

Child & Youth Risk Management Strategy

PURPOSE

Under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (the Act) organisations that work with children are to implement a Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy.

The purpose of this Strategy is to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who interact with the Archdiocese and to protect them from abuse and harm.

In this Strategy child and youth refer to any person under 18 years of age.

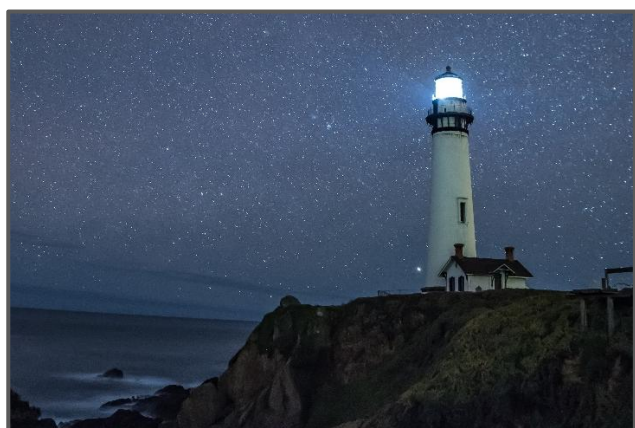


Statement of Commitment

The Archdiocese has zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and is committed to safeguarding children and young people involved in its activities, ministries and services. The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount.

The Archdiocese has also adopted and complies with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. The Standards are closely aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

The Archdiocese also complies with the Queensland Child Safe Standards (effective - October, 2025).



Code of Conduct

The Archdiocese has implemented a 'Safe Behaviour Code' that explicitly addresses expected behaviour standards towards children and young people. The following documents also address behaviour standards towards children and young people:

- Code of Conduct for employees and volunteers
- 'Our Common Mission' Code of Conduct for people in pastoral ministry

Recruitment, Selection, Training & Management



The Archdiocese has implemented the following measures and practices for those roles deemed to be child-related work:

- Role descriptions are available for all roles. The descriptions detail the skills and experience to perform the role and contribute to the protection and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Selection criteria are used to assess the commitment, understandings, attributes, attitudes and values required to perform the role, particularly those activities involving children and young people.
- Recruitment advertisements set out the Archdiocese's Safeguarding Commitment and candidate screening processes such as Working with Children blue cards, criminal history checks, referee checks and prior conduct declaration.
- Recruitment and selection processes include child-safe pre-requisites which explore the candidate's prior conduct and capacity to safeguard children and young people.
- Referee checks are conducted, including with the candidate's recent employer where possible, to verify their identity and suitability to work with children and young people.

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- The Archdiocese has a probationary period of 6 months for all roles. The probationary period provides the opportunity to assess the performance of new workers and their suitability to work with children and young people before confirming their employment.
- The Archdiocese requires all workers to undertake an organisational induction as part of the onboarding process. The induction includes key safeguarding information such as the Safeguarding Commitment Statement, process for managing abuse concerns and incidents, reporting obligations and the 'STOPline' service. Workers are also required to complete safeguarding training upon commencing work with children and young people, and every 2 years thereafter (at a minimum).

Management Practices

The Archdiocese has established a Safeguarding Committee at the senior leadership level to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding policies, procedures and practices.

The Archdiocese has also established an Office for Safeguarding Services. The functions of the Office are:

- to develop and implement safeguarding standards, policies and procedures;
- to enhance capacity to achieve compliance with safeguarding standards, policies and procedures; and
- to support workers in managing safeguarding concerns and abuse incidents.

The Archdiocese also has a network of Local Safeguarding Representatives who assist in implementing and monitoring safeguarding practices.

Other management practices that enhance the protection and wellbeing of children and young people include:

- A Safeguarding Framework and associated policy, procedures, implementation guides and support resources.
- A Risk Management Framework and associated policy and procedure which address safeguarding hazards and risks.
- A 'Safe Behaviour Code' that explicitly addresses expected behaviour standards towards children and young people.
- A Code of Conduct for employees and volunteers which includes disciplinary procedures.

