



## ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS PREVENTION AND PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Version 2.2 Effective July 2016

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.

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## FOREWORD

As Archbishop I am committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults from preventable harm and I wholeheartedly support the many clergy, religious, employees and volunteers of the Archdiocese of Brisbane who daily demonstrate this same commitment.

I am delighted to approve this Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy. Superseding our previous child safety policy, it prescribes best practice in prevention of harm to, and protection of children and vulnerable adults. I commend it to you as a valuable tool for your work.

The *Code of Ethical Behaviour for employees and volunteers who work in service of the Church* within this policy underlines your responsibility to report incidents should you receive a disclosure of abuse. Training for the implementation of the policy, monitoring and regular auditing for compliance are important practices. You are required to do everything possible to ensure our success in these aspects of the Church's work.

I am grateful for the ways in which you dedicate yourself to the service of the church in Brisbane and assure you of my continued prayers for your work.

May the God of peace bless you and those entrusted to your care.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Coleridge', written in a cursive style.

**Most Rev Mark Coleridge**  
**Archbishop of Brisbane**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Materials developed by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, Ireland: *Safeguarding Children* and the Diocese of Austin: *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* have been used with permission in this document. The Archdiocese of Brisbane is deeply grateful for the generosity of these colleagues.

We are very grateful for the consultation, support and guidance of the following people during the development phase of this document January to April of 2014:

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## INTRODUCTION

The Archdiocese of Brisbane is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. This policy, procedures and tools document is the next step in refining our long held practices of providing a safe environment and activities which respect and acknowledge the inherent dignity of each human being.

The policy applies to everyone who works in the pastoral structure of the Archdiocese. Nothing in the policy affects the expectations of *Integrity in Ministry – a document of principles and standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia. (June 2004).*

This document applies to clergy, religious, employees, students on placement and volunteers in parishes and agencies of the Archdiocese.

It is intended to provide a uniform standard of best practice in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. It contains our policy statement which articulates the core principles, church documents and legislation upon which it is based. The safeguarding procedures are built around three key standards – safe recruiting and selection practices; code of ethical behaviour; and safe activities and environments. The suite of tools which follows offers practical examples of administrative materials which will assist parishes and agencies in adhering to this policy and meeting their obligations for best practice and compliance.

## POLICY STATEMENT

*...for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.*

Mark 10:14

***Children, young people and vulnerable adults 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.***

This means that everyone in the church must ensure that the fundamental rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults are respected. This will be achieved through the development of respectful relationships and a commitment to safety embracing appropriate boundaries, behaviours and practices, in accordance with the Archdiocese of Brisbane *Code of Ethical Behaviour for employees and volunteers who work in service of the Church* as well as adherence to the legislative imperatives of the State.

This policy statement is approved by Archbishop Mark Coleridge for mandatory implementation by the Church and its agencies throughout the Archdiocese of Brisbane. It covers the measures needed to safeguard against abuse. The Archdiocese aims to ensure that none of its personnel or volunteers engages in behaviour that could allow abuse to occur or actions that could be misinterpreted by children, their families or other adults as constituting, or leading to abuse. We take every possible effort to safeguard against abuse and harm.

## CORE PRINCIPLES

Children, young people and vulnerable adults have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured and safeguarded by all.

The Archdiocese of Brisbane is committed to taking the necessary steps to:

- ⇒ demonstrate that the right to protection from harm for all people is paramount;
- ⇒ safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- ⇒ foster best practice;
- ⇒ demonstrate accountability through establishing effective structures and practices;
- ⇒ support Archdiocesan organisations and personnel in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults;
- ⇒ uphold safe recruitment and selection practices for all Church personnel including volunteers because the Archdiocese is committed to employing people who will keep children and vulnerable adults safe from harm;
- ⇒ uphold and maintain standards of conduct which set out clear guidelines regarding ethical behaviour as an essential part of reducing the risk of harm for all people;
- ⇒ operate a safe play, learning and pastoral environments that ensure safety.

