



DIOCESE of  
PARRAMATTA

Office for Safeguarding

# Safeguarding Policy

# 1. FORWARD



The Catholic Diocese of Parramatta recognises and acknowledges that the Church has failed to protect and care for persons who were harmed by the Church in the past and understands that it needs to do better to ensure that all children and adults within the Diocese are safe and protected.

The development of this Safeguarding Policy is to highlight the way forward and outline the Diocese of Parramatta and its ministries' commitment in making sure Parramatta champions a safe and supportive environment for all.

Safeguarding is about ensuring that there are measures to protect the safety, human rights and well-being of individuals, which allows people – in this context children and adults who may be at risk – to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

We do this by using a trauma informed approach that has six principles at the forefront:

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and transparency
3. Collaboration and mutuality
4. Empowerment, voice and choice
5. Peer support
6. Cultural, historical and gender issues

[https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/802/Engaging\\_sensitively\\_with\\_survivors.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y](https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/802/Engaging_sensitively_with_survivors.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y)

## A statement from Bishop Long (October 2020)

The Diocese of Parramatta continues to learn from the Royal Commission and from listening to survivors and victims. Over 17,000 of them came forward and nearly 8,000 addressed the Royal Commission about the abuse that was done to them. We recognise the courage this must have taken after so many were not listened to for so many years. For many, it was the first time they had ever spoken about the horrific crimes they endured. We continue to offer our unreserved and deepest apologies to those who were abused when in the care of the Diocese of Parramatta. We recognise many of them may still be traumatised by these experiences.

The Diocese is committed to being a community of safeguarding. This means we have zero tolerance of abuse in any form. We promise to do everything we can so no child or other person in our care is harmed again. As part of this, our job is to make sure everyone who works or acts for the Church understands and recognises the Standards as an integral part of their understanding of what it means to be engaged in the life of the Church.

We acknowledge the scars of the trauma of sexual abuse and power imbalance and the impact that has had on survivors and the Church. We remember to look back in reflection while looking forward and taking concrete action to create a safe place for children and all people.



# The Parramatta Way of Safeguarding is to...



Act with Justice, and state that we have a zero tolerance for any form of abuse or harm to children or any person

Act with justice and ensure that laws and obligations are upheld, and safety is paramount

## And it is to

Love tenderly, as we accept all who come to the Diocese of Parramatta from all walks of life, cultures, and abilities

Love tenderly, as we accept any person for who they are and where they are at in their lives

Love tenderly, as we look after and priorities children and care for those who may be in a difficult situation or at risk of harm for whatever reason

Love tenderly, as we are servants of the Church, and our role is to walk beside you and support you

## And acknowledge

The traditional custodians of the land in which the Diocese of Parramatta sits - the Darug and Gundungurra people

The lifelong trauma of abuse victims and those failures of the Church to protect children and all adults at risk

The diversity of many cultural groups that reside in Parramatta creating a kaleidoscope of diversity and beliefs that are valued and respected

And celebrate the talents and gifts of the community and families of all abilities

## And promote

The principles of Catholic social teaching of dignity, respect, association, participation, support for the vulnerable, solidarity, stewardship, subsidiarity, equality and the principle of the common good.

*"This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God."  
(Micah 6:8)*

# DOCUMENT CONTROL



<b>Document name:</b>	Safeguarding Policy
<b>Document owner:</b>	Head of Safeguarding
<b>Frequency of review:</b>	12 months, while remaining open and live subject to legislative changes
<b>Approved:</b>	25/11/2021
<b>Date approved:</b>	15/06/2021
<b>Date subsequently approved:</b>	20/10/2021
<b>Date for next review:</b>	20/10/2022
<b>Endorsed:</b>	Safeguarding Council
<b>Recommended:</b>	
<b>Status:</b>	Approved
<b>Point of contact:</b>	Head of Safeguarding

## Stakeholder distribution:

Distribution	Responsibility	Date
Safeguarding Council	Review and Recommend for Approval	22/03/2021
Curia	Review and Recommend for Approval	28/07/2021
College of Consultors	Review and Endorse for Approval	25/11/2021
Bishop	Approval	20/10/2021

## Document history:

(Document version numbering convention will follow the following format. Whole numbers for approved versions, e.g. 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 etc. With decimals being used to represent the current working draft version, e.g. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 etc. For example, when writing a policy document for the first time – the initial draft will be version 0.1).

Version	Date	Updated by	Description
1.0	06/10/20	Julianna Demetrius	Development of policy from previous Child Protection Policy
1.1	17/02/2021	Safeguarding Council	Finalising content and format
1.2	15/06/2021	Curia	Minor amendments and additions
1.3	26/08/2021	Safeguarding Council	Endorsement
1.4	13/10/2021	Safeguarding Council	Endorsement
1.5	20/10/2021	Curia	Approved



## 2. INTRODUCTION

### A. About this policy

The Safeguarding Policy applies to anyone employed or engaged by the Diocese of Parramatta in ministry. This includes clergy and religious, paid staff, as well as contractors and volunteers (including foster carers). It covers all aspects of service provided by the Diocese, whether on or off premises.