- 'Our Common Mission' Code of Conduct for people in pastoral ministry.
- A National Response Protocol for managing child abuse complaints and incidents.
- Contractor screening checks and induction processes, including behaviour standards towards children and young people, and suspected abuse reporting obligations.
- A Whistleblower policy and procedures.
- An independent 'STOPline' service for receiving information and reports about serious misconduct by workers, including abuse and harm.
- Procedures for reporting child abuse and harm to authorities.

Handling Suspicions & Disclosures of Harm



Archdiocesan workers have a duty of care to act upon suspicions of abuse or harm or potential risk of abuse or harm to children and young people. A procedure is in place to ensure that if a disclosure or suspicion of abuse or harm arises, it is managed appropriately and in a manner that supports the best interests, wellbeing and protection of the children and young people. The procedure includes:

- A definition of 'abuse'.
- The types and indicators of abuse.
- Guidance on identifying grooming behaviour.
- Guidance on steps for receiving disclosures of abuse or harm from a child or young person.
- Protocols for responding to abuse or harm suspicions, disclosures, complaints and incidents.
- Protocols for managing cross-agency disclosures or suspicions of abuse or harm.
- Providing pastoral support and referral to recognised support services.
- Protocols for reporting suspected child abuse to authorities.

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The Archdiocese has also adopted the Catholic Church's National Response Protocol for responding to concerns and allegations of abuse against children. The Protocol provides principles and procedures for responding to alleged or reported abuse and a consistent response to children who have been subjected to abuse by Church personnel.

Reporting Obligations



Archdiocesan workers who suspect that a child or young person is being, or has been abused or harmed (including historically) are required by the Archdiocese to report the matter as soon as possible.

If a child or young person is at risk of serious and imminent harm workers are encouraged to contact the police directly or call triple zero (000) if the situation is an emergency.

Workers must comply with all statutory reporting requirements which may involve making a report to the Department of Child Safety, the Queensland Police Service or the Queensland Family and Child Commission (Reportable Conduct Scheme). The relevant authority will decide the appropriate course of action. Reports must be accurate and as comprehensive as possible.

Mandatory Reporting

The *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)* requires certain professionals, referred to as 'mandatory reporters', to make a report to the Department of Child Safety, if they form a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse, and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them.

The mandatory reporters are:

- Teachers;
- Doctors;
- Registered Nurses;

- Police Officers with child protection responsibilities;
- a person performing a child advocate function under the *Public Guardian Act 2014*; and
- early childhood education and care professionals.

Section 13E, Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)

Criminal Code Reporting Obligation

Under the Queensland *Criminal Code Act 1899*, it is an offence to fail to report a suspected child sexual offence to the police. If an adult reasonably believes that a child is being, or has been sexually abused by another adult, they must report it to the police, unless they have a reasonable excuse not to do so.

Reportable Conduct Allegations

Under the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*, organisations that work with children are required to report concerns about misconduct of workers towards children (reportable conduct allegations) to the Reportable Conduct Scheme. 'Reportable conduct' includes:

- a child sexual offence
- sexual misconduct committed in relation to, or in the presence of a child
- ill-treatment of a child
- significant neglect of a child
- physical violence in relation to or in the presence of a child
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child

Managing Breaches of this Strategy

The Archdiocese expects that all workers abide by this Strategy. Breaches are dealt with as a disciplinary matter under the Archdiocesan Code of Conduct or the Code of Conduct for people in pastoral ministry. These Codes provide a process for addressing breaches of behaviour standards, including serious non-compliance with policies and procedures.

A breach may be grounds for disciplinary action including possible dismissal or termination, reporting to church and/or statutory authorities, and criminal or other legal proceedings.

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Risk Management High-Risk Activities & Special Events



The Archdiocese is committed to the effective management of risk across all activities, ministries and services. The Archdiocese has a comprehensive Risk Management Framework and associated policy and procedures which must be applied to all activities and events undertaken, regardless of the risk level. The Framework has been developed in accordance with AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management – Guidelines and reinforces a positive risk culture where all workers play a role in managing risk. All workers are responsible and accountable for managing risk, in so far as is reasonably practicable, within their area of responsibility.