## DEFINITIONS

### Agencies

- ⇒ Archdiocesan Committees
- ⇒ Archdiocesan Development Fund
- ⇒ Archdiocesan Services – Resource Development, Finance and Accounting, Human Resources, ICT, Property and Building;
- ⇒ Brisbane Catholic Education
- ⇒ Centacare – Child Care Services, Community Services, Family Relationships, Pastoral Ministries and Centacare corporate services;
- ⇒ Episcopal Office – Archbishop, Auxiliary Bishops, Vicar General, Vicar for Clergy, Clergy Life and Ministry;
- ⇒ Evangelisation Brisbane – ministry support services to parishes and deaneries; and
- ⇒ Financial Administrator’s Office.

### Abuse

**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 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.

**Child in need of protection** a child, who has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm. This may include detrimental effects on the child's body or the psychological or emotional state that are evident or are considered to be likely to become evident in the future.

**Harm** 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** 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.

**Standards** Those expectations and behaviours of clergy/religious and lay church workers/volunteers as articulated in the National Committee for Professional Standards publications: [Integrity in Ministry](#), [Integrity in the Service of the Church](#) and the Archdiocese of Brisbane Code of Ethical Behaviour.

**Vulnerable Adults** Those 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.

## **GOSPEL VALUES**

The values of love, dignity and justice as demonstrated by Jesus underpin this policy. Jesus especially showed care for the poor, powerless and vulnerable. He particularly loved children in their purity and innocence - ...for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. (Mark 10:14). All people are called to cherish and safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults from anyone who would harm them.

## **ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

National Committee for Professional Standards, [Towards Healing](#). Principles and procedures in responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia. January 2010.

National Committee for Professional Standards, [Integrity in Ministry](#). A document of principles and standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia. June 2004.

National Committee for Professional Standards, [Integrity in the Service of the Church](#). A resource document of principles and standards for lay workers in the Catholic Church in Australia. September 2011.



## LEGISLATION

[Child Protection Act \(QLD\) 1999](#)

[Child Protection Reform Amendment Bill 2014](#)

[Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Regulation 2011](#)

[Privacy Law](#)

[Public Health Act \(Qld\) 2005](#)

[Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#)

## REFERENCES

Truth Justice and Healing Council. Child Safe Institutions. [Issues Paper 3](#)

[Safeguarding Children](#). Standards and guidance document for the Catholic Church in Ireland. September 2008

South Australian Catholic Church [Child Protection Council Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People](#).

Archdiocese of Brisbane [Privacy Policy](#)

Archdiocese of Brisbane Catholic Education Council. [Student Protection Policy September 2011](#)

Carmody Report [www.justice.qld.gov.au](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au)

Child Wise <https://www.childwise.net>

**REVIEW**      **To be reviewed annually.**  
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This first section of this document is structured to present the standards and procedures for implementation of the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy.

The Resource Documents section follows and presents various tools and forms to assist you with compliance with the policy standards, record keeping and monitoring for audit purposes.

## 1.0 SCOPE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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*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 Guardium](#) (9) 2013

The Archdiocese of Brisbane's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults [Safeguarding] Policy applies to clergy, religious, employees, students on placement and volunteers 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/SUPERVISOR/BOARD MEMBER**

People in supervisory and management roles play a key function in modeling expected behaviour and the training of employees and volunteers. 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**

Each parish/agency is to have a local safeguarding representative.

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 Policy as appropriate to parish needs. See full Local Safeguarding Representative volunteer task description in the Resource Documents section. **Appendix 2.01**

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 new *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.
3. 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.
4. 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.***
5. 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 AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Children and young people themselves contribute to their environment by:

- ⇒ showing respect towards other children, young people 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 EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Employees, volunteers and students need to be screened, prepared, nurtured and supported to undertake their ministry and/or agency activities.

There is an expectation that employees, volunteers and students on placement who work with children, young people 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, young people and vulnerable adults.

To achieve the above outcomes volunteers and employees 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 appendices to this document.

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.

**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 any non-accidental physical injury or injuries to a child or adult, such as inflicting pain of any sort, or causing bruises, fractures, burns, electric shock, or unpleasant sensation (e.g. taste, heat or cold) as well as restrictive practices which are not contained in the client's positive behaviour support plan.

