



Archdiocese of Brisbane

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
Prevention and Protection Policy

Support Document



It takes a whole community.

CONTENTS

SCOPE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	3
PREPARATION OF ARCHDIOCESAN WORKERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN	5
UNDERSTANDING HARM AND ABUSE	6
PREVENTION AND PROTECTION PRACTICES	7
SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES	8
POSITIVE NOTICE TO WORK WITH CHILDREN CHECK (BLUE CARD).....	8
PREScribed NOTICE YELLOW CARD FOR THOSE EMPLOYED BY DISABILITY SERVICES.....	10
PARISH ROLES WHICH REQUIRE POSITIVE NOTICE BLUE CARD	11
NATIONAL CRIMINAL SCREENING.....	11
CODE OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR.....	12
SAFE ACTIVITIES - PLANNING ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS	13
TWO ADULT RULE	14
OTHER SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES	15
PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO	16
USING SOCIAL MEDIA WITH CHILDREN	18
WHAT TO DO IN THE CASE OF INCIDENTS/CONCERNS OF ABUSE OR HARM, DISCLOSURE AND MANAGEMENT OF HARM AND ABUSE	18
PROTECTION FROM CIVIL LIABILITY.....	20
MANAGING SUSPICION OF HARM AND/OR DISCLOSURE	21
CONFIDENTIALITY.....	23
DEFINITIONS	23
REFERENCES	26
CONTACT NUMBERS	26

SCOPE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

*If we wish to lead a dignified and fulfilling life, we have to reach out to others
and seek their good.*

‘The love of Christ urges us on.’ 2 Cor 5:14

Pope Francis in Evangelii Gaudium (9) 2013

The Archdiocese of Brisbane’s Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection and Prevention Policy applies to Clergy, Religious, and archdiocesan workers who are responsible for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in the care of a parish/agency. The duties/responsibilities expected of personnel within a parish/agency are:

Parish Priest/Administrator/Supervisor/Board Member

People in supervisory and management roles play a key function in modeling expected behaviour and the training of Archdiocesan workers. People in supervisory positions can minimise risk to children and vulnerable adults by:

- Adopting safe recruiting and selection practices;
- Supporting and encouraging a safe and secure environment;
- Adopting a proactive response to inappropriate behaviour by employees or volunteers;
- Monitoring and supervising subordinates’ performance;
- Ensuring employees and volunteers are inducted and trained appropriately in working with children and vulnerable adults and their obligations;
- Ensuring that complaints, suspicions and/or allegations are responded to in a prompt and professional manner;
- Ensuring that victimisation is not tolerated; and
- Ensuring that employees and volunteers who undertake activities with children and vulnerable adults have clearly articulated and documented role descriptions.

Local Safeguarding Representative (LRS)

Each parish/agency is to have a Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR). In parishes this role may be a voluntary role. A member of the Parish Pastoral Council (or nominee) may take on this task.

In Archdiocesan agencies, an employee responsible for Work Health and Safety matters could also perform this function.

The Local Safeguarding Representative is responsible for:

- Making sure that the parish/agency is aware of the importance of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, through regular communications to staff/community members;
- Promoting safe practices including articulating for others what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour; and
- Assisting in the administration of the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection and Prevention Policy as appropriate to parish needs. See full Local Safeguarding Representative volunteer task description in the Resources: Task Descriptions documents which can be found on the [Archdiocesan Intranet \(AI\)](#).

Some sample communications that may be used in parish bulletins follow. Please adjust the wording to reflect specific parish circumstances.

1. The Archbishop has promulgated a revised *Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy*. The policy states:

Children are a gift from God with an intrinsic right to dignity of life, respect and security from physical and emotional harm. They are to be treasured, nurtured and safeguarded from harm by all.

A copy of the full policy document can be found on the notice board at the entrance of the church and in the hall. You are encouraged to read it. Our parish is implementing the policy and procedures during the coming months and training will be provided to those who are working with children and vulnerable adults.

2. As part of the Archdiocesan *Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy* we are calling for expressions of interest in the volunteer role of **Local Safeguarding Representative**. This important role will assist our community to develop an extended culture of guardianship. If you can spare about two hours a month please ask the parish office staff for a task description and volunteer form.

Once the Local Safeguarding Representative has been appointed, create a bulletin insert with their photograph and name and contact number. Make opportunities to introduce this person to the community. Also create an A4 poster for display in the church and church hall with the person's photograph and appropriate contact details.

Once you have begun to implement the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy insert the following paragraph into your bulletin at a time when you expect large numbers to attend Mass e.g. Easter or Christmas Masses.

Our parish has implemented the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy. We are committed to high standards of recruitment, screening and selection of all of our employees and volunteers and undertake intentional strategies to maintain a safe and healthy ministry environment for all.

After the parish has had an internal and/or external audit, the parish may place the following statement in the newsletter:

Our Safeguarding Children audit was conducted during this week and we are pleased to let you know that..... for example:

~ we are fully compliant with the requirements of the policy

~ we have only minor adjustments to make to ensure that we are compliant with Archdiocesan requirements. (e.g. We will be contacting our volunteers to update our Blue Card register.)

Archdiocesan agencies may adapt these communication notices to suit their particular circumstances.

Families

Families can support a parish/agency's risk management and child friendly approach by:

- Providing children with required support to participate in the various activities including teaching self-protective behaviours;
- When appropriate, taking part in the planning, management and delivery of activities;
- Reporting when a child may be experiencing bullying or harassment whilst participating in an activity/service; and
- Reporting when there is a suspicion that a child or vulnerable person is being abused or harmed whilst participating in an activity/service.

