

SUBMISSION No. 24

Response to Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety Inquiry into Cyber-Safety from the Catholic Education Office in WA.

Issues related to cyber-safety are of concern to education sectors throughout Australia. There have been a number of major research projects focusing on this area of concern. Currently there are various processes occurring throughout Australia to address the issue.

The National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) is currently being revised by the Erebus group on behalf of the Australian Government to specifically include this area of school safety. The Catholic Education Office of WA (CEOWA), the operational arm of the Catholic Education Commission of WA (CECWA), has provided ongoing input to Erebus as requested in relation to the revision process. Relevant feedback is attached (Appendix 1, 2)

The CECWA promotes policies from which schools derive their own policies. School policies are audited by the CEO every five years. All CECWA policy statements, including those related to cyber-safety, can be found at:

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/policy_statements.asp

Policies of direct relevance to cyber-safety include:

- Information and Technology Use by Students
- Information and Communication Technology Use by Staff
- Dealing with Bullying and Harassment (Students). This policy is due for revision and will incorporate changes to reflect the revised NSSF.

Information has been provided by the CEOWA for inclusion on the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) Cybersmart website

<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Schools/Cybersafety%20policies%20and%20procedures/National%20or%20state%20and%20territory%20policies/Western%20Australian%20cybersafety%20policies.aspx>

Since 2005 the CEOWA has been actively involved in assisting schools to address the NSSF, and more recently in the NSSF review process.

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Pages/nationalsafeschoolsframework.aspx> and

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/NationalSafeSchools/Pages/Frameworkreview.aspx>

In relation to cyber-safety, the CEO is informed by the latest Australian research, e.g.

http://www.dbcde.gov.au/online_safety_and_security/cybersafety_plan/cybersafety_research

The CEOWA has been involved with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation National Pilot to increase Cyber-Safety in Schools.

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/DigitalEducationRevolution/Pages/AMFoundation.aspx>

<http://www.chprc.ecu.edu.au/research/bullying/cybersafety-wellbeing-schools.php>

The CEOWA promotes and participates in research related to cyber-safety through the Child Health Promotion Research Centre (CHPRC) at Edith Cowan University. Currently the CEOWA and Catholic schools have involvement with two CHPRC research projects:

1. Cross, D., Hasleby, J., Johnston, J., Nairn, R., Dooley, J., Hearn, L., Burns, S., & Pearce, N. (2010 – 2014). [Building school capacity to reduce social aggression among students](#). *Healthway*.
2. Cross, D., Roberts, C., Slee., P & Dooley, J. (2010 – 2012). [An empirical trial to reduce cyber-bullying in adolescents](#). *Healthway*

The CEOWA also has representation on the Western Australian cross-agency Internet Safety for Children Working Party.
<http://internetsafety.wa.edu.au/links.html>

Appendix 1: Feedback from the Catholic Education Office of WA to the Review of the National Safe Schools Framework
Questions for State and Territory Education Authorities – Draft Revision of NSSF Document

The purpose of this questionnaire was to seek advice from State and Territory education authority representatives about the recently revised National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) document. Over the past six months, based on feedback from schools and education authority representatives nationally, the document has been revised and is presented in the draft format attached.

We now seek your feedback about the potential of the revised document in promoting and maintaining safe and supportive learning environments in our schools. It would be appreciated if you could provide comments in the boxes below. Please use as much space as required in your response to the questions.

1. What do you see as the major strengths of the draft NSSF document?

The focus on safe and supportive schools as a prerequisite for effective learning.
The expectation of commitment to a whole-school approach
The contextualisation, with explicit links to other national initiatives
The focus on proactive, integrated policies, structures and procedures
The articulated, logical movement from key elements to characteristics to key actions etc
One all-inclusive document only
The new focus on cybersafety is necessary
The audit tool is clear and user friendly, (but subject to a hasty tick-the-box approach unless schools are requested to evaluate their practice in relation to the Effective Practices list.)

2. What do you see as the major limitations of the draft NSSF document?

P2 “using evidence to inform decisions and , P5 ‘evidence-informed’ both differ from evidence as to effectiveness which is what is really wanted
P4 “In a safe and supportive school, the risk from all types of harm is minimised”- The question to ask is; is minimising the RISK enough?
The terminology: elements, guiding principles, characteristics etc is still complex for schools
Inconsistent usage of terms, e.g. P11 a ‘safe school policy’ and then ‘ a school’s safety and wellbeing policy’
The length of the document will still be off-putting to busy school staff.
The heading Key Actions and Directions and/or Effective Practices is confused and the content of the boxes under this heading is a reflection of this. It is unorganised and verbose and appears to be the result of a quick brainstorm of ideas rather than a systematic process of research. [The heading changes at Element 3.] This section would be the logical place for breaking the Framework down into components (Student Wellbeing, Early Years

Foundations, Social Emotional Learning, Bullying, Cybersafety, Child Protection...), providing resources for each and links to resources on a NSSF website and to other useful websites.

It is difficult to separate the various areas related to safety (e.g. bullying, cybersafety, social emotional learning, early years foundations, child protection so that a school knows which specific areas need development.

If this is not mandated it runs the risk of getting lost in a sea of documents, all worthy but all time-consuming (Figure 1), both at school and education authority level.

The focus is on student issues. There does not appear to be any recognition of bullying involving staff and parents.

3. Are there any omissions in the draft NSSF document?

Minimal emphasis, information or expectations related to Child Protection or Protective Behaviours curricula (e.g. see Jennifer Sanderson, Child focused Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs: How effective are they in preventing child abuse? Crime and Misconduct Commission Research & Issues Paper No. 5 June 2004). This whole section of the original NSSF has been reduced and weakened until it is almost non-existent.