**Emotional/Psychological Abuse** is verbal communication that is threatening or demeaning, threats of maltreatment, harassment, humiliation, intimidation, failure to interact with a person or to acknowledge the person's presence, or denial of cultural or religious needs and preferences.

**Family (or Domestic) Violence** behaviour by a person towards another person in a relevant relationship that is physically or sexually abusive, emotionally or psychologically abusive, economically abusive, threatening, coercive or in any way controls or dominates the second person and causes that person to fear for their safety or wellbeing or that of someone else

**Neglect** is the failure to provide the necessary care, aid or guidance to dependent children or adults by those responsible for their care. Neglect may be physical, emotional, educational, environmental, medical or systemic.

**Exploitation** is taking advantage of the vulnerability of a person with disability in order to use them or their resources for another's profit or advantage (e.g. financial abuse)



**Cultural Abuse** can be an outcome of discrimination and harassment, and it can take different forms including emotional, psychological or social abuse. It may be evident through prejudice in what is said, dislike of a person based on their culture or background, discrimination in activities and not having the opportunity to contribute equally, bullying of a person based on culture, beliefs or values or unreasonable verbal abuse using offensive cultural language.

**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.

## 2.0 PREVENTION AND PROTECTION PRACTICES

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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:

- ⇒ safe recruitment and selection practices – helping prevent those who pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults from holding positions of trust
- ⇒ 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;
- ⇒ safe activities – ensuring a safe environments for parish activities.

### 2.1 SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES

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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 Safeguarding Officer via the annual Protection and Prevention Compliance Checklist: see Resource Documents Section. **Appendix 1.00**

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, young people 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 employees or volunteers 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 Document** contains sample volunteer task descriptions and other volunteer recruitment forms to assist you.

Sample Task Descriptions:

- ⇒ Local Safeguarding Children Representative **Appendix 2.01**
- ⇒ Children’s Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) Leaders **Appendix 2.02**
- ⇒ Sacramental Team Coordinator **Appendix 2.03**
- ⇒ Sacramental Team members **Appendix 2.04**
- ⇒ Altar Servers Trainer **Appendix 2.05**
- ⇒ Sacristan **Appendix 2.06**
- ⇒ State School Religious Instruction Catechist **Appendix 2.07**
- ⇒ Youth Worker **Appendix 2.08**
- ⇒ Care and Concern Team Member **Appendix 2.09**
- ⇒ Extraordinary Minister of Communion of the sick to homes/institutions **Appendix 2.10**
- ⇒ Voluntary Driver Transport Ministry **Appendix 2.11**

Other Volunteer recruitment forms:

- ⇒ Volunteer Form **Appendix 2.12**
- ⇒ Declaration form for all persons working as employees or volunteers with children, young people and vulnerable adults **Appendix 2.13**
- ⇒ Suggested Volunteer Interview Questions **Appendix 2.14**
- ⇒ High Risk Indicators for Applications Checklist **Appendix 2.14**
- ⇒ Volunteer Engagement letter **Appendix 2.14**
- ⇒ New Volunteer Engagement Form **Appendix 2.15**
- ⇒ Volunteer Induction Checklist **Appendix 2.17**
- ⇒ Who is a disqualified person? **Appendix 2.18**
- ⇒ Volunteer Register **Appendix 2.19**

**2.2 POSITIVE NOTICE TO WORK WITH CHILDREN CHECK (BLUE CARD)**

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Be aware that having this card is not a standalone strategy for safeguarding children and young people. Protection of children, young people 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
- ⇒ 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 employees (paid employees, volunteers and students on placement) 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 employee 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. **Appendix 2.18** lists who is a disqualified person. It is an offence for an employer not to provide the warning.

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 and young people 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 and young people must apply for and obtain a Positive Notice to Work with Children blue card. It is the responsibility of the employee and/or volunteer 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 and Services and reviewed annually. The 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. An *Authorisation to confirm a valid card 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 to provide services to children and young people 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 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.