Children

Children who are old enough can also contribute to their environment by:

- Showing respect towards other children and adults;
- Not placing themselves at risk of harm and keeping themselves safe; and
- Reporting where they may experience or observe inappropriate behaviour or unsafe situations.

PREPARATION OF ARCHDIOCESAN WORKERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Archdiocesan workers need to be screened, prepared, nurtured and supported to undertake their ministry and/or agency activities. There is an expectation that Archdiocesan workers on placement who work with children or vulnerable adults will:

- Report issues, activities, equipment and policies that are unsafe and potential areas of risk;
- Engage in appropriate behaviour;
- Use appropriate language and interactions that empower children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- Provide the highest standard of service provision;
- Participate in professional training and development; and
- Understand the requirements of their role with children and vulnerable adults.

To achieve the above outcomes Archdiocesan workers will need to participate in:

- A recruitment and selection process;
- An induction into the organisation;
- Training in the role; and
- Performance feedback or an appraisal system (as required).

Aids and support for these purposes in relation to employees are available from the Archdiocesan Human Resources Office Phone 3324 3146.

Tools for recruitment, selection, induction, training and performance feedback for volunteers can be found in the Resource documents available on the [Archdiocesan Intranet \(AI\)](#).

UNDERSTANDING HARM AND ABUSE

Those who work in the service of the church should be clear as to the meaning of **harm** and **abuse**.

Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation. It may be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

Self-harm is deliberate and voluntary physical self-injury (that is not life-threatening and is without any conscious suicidal intent) in an attempt to cope with strong feelings such as anger, despair or self-hatred.

Abuse is intentional acts by a person with responsibility for another person causing significant physical injury, or other behaviour which causes serious physical pain or mental anguish without any legitimate care or disciplinary purpose as judged by the standards of the time when the behaviour occurred.

Physical Abuse is when a child suffers physical trauma or injury that is not accidental. It doesn't always leave visible marks or injuries. What matters most is the act itself that caused the trauma or injury. Physical abuse can include: hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, biting, poisoning.

Emotional/Psychological Abuse happens when a child's social, emotional or intellectual development is damaged or threatened. It can include constant: rejection, teasing or bullying, yelling, criticism, exposure to domestic or family violence.

Family (or Domestic) Violence happens when one person in a relationship uses violence or abuse to control the other person. It is usually an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear. Abuse in this context can include: emotional abuse (criticising), verbal abuse (yelling shouting, swearing), stalking and harassment, financial abuse (withholding money), damaging property to frighten you, social abuse (isolating), spiritual abuse (forcing you into or stopping you from spiritual practice), sexual abuse, depriving you of the necessities of life such as food, shelter and medical care.

Neglect is when a child's health and development are affected because their basic needs are not met. These needs include: food, housing, health care, adequate clothing, personal hygiene, hygienic living conditions, medical treatment, adequate supervision.

Cultural Abuse is that abuse received primarily because of a person's cultural background. It can be an outcome of discrimination and harassment and can take different forms including emotional, psychological or social abuse.

Sexual Abuse is sexual assault, sexual harassment or any other conduct of a sexual nature that is inconsistent with the integrity of the relationship between Church personnel and those who are in their pastoral care.

Sexual abuse includes sexual behaviour involving the person and another person in the following circumstances:

- The other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person;
- The relevant person has less power than the other person;
- There is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.

Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional and can include: having any kind of sexual contact with a child, rape, incest, having sexual relations with a child under 16 years, talking in a sexually explicit way that is not suitable for a child's age,

Sending obscene mobile messages or emails to a child, persistently intruding on a child's privacy, showing pornographic material to a child or forcing them to watch a sexual act, child prostitution.

PREVENTION AND PROTECTION PRACTICES

Research by the Truth Justice and Healing Council (August 2013) indicates that *the greater the number of organisational strategies implemented, the more safe children, young people and vulnerable adults will be in their contacts with the organisation*. In developing an extended culture of guardianship, the Archdiocesan approach to providing a safe environment for all children incorporates three main strategies:

1. Safe recruitment and selection practices – helping prevent those who pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults from holding positions of trust;
2. Code of Ethical Behaviour – having clear guidelines that set out what is and is not acceptable behaviour is an essential part of keeping members of the parish community safe;
3. Safe activities – ensuring a safe environments for parish activities.

SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES

A key preventative strategy in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is to make clear to all who attend the parish/agency that it is a safe, protective and vigilant environment. Compliance with this strategy is monitored and checked annually by the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer via the annual internal audit.

It is important that all possible steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people working in parishes/agencies. While the vast majority of people who want to work with children and vulnerable adults are well-motivated, good recruitment and selection procedures will help screen out those who are not suitable, thus enhancing the prospects of identifying the best person for the job. Recruitment of employees should follow the established Archdiocesan Human Resources procedures for their respective agency.

When recruiting Archdiocesan workers, ensure safe practices by following the recommended steps of:

- Having task descriptions for each of the roles;
- Having the person complete an application and declaration form;
- Asking the recommended interview questions;
- Ensuring that the candidate is not a disqualified person;
- Presenting the selected person with an engagement letter;
- Completing the new employee engagement /volunteer form;
- Completing an induction process with the new person; and
- Entering the volunteers details into the volunteer register.

The resource documents available on the Archdiocesan intranet contain sample volunteer task descriptions and other volunteer recruitment forms to assist parishes/agencies.

POSITIVE NOTICE TO WORK WITH CHILDREN CHECK (BLUE CARD)

Be aware that having this card is not a standalone strategy for safeguarding children. Protection of children and vulnerable adults requires that the suite of strategies, as articulated in this document, is employed.

