to harm staff or students    | - Report the incident to the SSRU Hotline – **1300 495 051**  
- Advise Diocesan Director or School Authority  
- Discussion with the student(s) to determine their reasons for the behaviour  
- Discussion with Case Management Team to seek further advice and information from NSW Police to assist management  
- Application of the school's discipline policy  
- Communication with staff reminding them to remain vigilant  
- Information to be provided to those who are involved or have been threatened  
- Contact Diocesan Media Officer or school's Media Officer to seek advice.  
- Risk assessment – assess the requirement for ongoing attendance at the school by those involved or threatened  
- Strengthen systems to minimise further instances of *anti-social and extremist behaviour* |
| Media reported incident or interest in a member of staff or student attending the school | - Contact Diocesan Media Officer or school's Media Officer for advice  
- Brief staff on the situation and arrange for updated information to be provided as further information is available  
- In consultation with the Diocesan Media Officer or school's Media Officer, develop a simple script for administration staff who will take concerned calls from parents/carers or enquiries from the media  
- Seek information to assess if the media report has substance  
- Brief Director, Diocesan Director or School Authority as soon as possible  
- Arrange a letter to be sent home to parents reassuring them and providing accurate information. Discuss text with the Diocesan Media Officer or school's Media Officer before printing.  
- Brief students to remain inside the school gates and refrain from responding to media where possible  
- Office staff refer all media calls to the Diocesan Media Officer or school's Media Officer  
- Consider next day plans  
- Implement Recovery Plan  
- Place information from parent letter on school website |
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</table>
| Major incident where there are injuries to school members or direct police involvement which may include arrests being made. | - Contact Diocesan Media Officer or school's Media Officer for advice  
- Advise Diocesan Director or School Authority  
- Brief staff on the situation and arrange for updated information to be provided as further information is available  
- In consultation with the Diocesan Media Officer or school’s Media Officer, develop a simple script for administration staff who will take concerned calls from parents/carers or enquiries from the media  
- Brief Diocesan Director or School Authority as soon as possible  
- Arrange a letter to be sent home to parents reassuring them and providing accurate information. Discuss text with the Diocesan Media Officer or school's Media Officer before printing  
- Brief students to remain inside the school gates and refrain from responding to media where possible  
- Office staff refer all media calls to the Diocesan Media Officer or school's Media Officer  
- Arrange post incident support services for staff  
- Arrange student counselling services  
- Make notifications to other relevant areas  
- Brief P&F, student groups and other relevant stakeholders  
- Obtain legal advice as appropriate  
- Consider next day plans  
- Implement Business Continuity Plan  
- Place information from parent letter on the school website |

**CECNSW Contacts**

For further information you can contact:

Ian Baker - email: ian.baker@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au, phone: 02 9287 1520

Tony McArthur - email: tony.mcarthur@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au, phone 02 9287 1533, mob: 0421 647 811
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<tr>
<th>Type of Incident</th>
<th>Key actions to consider</th>
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| External incident which is outside of school’s control, this may include an     | - Follow advice from the emergency services  
| incident in the local community or where students are attending an external site | - Implement emergency response procedures (evacuation, lock out or lockdown)  
| for a school based activity.                                                   | - Contact Diocesan Media Officer or school's Media Officer for advice  
|                                                                               | - Brief staff on the situation and arrange for updated information to be provided as further information is available  
|                                                                               | - In consultation with the Diocesan Media Officer or school's Media Officer, develop a simple script to administration staff who will take concerned calls from parents/carers or enquiries from the media  
|                                                                               | - Brief Diocesan Director or School Authority as soon as possible  
|                                                                               | - Arrange to contact affected parents reassuring them and providing accurate information  
|                                                                               | - Brief students to remain inside the school gates and refrain from responding to media where possible  
|                                                                               | - Office staff refer all calls to the Diocesan Media Officer or school's Media Officer  
|                                                                               | - Arrange post incident support services for staff  
|                                                                               | - Arrange student counselling services  
|                                                                               | - Make notifications to other relevant areas  
|                                                                               | - Brief P&F, student groups and other relevant stakeholders  
|                                                                               | - Obtain legal advice as appropriate  
|                                                                               | - Consider next day plans  
|                                                                               | - Implement Business Continuity Plan  
|                                                                               | - Consider placing information on the school website.  
|                                                                               | - Consider the need to brief an impacted parish communities |
School Communities Working Together
FAQs for school executive staff

Q1 What do I report to the School Safety and Response Hotline?
All incidents must be reported in accordance with the notification policies relevant to your sector and Work Health and Safety legislation.

