Why is this important?

The characteristics of an environment may unintentionally increase the risks of offending behaviour for example, using closed-off or isolated locations and inadequate supervision and monitoring. However, environments can also be adapted to discourage offending behaviour and enhance safety.

What should we be doing?

Publicise Safeguarding Information

Posting key safeguarding information in high visibility locations and online provides access to those who may need it and conveys a strong commitment to safeguarding. Information that should be publicised includes (but is not limited to):

- Archdiocesan Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Commitment Statement
- Safe Conduct Standards
- Whistleblower STOPLine Service details
- Abuse types and potential indicators
- Local Safeguarding Representative details
- Office for Safeguarding Services contact details
- Complaints management process

Promote Behaviour Standards

Raising awareness of behaviour standards helps build cohesive communities, values that align with mission and a culture of safety. Communities should be made aware of, and be able to access the codes of conduct for Archdiocesan employees, religious representatives and volunteers. Children and young people should also be encouraged to develop their own code of conduct which sets out participation behaviours.

Actively Manage Risks

All activities should be assessed for safeguarding risks, especially those involving children and adults-at-risk. Risk management plans should be overviewed by leadership groups (e.g. parish councils, boards) and reviewed regularly and at least annually. See the Safeguarding Risk Assessment protocol and Work, Health & Safety Risk Management procedure.

Appoint a Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR)

The role of the LSR is to promote safeguarding and to assist in creating safe activities and environments. See the Appointment of Local Safeguarding Representatives protocol.

Supervise & Monitor

All workers have a duty of care to protect others engaging in activities, ministries and services. Supervising and monitoring activities is fundamental to satisfying that duty. A sufficient number of suitable people should be engaged to supervise activities, particularly those involving children, young people and adults-at-risk. Parents should be encouraged to assist in supervising and monitoring activities in which their children are involved. Suggested ratios of supervising adults to children is discussed in the Safe Practice Guide - Working Safely with Children & Adults at Risk. Young people (under 18 years) cannot be responsible for the supervision of other children.

Avoid using locations that are difficult to monitor (i.e. secluded, closed-off, out-of-view locations) or restrict access to them. If that's not possible, then make regular and random checks of those locations or improve security measures such as lighting or electronic surveillance (i.e. CCTV).

Engage & Support Communities

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Communities should be encourage to engage in safeguarding and be supported to do so. This may include raising awareness of safeguarding practices, providing training (e.g. safeguarding induction), assisting with accreditation processes (e.g. volunteer registration) and importantly, encouraging and supporting the community to raise concerns and complaints.

Promote Safeguarding

Safeguarding practices should be promoted regularly. Leaders who promote safeguarding demonstrate their commitment to the safety and wellbeing of those under their care. Opportunities to promote safeguarding include:

- Providing information in newsletters or bulletins
- Distributing information online and via social media
- Providing hardcopy information
- Discussing safeguarding during gatherings (e.g. mass, community events, team meetings)
- During the sacramental program
- Participating in civic initiatives (e.g. child protection week, disability week)

Overview Safeguarding

Safeguarding practices should be regularly overviewed to monitor compliance and identify concerns. Opportunities to overview safeguarding practices include:

- Establishing a safeguarding team or committee
- Making safeguarding a standing agenda item for key leadership group meetings (e.g. parish councils, management groups, boards).
- Obtaining reports from the LSR