The *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011* requires the development and implementation of an annual risk management strategy that takes into account screening requirements for volunteers and employees including those who:

- Have begun employment pending outcome of Positive Notice to Work with Children Check (Blue Card)/Criminal History Check;
- Hold a Positive Notice to Work with Children Blue Card;
- Are not required to hold a Positive Notice to Work with Children Blue Card; and
- Are having their Positive Notice to Work with Children Blue Card reassessed.

The Positive Notice to Work with Children Check is a national check of a person's criminal history. Disciplinary information held by certain professional organisations or information from police investigations into allegations of serious child related sexual offences will also be considered.

The *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*, prescribes child related regulated employment categories in which the Positive Notice to Work with Children Check (Blue Card) is mandatory.

All employers must warn all potential Archdiocesan workers that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a Positive Notice to Work with Children application. For example: *'I am legally obliged to warn you that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a Positive Notice to Work with Children Blue Card application form.'* The Archdiocesan worker must also sign the declaration on the application form stating they have been warned that it is an offence for a disqualified person to sign a Positive Notice to Work with Children Blue Card application. It is an offence for an employer not to provide the warning. The resource documents on the Archdiocesan intranet has a list of who is a disqualified person.

When a person submits an application and it is approved, a Positive Notice (letter) and a Positive Notice Blue Card will be issued. If an application is refused, a negative notice is issued. This prohibits the person from working in regulated employment categories as defined by the Act. (For more information refer to <http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au>)

The work and activities undertaken with children within the Archdiocese, either in a paid or voluntary capacity are governed by this legislative requirement. Therefore, employees (unless exempt) and volunteers working with children must apply for and obtain a Positive Notice to Work with Children Blue Card. It is the responsibility of the Archdiocesan worker to ensure that their Positive Notice Blue Card is maintained and current. As part of the parish/agency Risk Management Strategy, a Positive Notice Blue Card Register is to be kept and maintained by individual parishes/agencies and reviewed annually. The Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer will conduct random audits of Blue Card Registers from a selection of parishes/agencies annually.

Exemptions

There are some exemptions under the Act to holding a Blue Card. These include:

- Parent volunteering their services or conducting activities through a church, club or association when their child/children are involved in the same or similar activity; (however the Archdiocese recommends that all parents obtain a Positive Notice Blue Card to cover events where their own children may not be in the particular group they are working with);
- Children under 18 years who are volunteers – except students required to work in regulated employment as part of their studies;
- Parents volunteering their services at the school that their child/children attends so long as the child is under 18 years of age;
- Police officers and registered teachers – they will need to apply for an exemption when providing child-related services which are outside of their professional duties, such as volunteering with a community organisation.

This is done by completing an *Exemption Card Application Form* if they do not have a current Blue Card. A *Link an Applicant/Cardholder to this Organisation Form* is required to be completed and submitted if the person already holds a Blue Card issued when volunteering at another organisation.

People who are employed or volunteer to engage with vulnerable adults only, and who do not conduct any activities and/or do not provide services to children do not fall within the scope of the Blue Card system and therefore do not require screening under the Blue Card system.

Paid Employees

All paid employees (unless exempt) working with children are required to hold a current Blue Card when they work:

- Eight consecutive days or more;
- Once a week or more, each week over four weeks;
- Once a fortnight or more, each fortnight over eight weeks; or
- Once a month or more, each month over six months.

Parishes/agencies must submit an authorisation *Link an Applicant/Cardholder to this Organisation Form*, if they employ someone who already holds a blue card. This is mandatory for all employers and ensures the Commission has current employment details for all Blue Card holders and that employers/organisations will be notified by the Commission of any relevant change in status of the Blue Card holder.

Volunteers

Parishes/agencies welcome and invite people to volunteer their time to support individual ministries, such as activities involving children. It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that a volunteer is appropriate for the role, by following the recommended recruitment and selection processes contained within this policy.

Consistent with legislative obligations, volunteers must hold a current Blue Card before they can begin working with children, regardless of how often they come into contact with children.

PREScribed NOTICE YELLOW CARD FOR THOSE EMPLOYED BY DISABILITY SERVICES

Any person employed or volunteering to work with Centacare services must make an application for [Criminal History Screening – Prescribed Notice Yellow Card](#).

Archdiocesan employees and volunteers who work with Centacare disability services providing services to both adults and children with a disability can use their Blue Card for both services, but must apply for a Yellow Card Exemption (issued by the Department of Communities). Applicants can apply for a Blue Card and Yellow Card Exemption by completing a Blue Card Application and request for Yellow Card exemption Form 10-1.

PARISH ROLES WHICH REQUIRE POSITIVE NOTICE BLUE CARD

Generally, any parish role which has contact with children, in their parish work, requires a Positive Notice Blue Card.

Safeguarding all adults serving, as well as the children is the goal. Caution and common sense should dictate decisions in this regard.

- Sacramental Coordinator;
- Sacramental Leader;
- Children's Liturgy of the Word leaders;
- Youth Ministry Coordinator;
- Youth Ministry Leaders;
- Altar Servers trainer;
- Sacristan if they are in contact with children;
- Choir Leader – where children are included in the general choir and for childrens' choir,
- Nativity Play Director;
- Holiday Activities Leader;
- Parish Pastoral and Finance Council members;
- Care and Concern members who visit vulnerable people in their homes (children or grandchildren may be present);
- Communion to the Sick ministers who visit people in their homes (children or grandchildren may be present).

Your parish may have other roles that involve working closely with children and vulnerable adults. A Parish Volunteer Requirements Matrix for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults is available on the Archdiocesan intranet to support parishes in determining various volunteer requirements.

NATIONAL CRIMINAL SCREENING

All Archdiocesan employees are required to complete a Criminal History (Police) Check. Certain parish ministries will also require a Police Check (refer to Parish Volunteer Requirements Matrix for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults). The Office of Aged Care: [Employee Screening Requirements](#) states that anyone working or volunteering within an Aged Care facility is required to have completed a Criminal History Check before commencing.