For NSW Government Schools
The following incidents must be reported to the School Safety and Response Hotline – 1300 363 778:
- Violence and weapons;
- Illegal drugs;
- Other criminal activity;
- Natural disasters suspected suicides and missing students if there is a concern for their safety;
- Anti-social and extremist behaviour.


For NSW Non-Government Schools
All incidents of anti-social and extremist behaviour should be reported to the School Safety and Response Hotline – 1300 495 051.

Q2 Is it a breach of privacy to disclose information about a student to the police or School Safety and Response Hotline?
No. Information about a student exhibiting anti-social and extremist behaviour can also be exchanged with other agencies:

a. with the consent of the student/their parent or carer;

b. to assist decision making regarding the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student under the age of 18 (Chapter 16A of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998) – see Legal Issues Bulletin 50;

c. to manage health and safety risks related to a student’s violent behaviour (Part 5A of the Education Act 1990); or

d. where an exception to privacy legislation applies in
  - NSW legislation (for government schools and some independent schools), for example where there is a serious and imminent threat or an exemption is found in the Department’s Privacy Code of Practice, and
  - Commonwealth legislation (for all Catholic and most independent schools), for example where the school reasonably believes that the use or disclosure of the information is reasonably necessary for a law enforcement related activity or (in accordance with the non-government school Privacy Compliance Manual) is necessary to prevent threats to life, health or public safety.

Schools are encouraged to seek advice if uncertain about the impact of privacy law on their potential use or disclosure of information:
- Government schools – contact the Department’s Legal Services Directorate.
**Q3 What should I do if the police want to interview students at school?**

Unless special circumstances exist students should not be interviewed by the police at school.

If it is necessary to interview a student at school:

- **a.** the student must be told he or she does not have to speak to police;
- **b.** the student’s parents or carers should be notified before the interview takes place and given an opportunity to attend unless there is an exceptional reason why they should not be informed;
- **c.** if the police advise it is inappropriate to have a parent or carer present during the interview the student must be given the right to have another adult present. This can be a trusted member of the school staff;
- **d.** if the Principal believes the student is not capable of making a decision about whether or not he or she should have a support person the Principal is to make that decision on the student’s behalf; and
- **e.** the Principal should confirm with the police they will tell the student’s parents/carers about the interview and obtain the police officer’s contact details so any inquiries made by parents/carers about the interview can be directed to the police.

If the police do not agree to these steps being taken the interview should not take place at school. Further information about police interviews of students can be found in Legal Issues Bulletin 13.

**Q4 What support can schools expect?**

A Case Management and Specialist Support Unit has been established to assist schools. The unit has two key functions:

- Providing case management support to schools – including advice and guidance on managing a situation; and
- Providing specialist support to schools to assist them to identify and support vulnerable students and to work with schools to enhance programs and systems to provide tolerant, respectful and harmonious learning environments.

Principals or their delegate can contact the Case Management and Specialist Support Unit for advice and support on anti-social and extremist behaviour related issues.
Introduction

The NSW Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission NSW and Association of Independent Schools of NSW are working together to address anti-social and extremist behaviour in NSW schools. This fact sheet supports the School Communities Working Together online awareness module.

The role of schools is to work in partnership with parents to provide an environment that encourages students to connect with each other and their community, so they can succeed and thrive.

Schools have well established systems which support student wellbeing and address instances of anti-social behaviour such as bullying, threats of physical violence and other offensive behaviours.

There have been incidents of extremism that have resulted in tragic deaths and people left with life changing physical and psychological injuries.

Though the threat of incidents related to extremism in our schools is small, we need to be prepared for incidents that may impact the safety of our students and staff or the operation of our schools. Consequently our school systems are now being strengthened to support schools to address incidents of anti-social and extremist behaviour.

There are three ways that schools can prepare for and respond to anti-social and extremist behaviour:

1. Fostering and maintaining positive, inclusive and resilient school communities;
2. Identifying and supporting young people who require additional assistance; and
3. Having effective incident management and support systems in place to manage anti-social and extremist behaviour.