The policy complies with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (the Standards), and the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian Child Safe Standards which outline requirements for Catholic entities across Australia to promote the safety of children and adults at risk through implementing policies and activities to prevent, respond to and report concerns regarding abuse and harm.<sup>1</sup> The policy also reflects relevant safeguarding and child protection legislation in NSW.

This policy provides guidance in relation to expected professional standards, mandatory requirements, and best practice approaches for people working with children and adults at risk at risk in the Diocese.

Nothing in this policy affects the expectations outlined in the *Integrity in Ministry Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia*<sup>2</sup> or *Integrity in the Service of the Church Principles and Standards for Lay Workers in the Catholic Church in Australia, employees and volunteers*.<sup>3</sup>

### B. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance about how the Diocese will prevent, identify and respond to abuse and harm towards children and adults at risk. It is approved and endorsed by the Bishop, the Diocesan Safeguarding Council and Safeguarding Champion.

This policy covers all agencies, ministries and parishes of the Diocese. However, whilst there may be other specific policies within different organisations those policies must reflect this policy and in the event of any inconsistency, this Policy will prevail.

### C. In this document

The Safeguarding Policy is a holistic document that covers the many aspects of creating and maintaining a safeguarding culture. This includes:

**Safeguarding Commitment Statement**, setting out the intent of the Diocese of Parramatta with regard to keeping children and adults at risk, safe

**Identifying and managing safeguarding risks**, outlining the Diocese of Parramatta’s approach to risk management to support child safety

**Roles and responsibilities**, outlining who is responsible for implementing and overseeing this policy

**Recruiting safe and suitable people**, setting out the Diocese of Parramatta’s method for ensuring safe and suitable people are employed and engaged

**Providing safeguarding training and support**, outlining the induction and training framework for personnel

**Taking action and responding to complaints and concerns**, describing how the Diocese of Parramatta responds to concerns or complaints

Appended to the policy are further detailed procedures to guide implementation:

- Appendix A** Identifying and Managing Safeguarding Risks
- Appendix B** Roles and responsibilities
- Appendix C** Recruitment of Safe and Suitable people
- Appendix D** Safeguarding Training and Support
- Appendix E** Concerns about children and adults at risk
- Appendix F** Safeguarding Implementation Plan
- Appendix G** Requiring and upholding appropriate standards of behaviour
- Appendix H** Handling disclosures
- Appendix I** Reporting obligations
- Appendix J** Complaint Handling Procedures
- Appendix K** Modern Slavery
- Appendix L** What is Grooming?
- Appendix M** The Diocese Risk Management Framework

Definitions of key terms used in the policy are provided at the Glossary.

<sup>1</sup> The Standards are based on the child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse but include additional 'core components.

<sup>2</sup> <https://ncps.org.au/documents2/integrity-in-ministry>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ncps.org.au/documents2/integrity-in-the-service-of-the-church>

## D. Related policies and procedures

The Safeguarding Policy should be read together with the following related documents, which provide additional guidance, including procedural checklists and templates:

- Safeguarding Commitment Statement
- Responding to Survivors
- Code of Conduct
- Complaint Management Framework and Policy
- Reportable Conduct Procedure
- Diocesan Risk Management Policy
- Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy
- Recruitment and Selection procedure
- Whistle-blower policy
- Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination policy
- Privacy Policy
- Work Health and Safety policy
- Acceptable Use of Electronic Communication Systems and Devices Policy
- Parish Safeguarding Manuals
- Relevant safeguarding procedures of Diocesan agencies

In parallel to this policy, the Church also undertakes a Canonical investigative process when incidents are reported. Canonical investigations do not replace or override this policy.

### **Review of Safeguarding Policy and related documents**

The Safeguarding Policy and related documents will be updated as required and reviewed at least every five years (or as required due to relevant legislative changes).

## E. Relevant legislation

This policy has been developed following The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017).

The policy operates within a legal framework that includes:



*Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)*



*Children and Young People (Care and Protection) Act 1998*



*Children's Guardian Act 2019*



*Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*



*Ageing & Disability Commissioner Act 2019*



*National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 and related Rules*



*Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018 and the Aged Care Act 1997.*



*Privacy legislation (Commonwealth)*

## F. Further guidance

Further guidance may be found in the following resources:

- NSW Office of the Children's Guardian Child Safe Standards
- National Response Protocol: Church Authorities in Australia responding to concerns and allegations of child abuse (Implementation February 2021)
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Second Edition)
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Implementation Guide
- Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia
- Integrity in the Service of the Church: A Resource Document of Principles and Standards for Lay Workers in the Catholic Church in Australia
- Vicariate of Vatican City Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Persons.<sup>4</sup>
- The attached appendixes

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/resources/resources\\_protezioneminori-lineeguida\\_20190326\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/resources/resources_protezioneminori-lineeguida_20190326_en.html)

### 3. SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT STATEMENT



The Diocese of Parramatta is committed to being a community of safeguarding that actively promotes the dignity and rights of children and of all other persons, particularly those who may be at risk.

