Guide for Catholic School Principals
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As a school Principal, you have certain responsibilities in relation to your school's registration. The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) regulates all schools in Victoria. We are an independent statutory authority that works to ensure all schools are quality schools.

To access the resources mentioned in this guide, see the list of documents and links on the back.

Registration

The VRQA is responsible for registering all schools that operate in Victoria and for ensuring registered schools meet the minimum standards for registration.

For Catholic schools, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) manages the registration process and amendments to registration.

In order to maintain their registration, schools need to meet minimum standards which are set out in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (the Act) and the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (the Regulations). These standards establish the requirements for schools.

Any school providing senior secondary education (Years 11 and 12) must also meet the minimum standards to provide a senior secondary course.

We also have oversight of student exchange programs in Victoria.

School reviews

The VRQA has approved the CECV as the review body responsible for ensuring Catholic schools comply with the minimum standards and other requirements under the Act.

Our School Compliance Framework explains our approach to monitoring compliance through school reviews.

The VRQA is Victoria’s education and training regulator

We register and regulate Victorian schools and non-school senior secondary providers.

We approve schools and organisations to deliver courses to international students, and we oversee student exchange programs.

We register and regulate apprenticeships and traineeships, and some vocational education and training organisations.

We register and regulate home schooling.

Minimum standards

We regulate the minimum standards for school registration to ensure quality schools through:

- good governance
- strong financial management
- effective curriculum
- sound teaching practices
- safe environments for children.

To operate as a school, you will need to:

- be registered
- abide by the minimum standards
- submit an annual report to be published on the State Register.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria:

- manages Catholic school registrations
- provides support and advice
- reviews Catholic schools.
Standards, guidelines and other requirements

Our guidelines are intended to help schools understand the requirements of the minimum standards for the registration of schools and other requirements under the Act and the Regulations. These minimum standards relate to:

- school governance
- enrolment and monitoring attendance
- curriculum and student learning
- student welfare
- teacher requirements
- school infrastructure
- not-for-profit status.

There are also specific requirements in relation to:

- child safe standards
- bushfire preparedness
- anaphylaxis management
- financial management
- fit and proper persons requirements
- enrolling international students.

Catholic schools are required to be compliant with the registration requirements at all times. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure their school is compliant, and can provide evidence that all requirements have been met.

Child safe standards

Ministerial Order No. 870 sets out the requirements of the child safe standards for schools. These standards require schools to have a culture of child safety in the school environment and demonstrate the Government’s ‘zero tolerance’ for child abuse in Victorian schools.

Compliance with these standards is assessed through the initial registration process, and afterwards at the time of the cyclical school review. For resources that can help your school meet the standards, see the documents and links on the back of this guide.

As Principal, you are responsible at an operational level for implementing child safety policies and practices. Schools need to be mindful of the diversity of students when promoting a culture of safety in the school environment. This means considering the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

Bushfire preparedness

We have published guidelines to assist registered schools to be prepared in the event of a bushfire.

All schools must comply with these guidelines as a condition of their registration. For example, your school needs to maintain and review your bushfire preparedness arrangements as part of your emergency management plan.

Schools on the Bushfire At-Risk Register must meet additional requirements. This includes any school with campuses, school camps, or other facilities at high risk of fire danger.

Anaphylaxis management

Ministerial Order No. 706 requires that any registered school that has enrolled a student/s at risk of anaphylaxis must have a School Anaphylaxis Management Policy in place.

We have prepared a checklist to help schools assess their anaphylaxis policy against the Ministerial Order. To access the checklist, see the documents and links on the back of this guide.

International students, CRICOS registration and student exchange

Any Catholic school wanting to enrol international students must go through a two-part approval and registration process. First, you must apply to the VRQA for approval to deliver a course to an approved number of international students at a specific location. Approval may be granted for up to five years.

Once approved, you must be registered as a provider on the Commonwealth Department of Education’s Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). The VRQA will make a recommendation to the Commonwealth about whether you should be registered.

You should only accept exchange student enrolments from a VRQA-approved Student Exchange Organisation (SEO). See the documents and links on the back of this guide for a list of approved SEOs. Your school may wish to apply for approval as an SEO. You can make an application for approval directly to the VRQA.
Documents and links

School registration
- Guidelines to the minimum standards and other requirements for registration of schools
- School Compliance Framework
  www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/school-reviews

Child safe standards
- Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools
- The standards

International education
- CRICOS registration
- Student exchange

Anaphylaxis management
- Ministerial Order No. 706 – Anaphylaxis Management in Victorian Schools
- Anaphylaxis checklist
- Victorian Department of Education and Training website
  www.education.vic.gov.au
- Royal Children’s Hospital Anaphylaxis Advisory
  www.rch.org.au/allergy/advisory/Anaphylaxis_Support_Advisory_Line/

Bushfire preparedness
- Victorian Department of Education and Training website
  www.education.vic.gov.au
- Guidelines for bushfire preparedness – registered schools

General
- School education
  www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/schools
- VRQA publications

Contact the VRQA
- Send an email to:
  vrqa.schools@education.vic.gov.au
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  www.vrqa.vic.gov.au