For parishes, this would include Extraordinary Ministers of Communion to the sick to both Aged Care facilities and private homes.

Other roles that hold a certain level of trust, such as counters and those holding keys to parish facilities may also be required to complete a Criminal History Check, if no other risk controls have been put into place.

CODE OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

This Code of Ethical Behaviour (developed from *Integrity in Service of the Church*, National Committee of Professional Standards, 2010) clarifies and affirms the standards of behaviour that are required of Archdiocesan workers within the Archdiocese of Brisbane. Breaches of this code may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal. Clergy and Religious are bound by the standards for ethical behaviour as articulated in 'Integrity in Ministry.'

Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane employees and volunteers should refer to their particular Code of Conduct.

Centacare Family and Relationships Services are bound by their Code of Conduct.

The Code of Ethical Behaviour states:

Relationships among people are the starting point of all Christian life, ministry and service and are central to Catholic life. It is with the objective that relationships in ministry be experienced as collaborative, communicative and coordinated without intention to harm or allow harm to occur that I have approved this Code of Ethical Behaviour.

Those who serve in the Archdiocese of Brisbane – employees, volunteers and students on placement shall:

- 1. Commit to justice and equity** by exhibiting the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity in their professional conduct;
- 2. Uphold the dignity and right to respect of all people** by conducting themselves in a moral manner consistent with the discipline, norms and teachings of the Catholic Church;
- 3. Commit to safe and supportive relationships** by not taking advantage of any pastoral or authoritative role for their own benefit; and by adhering to the requirements of the law of Queensland, in particular in relation to reporting any suspected abuse of children and vulnerable adults;
- 4. Respond with integrity to those who are poor, alienated or marginalised** by not acting in an abusive or neglectful manner; and by sharing concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behaviour with the appropriate person in their organisational structure;
- 5. Strive for excellence in all their work** by following the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of Brisbane; accepting their professional responsibility in the protection of children and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse and harm; and by providing a professional work environment that is free from harassment;
- 6. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries in all contact settings including virtual** by:
 - Demonstrating behaviour consistent with role and responsibilities;
 - Avoiding inappropriate emotional attachment;
 - Not forming or engaging in relationships of a personal or sexual nature;
 - Maintaining distance between work time and activities and personal time and activities;
 - Not accepting gifts or entering into financial relationships or transactions;
 - not disclosing inappropriate personal information; and
 - Avoiding touch, in a manner, which is not a legitimate occupational requirement.

Conduct not consistent with this Code of Ethical Behaviour in the workplace includes, but is not limited to being engaged in activities or situations that can give the appearance of:

- Bullying;
- Sexual or other harassment;
- Exploitation;
- Sexual exploitation;
- Conflict of interest;
- Abuse, as defined in the Church's *Towards Healing* document;
- Possession or distribution of pornographic material;
- Abuse of alcohol, drugs or gambling that in any way interferes with the person's service of the Church; and
- Any form of criminal conduct, including stealing or any other form of theft or any form of assault.

SAFE ACTIVITIES - PLANNING ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Centacare Agencies must follow the procedures as prescribed in their Work Health and Safety, Children's Health and Wellbeing, Risk Management and Client Services policies.

Brisbane Catholic Education must follow relevant policies when planning activities for students.

Our commitment to safety along with State and National Legislation requires a parish/agency to undertake risk assessments of activities and services provided. As part of the overall risk management strategy, assessing any potential risks is critical in minimising harm to a child and vulnerable adult.

A risk is anything, including the behaviour of others that can cause harm or loss to a person.

In assessing any activity or service provision within the Archdiocese it is important to consider how harm might occur, why and when it could occur. The resource documents available on the Archdiocesan intranet contain a Risk Calculator which will guide assessment of risks. Once the level of risk is determined, the risks can be prioritised and options that effectively control the situation can be considered for implementation. The resource documents also contain a sample Risk Assessment Template.

Risk assessments must be conducted on all activities and services that involve children and vulnerable adults. These assessments are to be kept on file and reviewed annually, in light of the current circumstances.

Parishes/agencies can minimise the risk of harm to children by:

- Ensuring that activities support the interest of those involved;
- Providing constant supervision by reliable and trained adults;
- Knowing where participants are at all times; and
- Implementing appropriate risk mitigation strategies within the environment to keep participants safe e.g. installing glass windows into doors to give a line of sight into a particular space.

Risk assessments for some typical parish activities are provided for adaptation to your specific parish context on the Safeguarding page on the Archdiocesan intranet (AI).

A checklist to assist with identification of training needs for employees and volunteers can be found in the resource documents on the Archdiocesan intranet. There are a number of Archdiocesan employees within Archdiocesan Services, Centacare and Evangelisation Brisbane who will be able to assist you with this training. Safeguarding training will be provided by the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer.

There may be times when other organisations conduct activities for children within the parish/agency. In such a case it is imperative that a risk assessment be undertaken. A checklist of issues to be considered for these special events can be found within the resource documents. It is also important to know who is in attendance at activities along with who has delivered and who has collected the child.

TWO ADULT RULE

General safe practice in all activities, recommends the application of the *Two Adult Rule* which serves to keep children and vulnerable adults, as well as the adults serving them safe. Wherever practical no fewer than two adults are present at all times during any parish/agency sponsored program, event or ministry involving children and vulnerable adults. It is best that these two adults not be related.

Other points to consider:

Why have this rule?

