



CAST (Care at St Thomas') Policy

Related Policies and References

- CEO Policies and Procedures Manual 2005
- Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy
- Handbook of Policies for CEO Licensed School Age Care Services in the ACT
- Catholic Parish Primary, Central and Secondary School Boards and Parents and Friends Associations – Operational Guideline and Constitutions (2006)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1999*
- *Children and Young People Act 1999*
- ACT School Age Care – Conditions for Approvals in Principle and Licenses (2000).

Introduction

1. The School Board decided in 2006 that there should be a program of outside school hours care at the school. Such a program would be provided by a licensed provider of child care services. While any such provider would have responsibility for providing services that comply with the National Standards for Outside School Hours Care/School Age Care Services (OSHS/SACS) and the requirements of the *Children and Young People Act 1999* (the Act), the school has a vital interest in ensuring a high standard of care.

2. In 2006 the School Board agreed to establish CAST using the Multi Function Facility (MFF) space. Children attending the program will primarily be pupils of St Thomas the Apostle Primary School. School parents have an expectation that any program, will be consistent with the standards they have chosen for their children in sending them to the school. In addition, the provider will use some school facilities. While the Board recognises that providers of outside school hours care are required to be licensed and provide care that meets certain standards, it considers that on a regular basis a competitive process should be undertaken to test the market and ensure that the best possible services are provided at the school. Communities at Work is the current provider.

Purpose

3. The purpose of Care at St Thomas' (CAST) is to provide SACS (Before School, After School and Vacation Care programs) on site primarily for enrolled children at St Thomas'. The management of CAST is outsourced to an external organisation contracted to provide SACS ('Service Provider'). The purpose of this policy is to inform the School Board, school executive, staff, students and families of the policies, principles and procedures relating to the provision of OSHS/SACS at the school, which must be met by the Service Provider.

Policy

4. Accredited care will be provided within the school facilities outside school hours to assist families. The Act provides the legislative framework for the licensing of School Age Care Services within the ACT and for the setting of standards to facilitate the provision of quality child care. In June 1995 State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers responsible for child care endorsed OSHC/SACS. The principles in OSHCQA cover the areas of interactions, the program, health, safety and nutrition, and program management and staff development.

5. The Act requires all child care services in the ACT to be licensed and the framework for the licensing process is outlined in the document *ACT School Age Care – Conditions for Approvals in Principle and Licenses (2000)*. This document is underpinned by three basic principles, which are fundamental to the interpretation of the Act; the best interests of the child are the paramount consideration, children's services should provide care that is safe, positive and nurturing, and children's services should promote the educational, social and developmental well being of the child.

6. Under the Act it is mandatory in the ACT for child care staff to make a report when they have formed a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person has suffered or is suffering sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury and these grounds arise during the course of or from the person's work. (Refer to Section 159 of the Act.)

Definitions

'**Accredited care**' means accreditation as required in legislation.

'**Care Hours**' means the hours that CAST is provided each day.

'**Care Programs**' means Before School, After School and Vacation Care programs.

'**CAST**' means Care at St Thomas (the facility providing care for students outside school hours).

'**Fee**' means the charge or levy set by the Service provider to be paid by parents in return for the service.

'**License**' means the license required under the Act before the Service Provider can provide CAST.

'**Parent**' means a person who, in the reasonable opinion of the Service provider, appears to be the parent or legal guardian of a child.

'**School**' means St Thomas the Apostle Primary School in the ACT.

'**School Board**' means the School Board of St Thomas the Apostle Primary School in the ACT.

'**School Day**' means a day upon which the School conducts primary school classes.

'**School Premises**' means the school building and surrounding land which is a part of the property owned by the Trustees at St Thomas The Apostle Primary School in the ACT.

'**Service Provider**' means the external organisation contracted to provide CAST on the school site. In this instance Communities at Work

'**Services**' means the Before School, After School and Vacation Care programs.