What do we mean by anti-social and extremist behaviour?

Anti-social and extremist behaviour is a term that has been developed by the NSW school sector and applies when a student is exhibiting a combination of anti-social behaviour and extremist behaviour:

**Anti-Social Behaviour**
Anti-social behaviour threatens the safe and secure atmosphere of the school which is an essential requirement for student wellbeing and cohesion.

It includes unacceptable behaviours such as bullying, harassment, discrimination (for example racism or sexism), illegal or criminal behaviour, offensive behaviour, physical violence, or damaging school/other property.

**Extremist behaviour**
Extremist behaviour may be demonstrated when a person believes that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change.

While a student may have extreme views, it does not necessarily mean that the student wishes to commit an act of violence harming others.

What isn’t anti-social and extremist behaviour?

Staff need to consider whether a student is making a genuine attempt to process and understand a situation or whether they are exhibiting anti-social and extremist behaviour which needs to be reported to the Principal or their delegate. For example, students asking their teacher or having discussions with friends about what is happening in other parts of the world, discussing their understanding of the issues, including empathising with those living in areas where there is conflict, in a respectful way are not displaying anti-social and extremist behaviour.
What should staff look out for?

Staff may often be well-placed to identify changes in behaviour and then seek appropriate support for a student. Behaviour that changes suddenly or over a short period of time should be looked into promptly as early intervention is vital.

Changes in behaviour can mean a variety of things, and the context is important. With this in mind, things to look out for may include:

- sudden disconnection or distancing from friends and spending more time alone;
- no longer engaging in classroom or sporting activities or decreases in attendance;
- vocalising aggressive intolerance for other cultures and religions – using an “us” and “them” rhetoric;
- dialogue that may try to justify violence as being a solution to an issue; or
- displaying attitudes that justify criminal behaviour.

To reiterate, it is important to see these things in context e.g. a classroom debate conducted by a teacher is quite different to a heated exchange in the school yard.

What to do if you see these signs?

If you see a change in behaviour which gives rise to concern, notify your Principal or their delegate, according to your school’s notification protocols. Remember, there may be any number of reasons related to wellbeing which explain why a student is behaving in this way.

If the Principal or their delegate determines there is a case of anti-social and extremist behaviour, they must immediately report the incident to the School Safety and Response Hotline.

Remember if you believe a student, staff member or member of the community is in imminent danger call 000 (triple zero) immediately.

What happens next?

With advice from the Case Management & Specialist Support Unit, your Principal or their delegate will carry out a process of exploring what support options are available and offering a support plan to the student who is at risk. They will also monitor the implementation of the plan to check if it needs to be modified to meet any changing circumstances. These steps are outlined in more detail in the online awareness module.

For further information please refer to the School Communities Working Together online awareness module or talk to a member of your school’s executive team.

School Safety and Response Hotline
1300 363 778 (all NSW government schools)
1300 495 051 (all NSW non-government schools)
School Communities Working Together
Frequently Asked Questions for Staff

Q1 Is it okay for staff and students to talk about terrorism, including terrorist organisations reported in the media at school?

Local, community and world issues can and should be a part of normal discussion in schools and everyone has the right to explore and debate ideas in a tolerant and respectful manner. If you have any concerns about discussions taking place at your school, you should advise your Principal or their delegate.

Q2 How can I contribute towards keeping my students, colleagues and school community members safe?

By promoting a culture of acceptance, harmony and inclusiveness, staff can assist in creating and maintaining a safe environment where staff, students and members of the school community feel they belong. A sense of belonging at school can lessen the chance of a person seeking this in a riskier environment.

Staff may be well-positioned to observe changes in a student’s behaviour. If you do become aware of any issues or concerns you should advise your Principal or their delegate.

Q3 What is anti-social and extremist behaviour?

Anti-social and extremist behaviour is a term that has been developed by the NSW school sector. It applies when a student is exhibiting a combination of anti-social behaviour and extremist behaviour.

Anti-Social Behaviour threatens the safe and secure atmosphere of the school, which is an essential requirement for student wellbeing and cohesion. Anti-social behaviour includes unacceptable behaviours such as: bullying, harassment, discrimination (for example racism or sexism), illegal or criminal behaviour, offensive behaviour, physical violence, or damaging school or other property.