- Drastically reduces the risk of an incident of abuse (potential abuser will lose interest if they are constantly in sight of another adult);
- Protects the adults against false allegations;
- Reduces the possibility of a claim of negligence;
- Parents and adults more likely to volunteer to lead if they know they will have help on a regular basis;
- Provides help if there is an accident or emergency; and
- Sends a clear statement that children are important and valued.

What do we do if we are a small parish and have a hard time finding even one adult leader?

- Invite a parent or other parishioner to join the activity to act as the second adult;
- leave doors open; or
- put glass windows in the doors .

Professional counsellors and Centacare workers who work alone are not bound by this rule due to the nature of their work which calls for one-on-one sessions.

Teachers and Guidance Counsellors in schools are not bound by this rule due to the nature of their work.

OTHER SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES

Behaviour Management

Managing behaviour of children and vulnerable adults should always take the form of positive reinforcement, i.e. catch them doing the correct thing and draw attention to that. We must ensure that behaviour management is at no time punitive, humiliating or aggressive.

At the outset of any activity, expectations about appropriate and socially acceptable behaviour and taking responsibility for one's own behaviour should be made clear to children.

Physical Contact

Physical contact with children may be required in some circumstances. These may include; management of an injury, to assist with toileting, etc. Where practical, an adult should provide an explanation to the child as to what the physical contact will be and why it will occur.

Consideration should be given to whether it is necessary to seek permission from the child and/or parents in relation to the physical contact and any supervision which is required in relation to the physical contact (depending on the nature of the contact).

Any physical contact with a minor is expected to be in a manner appropriate for the ministry activity.

Transport of Children

As a general rule, ministry leaders should not transport children in their vehicles without specific permission from the child's parents. In the event that a child needs to be transported, for safety reasons the Two Adult Rule applies. All people travelling in a vehicle must wear seat belts, the driver should be appropriately licensed and the vehicle should be registered, insured and safe to drive.

Change Rooms/Toilets

Children should be afforded privacy when using toilets and change rooms. Responsible ministry requires that adequate and appropriate supervision be given to children in these circumstances. Where an adult needs to assist a child, the principles set out above regarding physical contact apply. Supervising adults should work to maintain the privacy of the individuals, e.g. announcing entry to the room.

Managing Injuries or Illness

Should a child be injured or fall ill during a parish ministry activity, first aid should be rendered and parents contacted immediately. An ambulance should be called if the injury/illness cannot be alleviated by simple first aid or parents are not available to make that decision.

Sick or injured children should be appropriately supervised until either parents or the ambulance take over their care.

The ministry leader should complete an Archdiocesan Notification of Injury/Illness form – available from the parish office.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO

Parishes/agencies host a range of activities including liturgical, pastoral and formational. It is not uncommon for parents and other family members to take photographs (of their children) at celebrations. It is important to be aware that there are some people who may attend these activities to take inappropriate photographs or video footage of children.

It is essential that the parish/agency makes clear to all in attendance that taking a photograph can be construed as obtaining personal information and therefore should be treated as any other item of personal and confidential information.

Attendees are to be encouraged to use sensitivity when taking photographs and to confirm with the parents of children other than their own that they are comfortable to have their child included in photographs taken by someone other than their own family members. A similar courtesy should also be extended to adults who may be included in the photographs.

The responsibility for this notification lies with the Priest or Agency leader but can be delegated, for example to the coordinator of the activity, such as the Sacramental Preparation Coordinator or agency coordinator.

A typical script to convey this information could be:

We understand that you may wish to make a photographic or video record of this celebration. In so doing please exercise courtesy, sensitivity and common sense in relation to photographing children other than your own. We request that you confirm with other children's parents before including them in your personal photographs. The images that you take should only be used as your mementos of this event. Where photos contain children who are not yours, these should not be shared in any public forums, such as social media.

Good practices include:

- For formal photography of a celebration for use by the parish/agency, permission to take images of children must be sought, signed off by parents and kept on file. See Photographic and Media Consent Form in the resource documents (Appendix 9) on the Archdiocesan intranet (AI);
- It is advisable to have one photographer who takes each child's photograph for particular ritual, for example, Confirmation. This person should hold a Blue Card and be reference checked prior to engagement;
- Provide identification for the designated photographer. This ID is to be worn for the duration of the ritual/event and then returned to the parish/agency. See a sample Name Label template (Appendix 9.01) in the resource documents on AI;
- Affirm for adults present that photographs are to be taken only for the purpose of the event/ritual and that Privacy Laws include the protection of images as well as written documents;
- All photographs should be taken in a public setting;
- Images should be used for the intended outcomes;
- Ensure all children are appropriately dressed;
- Images should be carefully stored with consent attached or cross referenced. Names, dates and other contextual information should also be stored,
- Images should only be passed to third parties for their use where this has been agreed as part of the consent process; and
- Vulnerable children or those whose identity may require protection should not be photographed;

Refusal of consent should not in any way limit children's participation in activities.

Your parish/agency needs to make clear to all in attendance, the guidelines on the use of images as there is evidence that information posted on the internet or published in a magazine/newspaper can be used to target, to locate and then to groom children.

Questions to consider:

- What is the reason for this photography?
- Do you have permission to take and use images of children?
- Have you asked the child how they may feel about the use of their image?
- Have you provided enough information about the image so the parent/carer can give informed consent?
- How will others interpret the image?
- Does the use of the image exploit the child in any way?
- Will you put the child at risk if you photograph them?
- Who will see promotional material containing the image?
- Have you considered issues of confidentiality under Child Protection and Privacy Act?

USING SOCIAL MEDIA WITH CHILDREN

'Social media' is the term commonly given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests online. As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement.

The underpinning principle for use of social media by church personnel is Christ-centred love for others and respect for human dignity, both on-line and off-line, in both private and professional life.