Principles

7. The Service Provider must on each school day and each day of the school vacation (*excluding Saturday, Sunday and public holidays and the days 27 December to 1 January inclusive*), make available to parents of children attending the school, services for the care of at least children attending the school on school premises. Children attending St Thomas the Apostle school are to have priority of access to the CAST service. Care hours are 7.30am to 9.00am for the Before School program, 3.00pm to 6.00pm for the After School program and 8.00am to 6.00pm for the School Vacation program.

8. CAST is conducted in accordance with the approval in principle and licenses as determined for ACT School Age Care by the Officer for Children, Youth and Family Support. The Service Provider must consult with the Director CEO or St Thomas' Principal, in regard to the provision and standard of services, the selection, appointment and continued engagement of all persons engaged to conduct CAST, and the setting of fees.

9. The Service Provider, represented by the Coordinator, will keep parents informed either through meetings (not less than once per year) or newsletter (not less than once per term) of issues relating to the management and operation of the service on a regular basis to facilitate feedback on parent's views and discussion with a view to continuous improvement of the service.

10. The Service Provider must at its own expense obtain and maintain a license for the provision of CAST, set and collect fees from the parents of children attending CAST, provide all necessary equipment and consumables in relation to the provision of CAST, and pay rent for the school premises. The trustees must make the premises available for CAST, provide electricity to the premises and adequate toilet facilities, arrange for the Care premises and toilets to be cleaned, provide reasonable storage and all reasonable assistance as required by the Service provider in order for the Service Provider to obtain and maintain a license for CAST.

11. The Service provider may exclude a child of the School from its care services, if the parent of the child has not paid the relevant fees and has been given at least two days notice of the Service Provider's intention to exclude the child, or the child has caused harm to another child attending the services, or has caused damage to property or significant disruption to the conduct of CAST.

Responsibilities

12. **CAST Staff** – Staff are selected by the Service Provider in accordance with *ACT School Age Care Conditions for Approvals in Principal and Licences* and the Service Provider's own policies and procedures. They have direct responsibility for the overall management of the programs within established policy and procedures, coordinate and direct the activities of employees engaged in the implementation and evaluation of developmentally appropriate programs, and are responsible for assisting qualified staff to provide an appropriate and stimulating program of care and education and to ensure the safety and well being of the children at the centre.

13. **School Board** – is responsible for:

- a. Ensuring that CAST offered by the Service provider within the school operates in such a way that the school does not face additional costs through the operation of CAST.
- b. Ensuring that accredited and licensed care is provided by the Service Provider.
- c. Reviewing costs and charges on an annual basis.
- d. Conducting a review of CAST prior to the end of the contract period to determine whether continuation of CAST, and whether continuation with the Service Provider is appropriate.
- e. is responsible with the School Principal or his/her delegate for re-negotiating/negotiating the CAST contract annually.

15. **School Principal** – is responsible with the School Board for re-negotiating/negotiating the CAST contract annually

Procedures

16. The operating procedures for CAST are implemented in accordance with the Service provider's own policy and procedures manual, and are consistent with the procedures for SACS outlined in the Handbook of Policies for CEO Licensed School Age Care Services in the ACT. A copy of the Service Provider's operating procedures should be provided to the school and be available for inspection to any parent upon request.

16. The school must be satisfied that the operating procedures establish an effective mechanism for, amongst other things, accurately managing the personal information of students, their attendance and accounting and record keeping issues, and communicating with parents, including dispute resolution mechanisms. The Service Provider must also have in place procedures to ensure that staff, relief staff, support staff etc, are familiar with the policies and procedures of the Service Provider, and the particular requirements of individual participating children and the school. In particular, the Service Provider must ensure staff are familiar with the school's emergency, fire safety and evacuation procedures.

17. The food and nutrition policy of the Service provider must be consistent with the school's nutrition policy. The Service Provider is also required to maintain the premises, and any equipment used, appropriately and to leave the premises clean and tidy. The Service Provider must also ensure the program runs as effectively as possible having regard to the interests of the children and parents and the competing needs of the school.

Approved by:	Principal
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