We have a zero tolerance to abuse of any form. We are committed to ensuring that all children and adults under our care are safe, protected and supported to flourish.

The Diocese offers its unreserved and deepest apologies to survivors of abuse and their families for the hurt and suffering this abuse has caused throughout their lives. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that no child entrusted to our care is ever harmed again.

The Diocese acknowledges that our past failings have led to irreversible harm being inflicted upon children. Whilst we seek to repair this fundamental breach of trust that was placed in us, we understand that trust is for some people perhaps broken forever. We remain steadfast in our future commitments to ensure our current child protection processes and procedures offer a safeguard from predatory behaviour.

In all of our works, ministries and activities, we respond to the call of the Gospel to protect those who are vulnerable by fostering culture, education, systems, processes and environments where the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people is paramount.

## WE COMMIT

to a culture of safeguarding where leaders at all levels put safeguarding first and where the best interests of children are always paramount.

to engaging and listening to the voices and experiences of survivors.

to ensuring all people engaged by the diocese are suitable, supported and skilled for their role, including robust screening processes, supervision, support and ongoing education and training.

to hearing the voices of our community, to creating safe spaces to listen to children's voices, and to seeking input and feedback from families, the broader community and the rich diversity of the Diocese of Parramatta including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and those with a disability.

to having regularly updated policies and procedures which document our safeguarding practices and are publicly available for transparency and accountability.

to a complaints management process and policy which is effective and accessible, with a focus on ensuring the complainant is supported through the process.

to ensuring that all matters requiring a statutory report are reported in a timely manner and that our volunteers and staff are trained to recognise and respond appropriately to disclosures and potential signs of abuse.

to creating safe spaces, to ensuring our physical and online environments are safe and that seek ongoing input from children and communities about what makes them feel safe.

to audit and accredit our safeguarding practice by engaging an independent and external body



The Diocese of Parramatta understands that we hold a privileged position of trust in the community. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment which respects and upholds the human rights and dignity of all people.

As part of this commitment, our responsibility to safeguard children and adults who are at increased risk of discrimination, exploitation and abuse is paramount. We will fulfil this responsibility with integrity, transparency and accountability to the community.

The Diocese has contact with adults at risk through its pastoral, community outreach and welfare services, as well as specialist aged care, health and disability services.

All people who are involved in the delivery of pastoral, education, social, and welfare services are responsible for creating safe and supportive environments to enable children and adults to fully benefit from all that the Diocese has to offer.

The Diocese acknowledges that we are uniquely placed to recognise people in our community who are particularly at risk and in need of care and support. We will not shy away from welcoming these people into our community because of misplaced fear or caution, but rather seek to provide help.

## 4. IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING SAFEGUARDING RISKS

The Diocese has appropriate processes in place to identify and manage risk to the safety and wellbeing of children and adults. As part of their initial safeguarding induction and refresher training, personnel will be familiarised with the Risk Management Strategy and their related responsibilities. The Head of Safeguarding has overall responsibility for ensuring implementation and compliance with the Risk Management Strategy. (Refer to **Appendix A** for more detail of identifying and managing risks)



## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Bishop and Trustees are ultimately responsible for ensuring the Diocese is a safe environment for children and adults at risk. The Vicar General is delegated to oversee the Safeguarding portfolio.

The Bishop of the Diocese is the head of the agency, and as such all Diocesan services fall within the mandate of the Bishop.

The Bishop has delegated the authority for handling child protection matters to the heads of agencies in the pastoral, education, out of school care and welfare divisions of the Diocese. Cross-diocese cooperation and information sharing is encouraged for consistent promotion and standardisation of best practice approaches to safeguarding and child protection.

All agencies and ministries are still directly accountable to the Bishop for their implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian Standards.

The Bishop has appointed a ‘Safeguarding Champion’ for the Diocese of Parramatta, former NSW Children’s Guardian, Ms. Kerry Boland. The Safeguarding Champion is responsible for guiding the Bishop on:

- the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) for children and adults at risk
- the implementation of the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian Standards
- safeguarding practices for safe cultures, including communication and engagement with stakeholders, and
- best practice accountability and governance structures for safeguarding children and at-risk adults.

(Refer to **Appendix B** for more details relating to Roles and Responsibilities)

The Bishop has established a ‘Support and Networking Framework’ to underpin partnerships and collaboration across the whole Diocese in

implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, the Office of the Children’s Guardian Standards, along with an independent Safeguarding Council.

The day-to-day safeguarding work of the Diocese is led and managed by the Head of the Office for Safeguarding. The Head of the Office for Safeguarding performs the ‘Safeguarding Coordinator’ role as required by the Standards.

The Safeguarding Commitment Statement, Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, Risk Management Strategy and Complaint Management Framework will be published on the Diocese’s website.

There will be continuous and proactive engagement with all clergy and religious, paid staff, volunteers and others in the Diocesan community.