Users of parish/agency networks have a duty of care to maintain network security and are required to adhere to Archdiocesan policies and procedures for the professional use of electronic mail (Email) and the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Duty of care;
- Ethical and appropriate use;
- The need to maintain privacy, confidentiality and the rights of individuals and copyright owners;
- Cost efficient use of the information services;
- Adherence to considered and appropriate records management practices;
- Appropriate use of systems, accounts and passwords; and
- Compliance with the *Social Networking Protocol for the Catholic Church in Australia* as issued by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference .

Compliance with legislation not only prohibiting anti-discrimination and /or harassment but also provisions such as found in the following:

- [Intellectual Property Laws Amendment Act 1998](#)
- [Privacy Law](#)
- [Electronic Transactions Amendment Act 2011](#)
- [Copyright Act 1968](#)

WHAT TO DO IN THE CASE OF INCIDENTS/CONCERNS OF ABUSE OR HARM. DISCLOSURE AND MANAGEMENT OF HARM AND ABUSE

The Archdiocese of Brisbane expects that all concerns, allegations, suspicions and disclosures of abuse are taken seriously. It is critical that employees and/or volunteers know what is expected of them in these circumstances.

All reporting of allegations is highly sensitive and should be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner with respect for the privacy of the individual/s involved.

This procedure sets out the action that must be taken if any concern, allegation, suspicion or disclosure is made, whether current or historical, that indicates an Archdiocesan worker (current or former) has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult;
- Committed a criminal offence against a child or vulnerable adult or related to a child or vulnerable adult; or
- Behaved towards a child or vulnerable adult in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.

The benefit of the doubt should always be in favour of the victim or the one reporting the harm.

The following procedures applies to all Clergy, Religious and Archdiocesan workers.

Staff of Brisbane Catholic Education must follow their Student Protection Processes and observe all requirements of mandatory reporting as required in the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*. The *Education (Accreditation of Non State Schools) Act 2001* and associated regulations and the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

The Archdiocesan Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection and Prevention Policy is to be followed with attention to legislative requirements that govern particular service delivery for example: Child Care Act, Disability Services Act.

If a person becomes aware of harm or suspected harm to a child, **they must immediately**.

In the case of sexual abuse:

1. Make a notification **directly to the Police**; or
2. Make a notification to the next senior person; such as the Parish Priest (if not about the Priest), Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR), Manager, Team Leader;
3. The senior person will then notify the Professional Standards Office (PSO);
4. The PSO will make a notification to the Police or will contact Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, depending on the nature of the disclosure as well as communicating with the Vicar-General and the Archbishop.

Professional discernment may indicate that the child or vulnerable adult should be referred onto Centacare Family and Relationship Services (CFRS) for support. This decision will be taken in consultation between the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer, Director of Professional Standards, the person reporting and CFRS.

In the case of other forms of abuse/misconduct:

1. Make a notification **directly to the Police if it is criminal in nature**; or
2. Make a notification to the next senior person; such as the Parish Priest (if not about the Priest), Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR), Manager, Team leader;
3. The senior person will then notify the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer;
4. The Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer seek advice from the Professional Standards Office, Police, and/or the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Service;
5. Depending on the nature of the disclosure, the advice gathered will be provided this to senior person reporting or the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Office will make a notification to these agencies.

In the case of abuse of a vulnerable adult:

1. Make a notification **directly to the Police if it is criminal in nature**; or
2. Make a notification to the Office of Public Guardian;
3. Advise your next senior person;
4. The senior person will also advise the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer.

Whistle Blower:

The Archdiocese also offers a Whistle Blower Line supported by an external agency, Stopline. This service has the capacity to accept disclosures and/or reports of harm. Call: 1300 304 550 or email AOB@stopline.com.au

Reasonable grounds to suspect harm include:

- A child or vulnerable adult discloses they have been harmed;
- Someone else (for example: another child, parent) discloses that harm has occurred or is likely to occur;
- A child or vulnerable adult discloses harm to another (it may be possible they are referring to themselves);
- Significant changes in behaviour of the person or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries; or
- Harm to a person is directly witnessed.

PROTECTION FROM CIVIL LIABILITY

Section 22 of the Child Protection Act 1999 provides for protection from civil liability for persons who, acting honestly and reasonably, notify or give information about suspected harm to a child. Further, the Archdiocesan Whistleblower Policy enables the reporting of improper behaviour and the protection of individuals who conscientiously make such disclosures.

The Office of Public Guardian is to protect an adult with impaired capacity from neglect, exploitation or abuse. Therefore, as long as the information is in relation to an adult with impaired capacity, the person providing the relevant information is not liable civilly, criminally or under an administrative process for giving information honestly – Public Guardian Act 2014 Section 24(3).

MANAGING SUSPICION OF HARM AND/OR DISCLOSURE

Where there is a suspicion that a child is being harmed physically, sexually or emotionally, the following Professional Standards Office Queensland's The 5R's of Receiving an Abuse or Misconduct Disclosure:

1. Receive

- Move to a suitable environment;
- Be calm and patient;
- Allow the person to tell their story; and
- Listen supportively.

2. Record

- Make notes, using their own words;
- Review what was disclosed; and
- Ask for the persons contact details.

3. Respect

- Respect that the person may not disclose full details;
- Respect the person's need for privacy and confidentiality; and
- Acknowledge the person's courage and strength.

4. Reassure

- Reassure the person that it is OK to disclose;
- Address any concerns about the person's safety; and
- Reassure the person that you will act.

5. Refer

- Explain that you will need to refer their disclosure to someone who can help;
- Provide the contact details for the Professional Standards Office;
- Notify your next senior person and/or report to the appropriate authority; and
- Keep a copy of your notes.