These behaviours are usually managed through the school’s wellbeing and discipline processes.

Extremist Behaviour – may be demonstrated when a person believes fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change.

It is important to remember that while a student may have extreme views, it does not mean that the student wishes to commit an act of violence harming others.

It is also important to remember that these behaviours could also be displayed by a staff member or a member of the school community. If you have any concerns, notify your Principal or their delegate.

Q4 What should I do if I believe someone is engaging in anti-social and extremist behaviour?

Promptly advise your Principal or their delegate, according to your school’s notification protocols, as soon as you become aware of the behaviour, so a decision can be made about what should be done. The Principal will promptly report to the School Safety and Response Hotline as part of the process of deciding what should be done in response to the behaviour.

Q5 What should I do if I am uncertain about whether someone has engaged in anti-social and extremist behaviour?

Advise your Principal or their delegate, according to your school’s notification protocols, as soon as you become aware of the behaviour, so a decision can be made about what should be done and by whom. Your Principal has access to the Case Management and Specialist Support Unit to assist with the management of anti-social and extremist behaviour.
Q6 Should I notify my Principal or their delegate if a student is discussing issues that relate to conflict overseas, or political or religious beliefs?

In our modern society, students are more informed about world events than ever before. Students often discuss these passionately as they develop their moral and ethical values. Professional judgment must be used on these occasions, however if support for extremist behaviour is exhibited during these discussions you should advise your Principal or their delegate that these discussions have taken place and an assessment can then be made as to whether the student is vulnerable to adopting anti-social and extremist behaviour or if they are merely debating current world issues in a non-threatening manner.

If there is any doubt about whether someone has engaged in anti-social and extremist behaviour, it should be reported to the School Safety and Response hotline.

Q7 If I notify my Principal of a student that is engaging in anti-social and extremist behaviour, will they get a formal police record?

If a Principal or their delegate makes a report to the hotline, information may be shared with relevant police authorities. However, any criminal charges would be dependent upon the outcome of a NSW Police investigation and not through the school incident reporting processes.

Q8 Is it okay to talk about the student fact sheet in class?

Yes, if the subject is raised. You should speak with your Principal or their delegate about how your school wishes to approach the subject generally.

Q9 Why have fact sheets been provided?

Fact sheets have been developed for students, staff and parents/carers. They provide basic information on:

- Where to go for advice and support;
- Who you can contact for information; and
- Tips on how to keep yourself, and others safe.

You should seek advice from your Principal or their delegate on how the student and parent/carer fact sheets will be distributed at your school.

Q10 What support can schools expect?

The NSW Department of Education, the Catholic Education Commission NSW and the Association of Independent Schools of NSW have developed an information package, including an online awareness module, so that NSW school staff understand how they can contribute towards keeping our students, staff and school communities safe from the threat of violent extremism.

Though the threat of anti-social and extremist behaviour impacting on our schools is small we all need to be prepared. Undertaking the awareness module is an important part of that preparation.

A Case Management and Specialist Support Unit has been established to assist schools. The unit has two key functions:

- Providing case management support to schools – including advice and guidance on managing a situation; and
- Providing specialist support to schools to assist them to identify and support vulnerable students and to work with schools to enhance programs and systems to provide tolerant, respectful and harmonious learning environments.

Principals or their delegate can contact the Case Management and Specialist Support Unit for advice and support on anti-social and extremist behaviour related issues.
School Communities Working Together
Fact Sheet for Parents and Carers

Introduction

The role of schools is to work in partnership with parents to provide an environment that encourages students to connect with each other and their community, so they can succeed and thrive. Parents, teachers and the community all play a role in fostering this environment.

Schools have well established systems which support student wellbeing and address instances of anti-social behaviour such as bullying, threats of physical violence and other offensive behaviours.

Your role in supporting your child

- Be involved in your child’s life – dedicate time to really understand your child. Know where they are, who they are with and what they are doing.

- Be cyber-aware:
  - regularly monitor what they are looking at on the internet and on social media sites and do what you can to reduce their exposure to inappropriate content;
  - place the computer or device in a common area of the house, so your child is less likely to try and access inappropriate web sites or use social media sites inappropriately; and
  - consider using content filters to help control what your child can access.