The Bishop, Vicar General, Priests, agency/ministry leaders and Head of Office for Safeguarding will ensure that the Diocese reports any safety concerns about children or adults at risk to the appropriate authorities (religious orders will advise relevant provincial authority). The processes by which safety concerns will be reported are outlined in **Responding to concerns about safety** (refer to section 8 of this policy) and include:

- reporting possible criminal offences (including historical allegations of child abuse) to Police
- making a mandatory child protection report to the Child Protection Helpline operated by the Department of Communities and Justice
- making a notification of reportable conduct to the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian, and
- reporting safety concerns for older people or people with disability to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission and Ageing and Disability Commission.

Acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is detailed at **Appendix G: Requiring and upholding appropriate standards of behaviour**.

## 6. RECRUITING SAFE AND SUITABLE PEOPLE



The Diocese is committed to recruiting and engaging people who are safe and suitable to have contact with children and adults at risk. The Diocese is also committed to ensuring that existing clergy and religious, paid staff and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities and are safe and suitable to have contact with children and adults at risk. (Refer to **Appendix C** for more detail on recruiting safe and suitable people)



## 7. PROVIDING SAFEGUARDING TRAINING AND SUPPORT



Personnel, including clergy and religious, paid staff, contractors and volunteers will participate in the Diocese of Parramatta Safeguarding Standards Introductory Sessions for Leaders, or equivalent suitable course/s delivered by an individual with relevant expertise, within four months of commencement.

As part of their induction, and as soon as possible after commencement, all personnel, including volunteers,<sup>5</sup> will be provided with training that empowers them to understand and implement their safeguarding responsibilities.

Refresher safeguarding training will be provided to personnel at least every two years.

The Diocese will keep up-to-date participation records to ensure personnel complete induction and refresher safeguarding training as required.

Professional supervision for personnel will include attention to safeguarding of children and adults, with specific consideration to the appropriate management of power imbalances in relationships. Annual performance reviews for personnel will have regard to responsibilities for the safeguarding of children and adults relevant to their role.

Leaders of religious institutes, clergy and religious in active ministry will be offered and expected to access both ongoing professional development and supervision.

Newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious will be supported with suitable mentoring and/or formation for at least five years post ordination or final profession.

Clergy and religious recruited from overseas will be supported with a suitable mentor for at least their first two years in Australia.

(Refer to **Appendix D** for more detail of providing safeguarding training and support)

5 As in section 4, 'volunteer' means any individual who provides an unpaid service to [name of Category 2 Church Authority] on a more than occasional basis.

## 8. TAKING ACTION AND RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS/CONCERNS



### Responding to concerns about safety

The Diocese strives to effectively identify and respond to concerns about the safety of children or adults at risk at the earliest opportunity. While the Bishop has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the Diocese identifies and responds to safety concerns, at a practical level this responsibility is shared across the organisation.

The Diocese's response to concerns about the safety of children or adults at risk will be decisive, timely and consistent with policy and legislative obligations. The safety and care of children and adults at risk will be the primary consideration. The principles of procedural fairness and natural justice will also be adhered to at all times.

### Criminal offences

Where the concerns involve a potential criminal offence (e.g., physical or sexual assault) by a person engaged by the Diocese, a report will be made to Police as soon as possible. Where the concerns involve a potential criminal offence by any other person, the Diocese will offer to support the alleged victim to report the matter to Police. In circumstances where we identify that the alleged victim has diminished capacity to make an informed decision about whether to report the matter to Police, the Diocese will do so on their behalf. The Head of the Office for Safeguarding is responsible for ensuring that the Police report is made.

### Concerns about children

Concerns about the safety of children may involve sexual or physical harm, emotional or psychological abuse, living in a household with domestic violence and neglect including medical and educational neglect. (Refer to **Appendix E** for definitions of concerns about children and young people)

### Concerns about adults

Identifying risks to the safety of adults can be challenging. An adult's vulnerability may not always be readily apparent, and indicators of abuse or

harm towards adults at risk may be more difficult to recognise. The right of adults to make their own choices and decisions, and the circumstances in which they may have diminished capacity to do so, are also relevant considerations.

An inclusive, compassionate approach to adults at risk can provide valuable opportunities to not only provide care and support, but also observe and identify any safety or other concerns and connect them with relevant professional services.

Safeguarding training for personnel will include the identification of 'transient risks' and additional support needs.

(Refer to **Appendix E** for definitions of concerns about adults at risk)

### Handling disclosures

Disclosures of abuse or harm may be received directly or indirectly. A direct disclosure is one by a child or adult who discloses current or previous abuse or harm (including historical abuse experienced as a child). An indirect disclosure is when a third person (child or adult) discloses that a child or adult has experienced current or previous abuse or harm (including historical abuse experienced a child).

Steps for handling disclosures are outlined in **Appendix H: Handling disclosures.**

### Reporting obligations

Reporting criminal conduct to Police: Conduct towards a child/children which may be a criminal offence will be reported to Police as soon as possible (and before making a mandatory child protection report). The Head of the Office for Safeguarding is responsible for ensuring that the Police report is made. Reporting criminal conduct is outlined in detail at **Appendix I: Reporting obligations.**

Any person engaged by the Diocese who becomes aware of a concern about the safety of a child or adult at risk, whether by a direct or indirect disclosure or any other means, must report it as soon as practical to the relevant Parish Priest, agency/ministry leader, who will in turn, immediately advise the Head Office For Safeguarding.