Record all details that support the suspicion (Safeguarding Recording Form). The record should be signed and dated by the person filling in the form. The record would also normally include:

- Accurate identifying information as far as it is known. This should include the name and address of the person who has raised a concern (as well as their date of birth, and parents'/carers' names and addresses when the person who has raised a concern/allegation is a child);
- The name of the individual against whom the concern/allegation is being raised and any other identifying information;
- As much information as possible about the circumstances that led to the concern/allegation being raised, why is the person reporting worried about the welfare and safety of the child/children or vulnerable adult/s;
- Dates when the concern arose, or when the incident(s) occurred;
- Circumstances in which the concern arose, or the incident(s) occurred;
- Any explanation offered to account for the risk, injury or concern;
- The person's own statement using the words they used to describe the events or incident(s), if possible. Do not make assumptions about the intended meaning of words used;
- Details of any action already taken concerning the incident/concern/allegation; and
- Any views expressed by the child's parent(s) or guardian(s)/carer(s) about the matter.

Do not be selective. Include detail even that which may seem irrelevant. It could prove invaluable.

At a later stage in an investigation, all records, including rough notes must be passed to the relevant designated officer; that is, the Director of Professional Standards or the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer (as appropriate) and the Police.

Any copies of records retained must be kept securely and confidentially.

Discuss the matter with the Parish Priest, Service Manager or Director and decide what action needs to be taken. (When one of these role holders is the suspected perpetrator, contact the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer on Ph 3324 3752 for advice.)

It is important not to discuss the incident/concern with anyone other than those detailed in these procedures.

In addition to The 5R's above, the following points inform your approach when a child or vulnerable adult discloses harm or abuse by someone else:

- Listen carefully to and support the child or vulnerable adult and thank them for helping you to understand;
- Don't be afraid of saying the 'wrong' thing;
- Give the person your full attention;
- Maintain a calm appearance with a listening style that is compassionate and reassuring. If the information given to you shocks, disgusts or distresses you, do not allow these feelings to show. If you do, you may inadvertently dissuade the person from giving any further information. Reassure the person that you are not upset with them but with the fact that such things can happen;
- Do not make promises you can't keep.
- Do not confront the accused;
- Do not undertake an investigation. This should be undertaken by authorities in accordance with the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

When there is a disclosure of an allegation of harm, only ask questions to confirm the need to report the matter to the Police or Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

When a Archdiocesan worker witnesses or receives an allegation of harm and/or suspected harm, they must report it to the Manager or Director of the service or the Parish Priest. Further follow-up on information may be required before an assessment of the situation and reporting requirements can be determined.

In situations where there is uncertainty, question or concern regarding the reporting of an allegation of harm, clarity should be sought from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services or Police service. This may be done directly or through the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer.

Suspicion or allegations of harm that involve an offence against a child or vulnerable adult must be reported to the Police. Investigation must be undertaken by them. The police will require the following details:

- The disclosure of harm;
- Name, age and address of the child or young person harmed;
- Whereabouts of the child or young person at that point in time;
- Any identifying information of the alleged perpetrator; and
- Details of the person reporting the harm.

When it is alleged that a archdiocesan worker is the perpetrator of harm against the child or young person, the archdiocesan worker may be stood aside from their duties until the matter is investigated and resolved. (An employee stood aside should continue to receive full pay until the matter is resolved. The Archdiocesan Services Human Resources department is to be advised in these circumstances and they will assist.)

If the allegation is proven the Archdiocesan worker's employment may be terminated. Further response to those proven guilty of abuse will be in line with Part Two Sections 27, 28 and 29 of *'Towards Healing'*.

An allegation must be reported to the Office of the Public Guardian when a vulnerable person is the victim of harm from any person with whom they are in contact.

Archdiocesan workers who have been involved with disclosure and suspicion or allegation of harm can be debriefed and supported through the Employment Assistance Program –
Phone 1800 81 87 28 or www.accesseap.com.au

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any issues relating to suspected or alleged harm and/or abuse to children or vulnerable adults is highly sensitive and must be treated in such a way. Any reports or documentation on disclosures must be kept secure at all times. Access should be strictly limited to those involved in the matter. The matter should only be discussed with relevant supervisors, managers or staff of statutory authorities.

DEFINITIONS

Who is an Archdiocesan worker?

A person who undertakes work for the Archdiocese in either a paid or unpaid arrangement. The work undertaken is not connected with spiritual or religious matters and the person is not bound by religious rule, nor belongs to or lives in a monastic or other order.

Who is a Child?

The *Child Protection Act 1999* s8 defines a child as an individual less than 18 years of age.

Who is a child in need of protection?

The *Child Protection act 1999* defines a child in need of protection as one who has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and does not have a parent who is able and willing to protect them from the harm.

Who is a vulnerable adult?

A person aged 18 or over, who may be in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability; or who may be unable to take care of him/herself or protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

What is harm?

Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation. It may be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

The abuse generally involves one or more of the following forms of abuse:

- Physical;
- Emotional/psychological;
- Domestic or family violence;
- Neglect;
- Cultural;
- Sexual; and
- Spiritual.

Physical Abuse is when a child suffers physical trauma or injury that is not accidental. It doesn't always leave visible marks or injuries. What matters most is the act itself that caused the trauma or injury. Physical abuse can include: hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, biting, poisoning.

Emotional/Psychological Abuse happens when a child's social, emotional or intellectual development is damaged or threatened. It can include constant: rejection, teasing or bullying, yelling, criticism, exposure to domestic or family violence.