Both the Australian Childhood Foundation website, particularly

www.childhood.org.au/SmartOnlineTraining/

and the National Child Protection Clearinghouse:

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/>

provide very useful information and training in relation to child abuse.

Child protection should be integrated into multiple elements in the same way as bullying

4. Would you find this document useful in your educational context?

With modifications

If it is supported by training for education authority leaders and consultants to assist schools to implement it and an expectation that this will be done.

If a structured process for mapping and evaluating school improvement is developed

If it is mandated

If funding is available for organisation consultants to assist schools to implement this

If there is an accompanying website with downloadable practical resources for schools

5. How would you plan to use the revised document in future?

Depends on Government expectations and on funding and support available

6. What support would you require to implement this draft framework document?

Professional learning about particular aspects of the draft framework document.	√ <input type="checkbox"/>
Exemplars of good practice through case studies	√ <input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of relevant pro-formas	√ <input type="checkbox"/>
Development of specific resources to support implementation of framework	√ <input type="checkbox"/>
Other(please describe): Mandated See above comments Section 4.	

7. Specific feedback can be provided in the Table below:

Section of Draft NSSF	Comments/Suggestions for refinement
Introduction	See previous comments re evidence as to effectiveness. The various programs listed in Para 5 should all be integrated into any Safe School policy, not implemented in conjunction with it.
Vision	The term, "School communities" means different things to different people.
Guiding Principles	Schools cannot "ensure" the participation of all school community members... Maybe "include"?
Context of the Framework	Figure 2 does not assist in understanding the elements in context.
Elements of the Framework	The nine key elements should be listed above the dot points describing them (i.e. reverse the order on this page)
Key Characteristics of the NSSF Elements	There needs to be consistency of terminology – e.g safe school policy/ safety and wellbeing policy 2.1 Add: Primary students participate in an explicit evidence-based, social emotional curriculum within a safe, well-managed learning environment. Students participate in an explicit, responsible, ethical and resilient digital citizenship curriculum (Robyn Treyvaud's terminology). 3.4 and 3.7 Bullying, including cyber bullying...

Section of Draft NSSF	Comments/Suggestions for refinement
	<p>3.5 Regular risk assessments - should not be a one-off occurrence, but an ongoing process, reviewed annually or biennially</p> <p>6.4 An evidence-informed Protective Behaviours curriculum...</p> <p>A recognition that not all “characteristics” can be carried out by every school (e.g. 8.2) , but that strong links with external agencies which can provide support may at times be more appropriate.</p> <p>8.2 What does Social restructuring mean in this context?</p> <p>8.3 Schools provide appropriate support</p>
Glossary	<p>Definitions of bullying apply only to students. Need to include student-staff, staff-staff and parent bullying</p> <p>Supportive Bystander behaviours</p> <p>Many definitions are contentious</p> <p>The definition of wellbeing is particularly troublesome.</p> <p>http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RW073%20v2.pdf</p>
Audit Tool	<p>It is confusing that the “Always True” rating is at the left. In most rating scales it is the opposite way around</p>
Resources/References to Support Implementation	<p>So many more need adding –</p> <p>eg www.childhood.org.au/SmartOnlineTraining/</p>

Appendix 1.b State Resources:

Catholic Education Office of Western Australia: <http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/>

Policies in relation to NSSF are at http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/policy_statements.asp

Appendix 2:

National Safe Schools Framework

The following is a list comprising information provided by the Reference Group of the NSSF and information added by the CEOWA.

Web links to documents listed below.

Organisation name: Catholic Education Office of Western Australia

Website: <http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/>

Legislation

Policies: All policies of the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia are listed at http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/policy_statements.asp

These are the official policy statements of the Catholic Education Commission of WA. Based on them, each Catholic school is expected to develop its own policy in each of the areas listed. Policies with particular relevance to the NSSF include:

In relation to staff:

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/Human_Resources/2-B4_Harassment_Discrimination&Bullying.pdf

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/Human_Resources/2-B2_Dispute_Complaint_Resolution.pdf

In relation to students:

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/2-C2_SCHOOL_CAMPS_AND_EXCURSIONS.pdf

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/2-C3_Child_Abuse.pdf

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/2-C6_Occupational_Safety_and_Health_in_Schools.pdf

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/2-C8_Management_Confidential_Information.pdf

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/Pastoral_Care_Outlook.pdf

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/2-C9_PRIVACY.pdf

[http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/2-C12_Dealing_with_Bullying_and_Harassment_\(Students\).pdf](http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/2-C12_Dealing_with_Bullying_and_Harassment_(Students).pdf)

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/2-C13_ICT_Staff_use.pdf

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/2-C14_ICT_Student_use.pdf

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/2-C17_Crisis_Management_Planning_Catholic_Schools.pdf

http://web4.ceo.wa.edu.au/PDF/policystatements/School_Community_Operations/2-C7_Exclusion_Students_for_Disciplinary_Reasons.pdf

Memoranda:

Under the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Child Protection (DCP), Principals employed in Catholic schools have been recognised as an approved class of persons able to take reports regarding child sexual abuse. Principals employed in Catholic schools have a legal obligation upon receiving reports regarding child sexual abuse to forward these unaltered to the approved agency (currently the Department for Child Protection) as soon as possible. As well as informing the Principal, teachers would continue to have the option in law to report directly to DCP.

Guidelines**Fact-sheets****Other**