**Until an employee (unless exempt) or volunteer ( who will be working with children or vulnerable adults) holds a Positive Notice blue card they are unable to work with children or young people.**

Parishes/agencies must submit an authorisation form to confirm a valid blue card application: (<http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/applications/have-a-card-already.html> ), 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.

## 2.3 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.

## 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 blue card **before** they can begin working with children and young people, regardless of how often they come into contact with them.

### 2.3.1 PARISH ROLES WHICH REQUIRE POSITIVE NOTICE BLUE CARD:

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

Safeguarding all adults serving, as well as the children, young people and vulnerable adults 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/young people
- Choir Leader – where children are included in the general choir and for children's choir
- Nativity Play Director
- Holiday Activities Leader
- Parish Pastoral Council members where there is a youth member (under the age of 18 years)
- 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, young people and vulnerable adults*

### 2.4 CODE OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

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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 lay employees, students on placement and volunteers within the Archdiocese of Brisbane. Breach 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](#).

**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 [Archbishop Mark Coleridge] 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, young people 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, young people 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 any form of criminal conduct including stealing or any other form of theft or any form of assault.

## 2.5 SAFE ACTIVITIES - PLANNING ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

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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.

Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane 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, young person or 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. Resource Documents section: **Appendix 4** contains 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. There is a sample Risk Assessment Sheet in **Appendix 4.1**.

Risk assessments must be conducted on all activities and services that involve children, young people 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 and young people 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;
- ⇒ 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. Microsoft Word versions are available on the Archdiocesan Intranet:

- ⇒ Altar Server training **Appendix 4.2**
- ⇒ Care and Concern visits to private homes **Appendix 4.3**
- ⇒ Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) **Appendix 4.4**
- ⇒ Sacramental preparation sessions **Appendix 4.5**
- ⇒ Sacristans opening and closing the church **Appendix 4.6**
- ⇒ Special Ministers of Communion to the sick in hospitals or accredited nursing homes **Appendix 4.7**
- ⇒ Special Ministers of Communion to the sick in private homes **Appendix 4.8**
- ⇒ Volunteer Driver Transport Ministry **Appendix 4.9**
- ⇒ Debutant Ball preparation training **Appendix 4.10**

- ⇒ Ministry of Consolation
- ⇒ Youth group regular activity
- ⇒ Easter Vigil Ceremony of Light

**Appendix 4.11**

**Appendix 4.12**

**Appendix 4.13**

A checklist to assist with Identification of training needs for employees and volunteers can be found in the Resource Documents section: Appendix 5. There are a number of Archdiocesan employees within Archdiocesan Services, Centacare and Evangelisation Brisbane who will be able to assist you with this training.

**Appendix 6** is a checklist to assist with planning for general/regular activities with children.

There may be times when other organisations conduct activities for children and young people, 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 in **Appendix 7**. It is also important to know who is in attendance at activities along with who has delivered and who has collected the child. A sign in/sign out register may be found in **Appendix 8**.

### 2.5.1 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, young people and vulnerable adults. Points to consider:

- ⇒ It is best that these two adults not be related.
- ⇒ 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;
  - ~ sends a clear statement that children/youth 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;
  - ~ 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.



## 2.5.2 OTHER SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES

### BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Managing behaviour of children, young people 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 and young people.

### PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact with children and young people may be required in some circumstances. These may include: management of an injury, to assist with toileting. Where practical an adult should provide an explanation to the child/young person 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 and always with safeguarding from harm all those involved.

### TRANSPORT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

As a general rule ministry leaders should not transport children/young people in their vehicles without specific permission from their 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/young people 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. The Two Adult Rule applies.

### 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.

### 2.5.3 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, 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 & Media Consent Form in the Resource Documents section: **Appendix 9**.
- ⇒ 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**
- ⇒ 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.
- ⇒ Vulnerable children or those whose identity may require protection should not be photographed.

Refusal of consent should not in any way limit children's or young people'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 children, to locate them and then to groom them.

#### 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 or young person 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 or young person in any way?
- ⇒ Will you put the child or young person 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?