If the concern relates to the person in the position who is normally responsible for receiving reports, it must be directly reported to the Head, Office For Safeguarding. If the concern relates to the Head, Office For Safeguarding it must be reported to the Vicar General with the oversight of Safeguarding.

The report should include all known information such as the nature of the allegation; when and where it occurred; the subject of the allegation and the alleged victim.

NB: It is not the reporter's role to interview any person or investigate the concern. Under no circumstances should the reporter ask a person for further details or ask leading questions – this has the potential to interfere with the disclosure and may jeopardise any future criminal proceedings that may arise as a result of an investigation. However, the reporter should obtain basic details to assess the person's immediate safety.

Except for the purpose of meeting their reporting obligations, the reporter will treat the matter in strict confidence.

The Head, Office For Safeguarding will provide advice and guidance on how the matter should be handled, including whether the conduct is 'reportable' and external authorities need to be notified (see below).

Reporting obligations are outlined in detail at **Appendix I: Reporting obligations**

### Responding to complaints

The Diocese seeks to empower people to communicate their concerns and complaints without fear of retribution. We actively encourage and provide appropriate ways for children and adults at risk to express their views and speak up when something is wrong, recognising that they face special barriers to disclosure. We understand that speaking up requires courage and we will respond with respect and compassion. We will try to resolve concerns and complaints as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Complaint handling procedures are provided at **Appendix J: Complaint Handling Procedures.**

### Record keeping and information sharing

The Diocese is committed to appropriate and lawful record keeping, storage and sharing of information related to children and adults at risk.

Complete and accurate records will be created and maintained for all incidents, complaints (including allegations), responses and decisions that relate to abuse or harm to children or adults at risk. Records will be created at the time of, or as soon as practicable following, an incident, complaint, response or decision. Records relating to any allegations will be maintained on a file.

All records will be securely stored, maintained and disposed of in accordance with legislative and statutory requirements (including requirements relating to the Reportable Conduct Scheme, Working with Children Check scheme and NDIS reportable incidents scheme), or after a period of 50 years (whichever is higher). Access to information and records will be restricted to personnel who require it in order to discharge their safeguarding obligations.

The Diocese of Parramatta will uphold and facilitate, to the fullest extent possible, individuals' rights to access, amend or annotate records about themselves. If the individual has capacity issues, consideration will be given to the most appropriate way to release records and information and who else may be authorized to receive it on their behalf (e.g., a guardian or nominee).



## Confidentiality and privacy

The Diocese will maintain current knowledge of, and comply with, our legislative obligations to maintain confidentiality and protect personal information and privacy.

Information and records relating to incidents, complaints, responses and decisions will be treated as confidential except where the sharing or distribution of information and/or records is mandated by statutory requirements or principles of natural justice. In this regard, if the complaint involves conduct that is serious and/or potentially criminal, any legal obligations to report relevant information to bodies such as the police or child protection services will over-ride confidentiality, for example, in accordance the Chapter 16A of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

In addition, in certain circumstances the obligation to be fair to the subject of a complaint may completely or partially override confidentiality. The Diocese will seek to balance fairness and confidentiality requirements and, as far as possible, safeguard the interests of all parties.

When determining what information to release relating to a complaint record, the Diocese will be mindful of privacy and confidentiality obligations concerning the release of personal information about other individuals, such as a subject of the complaint.



## 9. PREVENTION, HEALING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The Diocese of Parramatta additionally commits to providing prevention, healing and supports services. It is critical that personnel (both paid and volunteer) understand that Safeguarding is on a continuum of service delivery and requires all personnel to understand what prevention, healing and support are. The Diocese of Parramatta commits to the principles in the National Response Protocol (February 2021) that include:

1. Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and adults subject to childhood abuse within a culture of prevention of harm
2. Provide a just and compassionate response respecting the dignity and diversity of all involved and ensuring an inclusive and supportive process
3. Act with integrity and accountability with law and policy
4. Work and communicate effectively with all relevant parties and agencies and
5. Drive a consistent response Church wide through committed leadership and effective governance

Prevention services aim to ensure that any new or relevant research or best practice information is shared across the agencies and is used in the development of training, to inform policy and procedure development and provide information for all those engaged/employed by the Diocese. Additionally, research/review of matters can improve practice within the Diocese of Parramatta and considered as a critical part of safeguarding practice in that it can identify issues or concerns about current practices and process and be a key driver for continuous improvement.