Family (or Domestic) Violence happens when one person in a relationship uses violence or abuse to control the other person. It is usually an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear. Abuse in this context can include: emotional abuse(criticizing), verbal abuse (yelling shouting, swearing), stalking and harassment, financial abuse (withholding money), damaging property to frighten you, social abuse (isolating), spiritual abuse (forcing you into or stopping you from spiritual practice), sexual abuse, depriving you of the necessities of life such as food, shelter and medical care.

Neglect is when a child's health and development are affected because their basic needs are not met. These needs include: food, housing, health care, adequate clothing, personal hygiene, hygienic living conditions, medical treatment, adequate supervision.

Cultural Abuse is that abuse received primarily because of a person's cultural background. It can be an outcome of discrimination and harassment and can take different forms including emotional, psychological or social abuse.

Sexual Abuse is sexual assault, sexual harassment or any other conduct of a sexual nature that is inconsistent with the integrity of the relationship between Church personnel and those who are in their pastoral care.

Sexual abuse includes sexual behaviour involving the person and another person in the following circumstances:

- The other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person;
- The relevant person has less power than the other person;
- There is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.

Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional and can include: having any kind of sexual contact with a child, rape, incest, having sexual relations with a child under 16 years, talking in a sexually explicit way that is not suitable for a child's age,

Sending obscene mobile messages or emails to a child, persistently intruding on a child's privacy, showing pornographic material to a child or forcing them to watch a sexual act, child prostitution.

Spiritual Abuse results from any act or omission that undermines a person's relationship with God, the Catholic Church and/or the community. When abuse is perpetrated by an individual in a position of authority and trust within the church (clergy, members of religious institutes, Archdiocesan workers or volunteers). Can cause a child or vulnerable adult to have lifelong loss of faith and/or feel distance from the church. Can result in health problems, psychological illness, problems with accepting authority and having trusting relationships.

Grooming

Grooming is deliberate actions by which an offender befriends and establishes an emotional connection with a child or vulnerable adult to lower their inhibitions in order to sexually abuse the person. The relationship is usually maintained in secrecy.

Sexting

Sexting refers to the act of sending sexually explicit photographs or messages electronically.

Self-harm

Deliberate and voluntary physical self-injury (that is not life-threatening and is without any conscious suicidal intent) in an attempt to cope with strong feelings such as anger, despair or self-hatred. It may be by direct means including cutting and burning but could also be by engaging in serious risk-taking behaviours such as alcohol/substance abuse, recklessly dangerous physical activities and/or unsafe promiscuity. (NB: Some cases of self harm may be an indication of sexual abuse.)

Risk

A risk is anything that can cause harm or loss to a child or vulnerable adult.

REFERENCES

Safeguarding Children. Standards and guidance document for the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Australian Law Reform Commission. Publication 69 Particular Privacy Issues Affecting Children and Young People

Archdiocese Use of Communication Mediums policy:

<http://ai.catholic.net.au/ads/wr/Employment%20Guidelines/Policy%202022%20Use%20of%20Communication%20Mediums.pdf>

Archdiocesan Social Media Use by Employees policy:

<http://ai.catholic.net.au/ads/wr/Employment%20Guidelines/Social%20Media%20Use%20by%20Employees%20policy.pdf>

Australian Institute of Family Studies, National Child Protection Clearing House – practice brief. September 2011.

Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
www.communities.qld.gov.au

Child Wise facts sheets <https://www.childwise.org.au/page/39/fact-sheets>

CONTACT NUMBERS

Director of Professional Standards	3336 9474
Archdiocesan Safeguarding Children Officer	3324 3752 or safeguarding@bne.catholic.net.au
Police-	use your local area police station. Where immediate harm to the child is probable phone 000.
Director Centacare Child Care Services (CCCS)	3367 6318 or 0400 342 130
CCCS Operations Manager	3367 6925 or 0458 559 622
Office of Early Childhood Education and Care	1800 637 711

Child Safety Services Contact Information

If you suspect a child is experiencing harm, contact Child Safety Services to report suspected child abuse. You can contact Child Safety Services through the:

- Regional Intake Service;
- Child Safety Service Centre; or
- Child Safety After Hours Service Centre.

The contact point that you choose will depend upon the service you need, and the time you make contact with Child Safety Services.

Regional Intake Services

A Regional Intake Service is the contact point when you have concerns for a child and suspect that a child is being harmed or may be at risk of experiencing harm in the near future.

Trained child protection workers talk to you about your concerns for the child. They will record information you provide and gather other information that may be helpful to assess the situation. The worker will then decide the best way of responding to the information you have provided.

When you contact a Regional Intake Service to report your concerns, your details will be confidential and your identity, if provided, will be protected by law.

The Regional Intake Service receives information from community members, government and non-government agencies during business hours from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Regional Intake Services	Phone number	Fax number
South East	1300 679 849	3884 8801
South West	1300 683 390	4616 1796
Far North Queensland	1300 684 062	4039 8320
North Queensland	1300 706 147	4799 7273
North Coast	1300 703 921	5420 9049
Brisbane	1300 682 254	3259 8771
Central Queensland	1300 703 762	4938 4697

Child Safety After Hours Service Centre

Outside of usual business hours, the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre:

- Provides a range of services to current clients of Child Safety Services;
- Is the contact point when you are concerned that a child has been harmed or may be at risk of harm; and
- Provides support for foster and kinship carers.

Telephone: 07 3235 9999

Freecall: 1800 177 135 (Queensland only)

<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/contact-us>

Office of the Public Guardian www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au Freecall: 1800 661 533

This document is subject to amendment at certain times.

The current version can be found at: <http://brisbanecatholic.org.au/support/safeguard/> and the Archdiocesan Intranet.

Name: **AD16_P01_Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Prevention and Protection Policy**

Policy Owner: *Safeguarding Officer*

Version: *19 April 2017*

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