#### 2.5.4 USING SOCIAL MEDIA WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

'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;
- ⇒ 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](#)

### **3.0 WHAT TO DO IN THE CASE OF INCIDENTS/CONCERNS OF ABUSE OR HARM, DISCLOSURE AND MANAGEMENT OF HARM AND ABUSE**

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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 a Church employee/volunteer (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;
- ⇒ 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 procedure applies to: all clergy, religious, Church employees, volunteers and students on placement.

Staff of Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane 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 Policy and procedures are to be followed with attention to legislative requirements that govern particular service delivery for example: Child Care Act, Disability Services Act.

The Safeguarding Reporting Procedure summarises the reporting process – (See Resource Documents section: Appendix 10).

**If you become aware of harm or suspected harm to a child, you must immediately:**

Sexual Abuse	Other forms of abuse/harm
<i>As a citizen you are able to report directly to the police yourself.</i>	<i>As a citizen you are able to report directly to the police/Department of Communities and Child Safety yourself.</i>
Inform the next senior person and ensure that the Safeguarding Recording form (Appendix 10) is completed.	Inform the next senior person and ensure that the Safeguarding Recording form (Appendix 10) is completed.
Supervisor informs Director of Professional Standards - <b>3336 9474</b>	Supervisor informs the Safeguarding Officer – 3324 3752 or 0417272063
Director of Professional Standards informs the police	Safeguarding Children Officer informs the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Child Safety informs police.
<b>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 Safeguarding Children Officer, Director of Professional Standards, the person reporting and CFRS.</b>	

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.

### 3.1 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.

One of the functions of a 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).

### 3.2 IN THE EVENT OF SUSPICION OF HARM

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Where there is a suspicion that a child or young person is being harmed physically, sexually or emotionally, the following checklist guides your behaviour in responding to the disclosure:

- listen;
- affirm;
- don't blame – 'This is not your fault.';
- support – 'Thank you for telling me, you are very brave.';
- safety – 'I'm sorry this happened to you. I'll do everything I can to keep you safe. I will have to speak to other people in order to help';
- document – after speaking with the person make your own notes of the conversation. Ensure that the disclosure is recorded as fully as possible on the Safeguarding Recording Form (Appendix 10);
- act - report according to the Safeguarding Reporting Procedure below.

Record all details that support the suspicion (**Appendix 10** 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;
- ⇒ 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 Safeguarding Officer (as appropriate) and 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.)

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

### 3.3 MANAGING DISCLOSURE

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In addition to the brief checklist guide 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.
- ⇒ Reassure the child or vulnerable adult it is right to tell someone about this.
- ⇒ Don't be afraid of saying the 'wrong' thing.
- ⇒ Give the person your full attention.
- ⇒ Let them take his/her own time.
- ⇒ Let the person use their own words.
- ⇒ Accept that the person will disclose only what is comfortable and recognise their bravery/strength for talking about something that is difficult.
- ⇒ Tell the person what you intend to do next.
- ⇒ 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.
- ⇒ Record all details that support your concerns.
- ⇒ Inform your Local Safeguarding Representative, Service Manager, Director or Parish Priest and decide what action is to be taken. (In the event that the accused is one of these role holders, contact the Office of Professional Standards phone (07)3336 9474).
- ⇒ Report as appropriate to the police, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services - <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/protecting-children/reporting-child-abuse>.
- ⇒ 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 an employee, volunteer or parishioner 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 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.

When it is alleged that an employee or volunteer is the perpetrator of harm against the child or young person, the employee or volunteer 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 employee's or volunteer'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*'.

### 3.4 DOCUMENTING THE DISCLOSURE

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Notes about a disclosure must be recorded. Immediately after the disclosure discussion, make your own notes and as far as is possible record the actual words spoken. The person reporting must use the **Safeguarding Recording Form** Appendix 10 and guidelines as outlined in this section. It is important to ensure that the child or vulnerable adult is informed that the documentation is occurring and its importance. The explanation should be appropriate to the age and level of understanding of the person.