Healing and Support Services for those who may have been harmed by the Church as a child or as an adult at risk is undertaken in a person-centred trauma informed approach with a case management role. Assistance that maybe provided to a person coming forward can include the following:

- referrals to appropriate agencies for therapeutic support
- written and or verbal apologies,
- referral to Knowmore legal services for information on redress and/or civil claims
- support groups and networks
- support for families and carers

For additional information on the Prevention, Healing and Support Service of the Parramatta Diocese click on link <https://safeguarding.org.au/prevention-healing-and-support/>



## 10. GLOSSARY

Adults at risk	<p>Adults at risk are people over the age of 18 who are at increased risk of abuse, including those who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are elderly</li> <li>• have a disability</li> <li>• have a mental illness</li> <li>• have diminished capacity</li> <li>• have cognitive impairment</li> <li>• are experiencing transient risks, e.g., bereavement, relationship breakdown, domestic or family violence, homelessness</li> <li>• have any other impairment that makes it difficult for that person to protect themselves from abuse or exploitation.</li> </ul> <p>While taking care to not make assumptions or generalisations about individuals, we recognise that other aspects of a person’s identity or life experiences may also increase their risk of vulnerability to abuse or harm, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander</li> <li>• being a refugee or migrant</li> <li>• diverse gender or sexuality</li> <li>• speaking a first language other than English</li> <li>• surviving sexual abuse or child abuse.</li> </ul>
Allegation	A complaint, still to be verified, claiming or asserting that someone has committed an act of abuse against a child. The term is used interchangeably and in combination with “complaint”.
Bishop	A diocesan bishop in the Latin Church and an eparch in the Eastern Churches.
Child/ren	<p>Individuals under 18 years of age.</p> <p>Can also be a child 0-15 years under the Children and Young persons (Care and Protection Act) 1998 In this Act a young person is 16 or 17 years</p>
Child abuse	There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Most commonly, the categories of child abuse include sexual, physical, psychological, neglect, ill-treatment, exploitation and exposure to family violence.
Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement	A commitment statement describing an entity’s commitment to keep children safe from harm. It informs the entity’s culture with respect to child safeguarding.
Clergy	The body of those ordained in sacred ministry in the Church. They are either deacons, priests or bishops.
Complainant	Any person who makes a complaint that may include any allegation, suspicion, concern, or report of a breach of the entity’s code of conduct. It also includes disclosures made to an institution that may be about, or relate to, abuse in the entity’s context.
Conflicts of interest	<p>This can occur when any person (staff/volunteer/contractor) engaged by the Parramatta Diocese have private interests that could influence or appear to influence judgements made during the course of their professional duties. They arise when there is a reasonable expectation of a personal benefit, direct or indirect, that could influence the performance of a person’s duties. This benefit may be non-financial or financial. Refer to the Code of Conduct Policy (section 7.6):</p> <p><a href="https://thedioceseofparramatta.sharepoint.com/forms-resources/policies/Documents/Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf">https://thedioceseofparramatta.sharepoint.com/forms-resources/policies/Documents/Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf</a></p>
Cultural safety	An environment that is safe for people of all ethnicities and cultural identities: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.



Diocese	Ecclesiastical jurisdiction under the leadership of a bishop or an archbishop. In this document it is used as an inclusive term, including eparchies, ordinariates and personal prelature.
Entity	An entity that has been identified as Catholic by a competent authority within the Catholic Church.
Exchange of Information – Chapter 16A	<p>(Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 – Authorises the release of information under law to a prescribed body. This provision allows for information sharing between government and non-government organisations, relating to a child’s safety, welfare or wellbeing and pertains to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A parent or other family member</li> <li>• A child or young person’s history or circumstances</li> <li>• Any person/s having a significant or relevant relationship with the child or young person</li> <li>• Other agencies working with the child or young person, including past support or service arrangements</li> </ul> <p>Consent is not required to share information using Chapter 16A. A provision of any other Act or law that prohibits or restricts the disclosure of information does not operate to prevent the provision of information under Chapter 16A. For more information and templates relating to requesting information or initiating information exchange click on the link:</p> <p><a href="https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/providers/children-families/interagency-guidelines/information-sharing-for-service-coordination">https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/providers/children-families/interagency-guidelines/information-sharing-for-service-coordination</a></p>
Formation/formation program	A program preparing individuals for ordination or profession of vows as well as a life-long journey to the invitation of Christ to proclaim and live the Gospel message within the life of the Church.
Grooming	Grooming is defined as communication with a child where this is an intention to meet and commit a sex offence with the child. More generally it can be seen as the process by which an individual manipulates those around them - particularly, but not exclusively, the child - to provide opportunities to abuse and reduce the likelihood of being reported or discovered. (see reference list)
Leaders	Personnel who are responsible for important governance decisions within a Church entity and/or who lead and coordinate Church improvement initiatives.
Modern Slavery (Anti-Slavery)	<p>The term is used to cover a range of exploitative practices including human trafficking, slavery, forced labour, child labour, removal of organs and slavery-like practices</p> <p>The term [modern slavery] is a recent one and has come into use partly because of the complexities surrounding concepts that are typically subsumed under its umbrella, namely: slavery; servitude; trafficking in persons; forced labour; debt bondage; forced marriage; and sale of or sexual exploitation of children. (see reference list)</p> <p>Also refer to the Diocese of Parramatta Statement on Morden Slavery see <a href="https://parracatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Diocese-of-Parramatta-Modern-Slavery-Statement.pdf">https://parracatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Diocese-of-Parramatta-Modern-Slavery-Statement.pdf</a></p>
Ministry	Any activity within, or delivered by, an entity that is designed to carry out the good works of the Catholic Church.
Office for Safeguarding	Office for Safeguarding, Parramatta Diocese
Personnel	A cleric, member of a religious institute or other person who is employed by the entity or engaged on a contract, subcontract, voluntary or unpaid basis.

