



## SAFE PRACTICE GUIDE Maintaining Personal Boundaries

### Why is this important?

Personal boundaries are the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual limits people have to protect themselves from being manipulated, exploited or abused by others. It is essential to have personal boundaries in order to have healthy and respectful relationships.

### What should we be doing?

Archdiocesan workers should maintain respectful personal boundaries in all interactions with others, but especially with children and adults-at-risk. The responsibility for maintaining personal boundaries rests with workers at all times.

Some accepted practices for maintaining respectful personal boundaries include:

- Avoiding unnecessary or unauthorised physical contact with children and adults-at-risk (beyond common and reasonable gestures to greet, comfort or congratulate).
- Avoiding unnecessary or unauthorised one-on-one interactions (including online) with children and adults-at-risk.
- Avoiding unnecessary or unauthorised privacy intrusions (e.g. entering dressing/bathing areas, accessing private/sensitive information).
- Not being excessively familiar with children and adults-at-risk beyond the boundaries of the worker's position/role.
- Not sharing and keeping secrets of a personal nature with children and adults-at-risk.
- Not seeking information of a personal or intimate nature from a child or adult-at-risk that is not necessary or otherwise relevant to the worker's position/role.
- Avoiding giving extra attention or privileges to a child or adult-at-risk which may give the impression of a 'special relationship'.
- Avoiding adopting the role of 'confidant' with children or adults-at-risk beyond the boundaries of the worker's position/role.
- Being respectful in all interactions with children and adults-at-risk consistent with the worker's position/role.
- Immediately addressing any behaviour that is inappropriate or otherwise breaches personal boundaries.

NOTE: This guide should be read in conjunction with Archdiocesan and Church conduct codes or other applicable behaviour standards.