- ⇒ Do not be selective. Include detail which to you may seem irrelevant. It may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation. All records, including rough notes must be passed to the police or Department of Communities and Child Safety, as appropriate.
- ⇒ Any copies of records retained must be kept secure and confidential.
- ⇒ Notification to Police.

The allegation must be reported to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services when:

- ⇒ The alleged case of harm may be caused by a family member.
- ⇒ The family is not acting to protect their child from harm.
- ⇒ Disclosure of harm is related to shared family care.
- ⇒ Disclosure of harm is related to residential services for a child or young person.

Disclosure of harm that indicates a criminal offence has taken place (for example, sexual or physical assault) must be reported to the police.



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.

The allegation must be reported to the Office of the Public Guardian – Phone 1800 661 533 when:

- ⇒ a vulnerable person is the victim of harm from any person with whom they are in contact.

Employees and/or volunteers 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](http://www.accesseap.com.au)

### 3.5 CONFIDENTIALITY

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Any issues relating to suspected or alleged harm and/or abuse to children, young people 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.

## 4.0 CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITIONS

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### **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 four main forms of abuse:

- ⇒ physical abuse;
- ⇒ emotional/psychological abuse
- ⇒ neglect;
- ⇒ domestic or family violence;
- ⇒ sexual abuse.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is any non-accidental physical injury or injuries to a child or adult such as inflicting pain of any sort. It may involve beating, shaking, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, biting, grabbing hard enough to leave a mark, throwing a person, strangulation, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

### **Emotional/psychological abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a person causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the person's emotional development. It may involve constant criticism, belittling, teasing, constant yelling, withholding praise and affection, exposure of a person to domestic and family violence, conveying that the person is worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as s/he meets the needs of another person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed. These may include interactions that are beyond the person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of reasonable exploration and learning, or preventing the child or vulnerable adult from participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve causing a person to feel frightened, in danger or exploitation or corruption of the person.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult, though it may occur alone.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is failure to provide the necessary care, aid or guidance to dependent children or adults by those responsible for their care. It becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. It is the persistent failure to provide a person's basic necessities of life such that his/her health and development are affected. Basic needs include: food, housing, health care, adequate clothing, personal hygiene, hygienic living conditions, timely provision of medical treatment, adequate supervision. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

### **Domestic or family violence**

Domestic or family violence is behaviour by a person towards another person in a relevant relationship that is physically or sexually abusive, emotionally or psychologically abusive, economically abusive, threatening, and coercive or in any way controls or dominates the second person and causes that person to fear for their safety or well being or that of someone else. Exposure of a child or vulnerable adult to domestic and family violence can impact on the person's physical, development, psychological and emotional well-being and in this way cause harm.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities including prostitution, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including penetrative (for example, rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (oral sex). It may include non-contact activities such as involving the person in looking at or in the production of pornographic material, watching sexual activities or encouraging the child or vulnerable adult to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Children and vulnerable adults can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

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.

### **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.

## **4.1 OTHER DEFINITIONS**

### **Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW)**

CLOW is ritual centered on the proclamation and breaking open of the scriptures in a manner that is accessible to children. The children do what the rest of the community is doing at this point of the Mass, usually in a location adjacent to the gathered assembly.

### **Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)**

A group of parishioners gathered by means of discernment from the community, to ensure that the local church community has every possible opportunity to carry forward the mission of Jesus.

### **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](#)

Australian Federal Police Fact Sheet [Protect your kids online](#). August 2009

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](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

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

## CONTACT NUMBERS

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**Director of Professional Standards** 3336 9474

**Safeguarding Children Officer** 3324 3752 or 0417 272 063

**Police** use your local area police station. Where immediate harm to the child is probable phone 000.

**Director Centacare Child Care Services (CCCS)** Phone 3367 6318 or 0400 342 130

**CCCS Operations Manager** Phone 3367 6925 or 0458 559 622

**Office of Early Childhood Education and Care** Phone 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:

- a Regional Intake Service
- a Child Safety Service Centre
- the 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

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

<b>Regional Intake Services</b>	<b>Phone number</b>	<b>Fax number</b>
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;
- ⇒ 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](http://www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au)

Freecall: 1800 661 533