Professional/ pastoral supervision	<p>A forum for reflection and learning, an interactive dialogue between at least two people, one of whom is professionally trained as a supervisor. The dialogue shapes a process of review, reflection, critique and replenishment for personnel. Supervision is a professional activity in which personnel are engaged regardless of experience or qualification.</p> <p>Supervision assists personnel in their accountabilities for professional standards (including in relation to maintenance of professional boundaries), defined competencies for their role and understanding and implementation of organisational policy and procedures.</p> <p>For clerics and religious, professional/pastoral supervision assists in the maintenance of boundaries of the pastoral relationship and enhances the quality of their ministry. A cleric/ religious' commitment to conscious and critical reflection on their ministry and ministry experiences is recognised as being important for the wellbeing of the cleric/religious, the people with whom they exercise ministry, the wider Church and the community.</p>
Religious Institute	An institute of consecrated life, a secular institute or society of apostolic life, and their provinces or equivalent.
Risk:	Effect of uncertainty on objectives" where an effect represents "a deviation from the expected - being positive and/or negative
Risk Management	<p>Managing coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation with regards to risk. The process of identifying risks, assessing risks and developing strategies to manage risks</p> <p>Risk Management Policy and Framework (<a href="https://tinyurl.com/vxmsrmps">https://tinyurl.com/vxmsrmps</a>)</p>
Risk Management Framework	<p>The set of components that provide the foundations and organisational arrangements for designing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing and continually improving risk management throughout the organisation (Reference Policy Risk Management Framework Diocese of Parramatta)</p> <p>Refer to Risk Management Policy and Framework on risk, risk factors in safeguarding, risk management and risk management framework in safeguarding.</p>
Safeguarding	Measures to protect the safety, human rights and well-being of individuals, which allow people - in this context children and adults at risk - to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.
Safeguarding Council	A committee established to advise and support the Church Authority on all matters relating to safeguarding, including the development and implementation of a Safeguarding Implementation Plan and coordination of annual self-audits at a local level. Committee members need relevant and varied professional expertise in relation to, but not limited to safeguarding, child protection, organisational culture and structure, policy development, and need to include lay women and men.
Safeguarding Coordinator	An individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
Safeguarding Implementation Plan	A documented plan which articulates actions to be taken across the entity to ensure safeguarding practices are in place. It includes actions, strategies, responsibilities and delegations and tracks review and progress. It is overseen by the Safeguarding Committee.
Seminary	A centre for the formation and education of students preparing for ordination.
Working with children check	Generic term used in the Standards to denote the statutory screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. There is no single national framework setting out requirements for 'working with children' checks. Each state or territory in Australia has its own name, procedures and differences in scope regarding what this type of check entails. They are one part of a Church entity's recruitment, selection and screening processes.





# Appendices

## Appendix A – Identifying and Managing Safeguarding Risks

### Safeguarding Risk management strategy

- The recruitment and screening processes outlined in **Recruiting Safe and Suitable People** will be consistently applied to ensure all possible steps are taken to only employ or engage individuals who are suitable to have contact with children and adults at risk.
- All personnel, including clergy and religious, paid staff, contractors and volunteers are required to comply with the Code of Conduct which clearly outlines conduct towards children and adults that is not acceptable. A breach of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and may also lead to criminal proceedings if the conduct involves a potential criminal offence.
- The Diocese will provide initial and refresher safeguarding training to all personnel as outlined in **Providing safeguarding training and support**. The training will equip personnel with information and skills to understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, including preventing, identifying and reporting concerns about safety to children and adults at risk.
- All personnel are required to report safety concerns for children or adults at-risk to the relevant Parish Priest, agency/ministry leader or, if the safety concern relates to the relevant leader, to the Head Officer for Safeguarding. This will ensure the processes summarised in **Responding to concerns about safety** are followed.
- The Diocese will seek the views of children and adults at increased risk (and/or their families/carers where appropriate) about what makes them feel safe and how their safeguarding needs can be met.
- The Diocese will consult children, their families and adults at risk (and/or their families/carers where appropriate) about decisions that affect them.
- The Diocese will make families and carers aware of the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries or services to children or adults with diminished capacity and/or cognitive impairment.
- The Diocese will recognise and encourage the importance of friendships and social connections and provide children, their families and adults at risk (or their families/carers where appropriate) with information about safe and respectful relationships.
- The Diocese has a Complaint Management Framework which encourages people to raise concerns about the safety of children or adults at risk and to effectively respond to complaints, disclosures or incidents of abuse or harm. Children and adults at risk are provided with information about their right to be safe and how to speak up if they have concerns.
- Physical premises will be regularly monitored, and safety hazards promptly identified and addressed to minimise the risk of injury to any person, particularly young children, people with physical disability and frail older people.
- When organising recurring or one-off events or activities where children and/or adults at risk will or may be present, the relevant person will ensure that a risk assessment and management plan is completed using the template provided in the Risk Management Strategy. The plan will include (but not be limited to) consideration of parental consent, physical safety, transport, photography/video recording, privacy and supervision arrangements.
- Where appropriate, families/carers will be encouraged to take an active role in monitoring the safety of adults at risk, particularly those with diminished capacity and/or cognitive impairment, when participating in activities.

