



Why is this important?

Safe and nurturing environments flourish when children are encouraged to give their views about what makes them feel safe, and to raise their concerns. The right to be heard and taken seriously are fundamental values of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

What should we be doing?

Communicate regularly with children about safeguarding and their wellbeing when involved in activities, ministries and services. Information that should be provided includes (but is not limited to):

- the right to feel safe and be protected from abuse
- safeguarding policy and practices
- measures in place to keep them safe
- behaviour standards that apply to them and adults
- safe and supportive peer relationships
- child advocacy and support services
- how to raise concerns or incidents
- e-safety information
- child-related community campaigns (e.g. Child Protection Week)

Information should be provided in age appropriate language, a child-friendly format and be suitable for children and young people from diverse cultural backgrounds and with disabilities (where applicable).

A child-friendly version of the safeguarding policy and commitment statement should be publicly displayed and made readily accessible for example, on a notice board or website, through social media or in a welcome pack.

Regularly check with children, young people and their parents and guardians that they are aware of safeguarding practices and that the child safe environment is visible and experienced (e.g. during CLOW, sacramental program).

Implement specific processes or tools for children and young people to contribute to or provide feedback on safeguarding measures or issues, for example:

- post-activity rating exercises
- anonymous surveys
- a suggestion box
- online feedback
- a focus/reference group (e.g. youth leaders)
- parent or guardian guided feedback (particularly for young children)

(See the feedback tools provided on the Safeguarding Resources page of the Archdiocesan public website)

It is important to gather specific feedback from children and young people about whether they know what to do if they or someone they know is being abused and if they feel safe to raise concerns.

Match participation/feedback processes or tools to the age, capabilities (including disabilities) and background of the children and young people.

Ensure all feedback from children, young people and their parents/guardians is handled confidentially and with due regard for their privacy.

Be open with children and young people about the extent of their participation and explain how their contribution/feedback was used.

Document and regularly review opportunities for children and young people to contribute or provide feedback on safeguarding and wellbeing issues.