- Encourage open and honest discussion at home – encouraging your child to learn about and understand other points of view is a valuable life skill. If you stop discussion about topics that you are uncomfortable with, for example religion, politics, racism, drugs, extremism or terrorism, your child may find it even more interesting and may try to find information without you knowing. This could lead them to inaccurate information.

- Encourage positive outlets for your child’s energies – sports, performing arts, hobbies and organised clubs, all provide a sense of belonging and somewhere to focus their interests, though it may take a few attempts to find the right interest for your child.

- Be a role model – modelling positive, respectful relationships, positive ways to show emotions and how to apply objective thinking skills are valuable life skills for your child.

How you can help your child

You know your child better than anyone else and are in a good position to notice any changes in their behaviour. If their behaviour changes significantly, try to find out what is happening in their lives. There are many reasons for a change in behaviour, so don’t jump to conclusions.

The best way to support your child is to maintain open, non-judgemental communication with them. By keeping a positive relationship you may be in a position to help them if they want to talk about their problems. Listen to their concerns and try to understand their perspective.

Even if you disagree with what they are saying, it is important to find some way to let them know they are accepted and that you are there to help them.

What to do if you are concerned for your child

If you do have concerns that your child is involved in or supporting extremist behaviour there are a number of options for seeking advice. You may like to talk to someone from your child’s school such as the Principal, your child’s Year Advisor, a teacher, or a trusted staff member.

You may wish to talk to your child yourself, or ask a close friend or family member to do so. Alternatively, there are government assistance and advice lines and websites. Some are listed below.
Remember
As your child grows, they will be exploring their own values and beliefs. They may search for and push the boundaries of acceptable, responsible behaviour during this process.

Cyber Safety
- ThinkUKnow – internet safety education site – https://www.thinkuknow.org.au

If you are concerned that a person in your community is showing possible signs of terrorism, you should call the National Security Hotline - 1800 123 400 or email hotline@nationalsecurity.gov.au

Resources
- 000 (triple zero) if you feel unsafe or in danger
- 1800 RESPECT – http://www.1800respect.org.au
- Domestic violence line (24h) 1800 65 64 63
- Black Dog Institute – http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

If you are concerned that a person in your community is showing possible signs of terrorism, you should call the National Security Hotline – 1800 123 400 or email hotline@nationalsecurity.gov.au
Introduction
This information provides advice and support to assist you, your family and friends if they are affected by conflict which is taking place overseas or instances of violence here in Australia.

Some students may have family or friends who live in parts of the world which are affected by the conflict reported through the media.

How can I help my friends?
If you notice that something is bothering a friend, there is a change in the way they act or they are sad, angry or unhappy, ask if they are okay and listen to what they have to say. Sometimes having a good friend to talk to helps and we feel better. Sometimes the problem is too big and needs more help from an adult. It is never wrong to tell an adult that you are worried about a friend.

What can I do if I am worried that they may hurt themselves or others?
If you are worried that one of your friends might hurt themselves or someone else, then you need to get them some help without asking them. You can request that this is anonymous, though that may not always be possible. Remember, you are doing this because you care about them and are concerned for them.

There are several people in your school who you can go to for advice. The School Counsellor can talk to you about any issues, either related to school or outside school. You could also talk to your Year Advisor, another teacher you trust, Deputy Principal or Principal.

There are also places outside of school where you can get confidential advice or help. These are listed below.

What can I do to stay safe?
We all come from different backgrounds and we all experience different things. This means we need to accept that others may have different opinions.

If you know someone who is passionate about their views, try and listen with an open mind. It is okay to disagree, but do it respectfully.

Like gossip or rumours, some of the things you read or hear or see may not be true. If you are concerned or confused about something, ask someone you respect. This could be your parents or carers, Year Advisor, the School Counsellor, a teacher, Deputy Principal or Principal of your school.

Everyone is allowed to have their own opinions, even if they are different from our own – but it is never okay for people to force their views on others or use threats or violence to get their opinions across, or to solve problems.
Where to get advice

■ Talk to your parents or carers
■ Lifeline – **13 11 14**
■ headspace – http://www.headspace.org.au
■ **1800 RESPECT** – http://www.1800respect.org.au

Cyber Safety

■ ThinkUKnow – http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/

Remember, if you feel unsafe or in danger, or if you think others are, call the police on **000** (triple zero).