All activities involving children and young people are to be assessed for risks. High-risk or special events, due to their nature, require special planning to ensure that appropriate risk control measures are implemented to protect children and young people. The following factors (individually or in combination) are likely to elevate and event to high-risk:

- The involvement of external people.
- The involvement of external organisations/entities (including religious entities).
- The involvement of a large number of people.
- The involvement of children with diminished capacity or a disability.
- Accommodating children and young people overnight or for longer periods of time.
- Using an external venue or location.
- Transporting children or young people.
- One-to-one interactions between adults and children or young people.
- Physical contact activities/interactions.
- Online activities/interactions.

- Hazards presented by the physical environment.
- Physically hazardous activities.
- Emotionally/psychologically hazardous activities.

** Not an exhaustive list of factors.*

Examples of high-risk or special events involving children or young people include (but are not limited to):

- Excursions and/or overnight camps/retreats
- billeting
- personal/private one-to-one counselling
- parish fetes
- pilgrimages
- jumping castles
- rock climbing
- ropes courses
- water-based activities
- horse riding

Managing Blue Card Compliance



The Archdiocese is committed to ensuring all workers engaged in child-related regulated employment, hold a positive notice blue card, or an exemption card.

The Archdiocesan Criminal History Screening policy establishes a requirement for workers (including volunteers) involved in child-related work to obtain a positive notice blue card, or an exemption card and the associated procedures set out how blue cards are to be managed, including negative notices, changes in police information/criminal history, and notifications about high-risk individuals.

All religious representatives (priests, chaplains, members of religious orders, seminarians) ministering on behalf of the Archdiocese are required to hold a positive notice blue card. Visiting or relief religious representatives are also required to hold a positive

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notice blue card, unless they are not working more than 7 days in a calendar year as per the Act.

Workers and religious representatives involved in child-related work who rely upon an exception under the Act (e.g. 7 day threshold) are required to sign a Prior Conduct Declaration and Restricted Person Declaration before commencing that work.

All worker blue cards are linked to the Archdiocese and the People & Culture (HR) Office administers and records blue card details centrally via an account in the Blue Card Services Organisation Portal.

Compliance with blue card requirements is monitored by the People & Culture (HR) Office and managed with parishes, ministries, services and agencies. Blue card compliance is also monitored during internal and external safeguarding audits.

Communication & Support

This Strategy and associated Safeguarding Framework, policy and procedures, implementation guides and resources are located and accessible on the Archdiocesan public website and intranet. This includes:

- Information on the types and indicators of abuse.
- Guidance on how to respond to abuse concerns, suspicions, complaints and incidents.
- The 'STOPline' reporting service.
- The 'Safe Behaviour Code'.
- The 'Our Common Mission' Code of Conduct.
- Key contacts such as the police and Department of Child Safety.
- The Office for Safeguarding Services contact details.
- Dedicated information resources for children and young people in formats that are developmentally appropriate.
- Information on recognised support or counselling services for children, young people and others affected by abuse.
- Safeguarding training module.

All related policies and procedures such as the Whistleblower Policy, Complaint Management Policy, Criminal History Screening Policy and procedures, and Risk Management Policy and procedures are available to all workers on the intranet.

The Office for Safeguarding Services regularly attends parishes, ministries, services and agencies to deliver

information sessions and training, and distributes written communications via various channels including direct email, bulletins and social media. Local Safeguarding Representatives are also responsible for promoting safeguarding practices at the local level guided with the assistance of a Local Safeguarding Representatives' Reference Group.

Parishes, ministries, services and agencies are required to regularly provide safeguarding information to community stakeholders for example via their public websites and in parish bulletins.



Office for Safeguarding Services

Ph: (07) 33243752

Em: safeguarding@bne.catholic.net.au

Online report:

<https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/safeguarding/stoplevel-whistleblower-service/>

STOPline Service

Ph: 1300 304 550

Em: AOB@stopline.com.au

Online report: <https://bnecatholic.stoplinereport.com/>