- Families and carers will be supported and encouraged to take an active role in monitoring children's safety when participating in activities. Where appropriate, families/carers of children may also be offered information about preventing abuse and/or referrals to abuse prevention programs.
- One-to-one interactions between an adult and a child will not take place unless in an open or visible space, or within the clear line of sight of another adult. This includes ministries and/or services such as counselling, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, coaching, spiritual direction and mentoring.<sup>6</sup> A similar approach should generally be taken with an adult at risk, but this will depend on the individual's circumstances, preferences and right to privacy. Prudent judgement is encouraged on a case-by-case basis.
- When the Diocese becomes aware that a person attending or residing in any of its services or activities poses a risk to others (e.g., those with a serious criminal conviction resulting in parole conditions, domestic and family violence orders) the risks posed by the person's ongoing involvement in the service or activity will be assessed and managed.
- Photographs/videos of children will not be published by the Diocese, including on social media, without written parental permission. Where photographs/videos are published with parental consent, identifying information will not be provided and children must be fully clothed.
- This strategy should be read in conjunction with the overall Diocesan Risk Management Framework and Policy.

---

<sup>6</sup> Where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated using the first form of the Rite of Penance, that is, the Rite for Reconciliation Individual Penitents, this may occur in a chapel or other space within a church that is set apart for this purpose, but physical contact between the cleric and penitent is not permitted.

## Appendix B – Roles and Responsibilities

The Bishop and the heads of the relevant agencies and ministries will lead and promote a safeguarding culture by:

- Personally upholding and modelling a standard of behaviour consistent with the Integrity in Ministry Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia and the Diocesan Code of Conduct.
- Prominently publishing and displaying the Safeguarding Commitment Statement and making the Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, and Complaint Management Framework readily available to personnel and the broader community.
- Identifying and taking opportunities to promote whole of community awareness of the dignity and rights of children and adults at risk, and to champion and model safeguarding within the Diocese, the Diocesan community and more broadly (where appropriate).
- Promoting an inclusive, respectful and responsive approach to the diverse needs of children and adults at risk.
- Paying particular attention to the needs of children and adults who may be at increased risk of abuse, discrimination or exploitation including those who:
  - are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
  - have a disability, mental illness, diminished capacity or cognitive impairment.
  - are from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
  - are unable to live at home
  - have diverse gender and/or sexuality
  - are experiencing domestic violence, family breakdown or bereavement
  - are at increased vulnerability for any reason
- Taking all possible steps to ensure that only people who are safe and suitable to have contact with children and adults at risk are engaged by the Diocese.
- Empowering all personnel to take responsibility for safeguarding and providing opportunities for them to have input into improving safeguarding practices.
- Ensuring families, carers and communities have access to information about the governance and operations of the Diocese.
- Encouraging people to bring forward concerns or complaints about the safety of children or adults at risk (including disclosures of current or historical abuse) and providing appropriate processes by which to do so, including processes that are suitable for children and people with diminished capacity and/or cognitive impairment.
- Responding to disclosures and complaints in a manner that is transparent, respectful, fair and accountable.
- Working with survivor advocacy and support groups to recognise past wrongs where these have occurred and build a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.
- Welcoming and facilitating dialogue with and feedback from the Diocesan community, including children, adults at risk and outside experts, about our safeguarding approach, including when reviewing safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Ensuring the Diocese complies with all relevant statutory and legislative requirements.
- Actively monitoring compliance with the Safeguarding Policy and ensuring continuous improvement of safeguarding practices.

## Appendix C – Recruiting Safe and suitable people

Details of our recruitment processes may be found in our Recruitment for Professional Standard Policy. The processes in place to support safe recruitment and engagement form part of the Diocese's Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy for working with children and adults at risk, which includes the Recruitment and Selection Procedure. Key commitments are summarised below:

- The commitment of the Diocese to safeguarding and culturally safe practices<sup>7</sup> will be included in all advertisements, role descriptions and callouts for volunteers.
- All applicants for roles, including volunteers,<sup>8</sup> will be required to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to safeguarding principles and culturally safe practices regardless of the expected level of contact with children and/or adults at risk.
- At least two recent referee checks will be directly undertaken and documented for all applicants, including volunteers. Referee checks include specific questions to assist with the assessment of the person's suitability for contact with children and/or adults at risk. This will include asking whether the person has been the subject of previous disciplinary proceedings. All references must be verified by direct telephone contact with the referee.
- Any person required by legislation to have a current Working with Children Check or NDIS Worker Screening Check will have their clearance verified prior to being permitted to have contact with children/adults at risk.
- A National Police Check maybe conducted, and the outcome assessed before any person is permitted to have contact with children or adults at risk.
- Selection and screening procedures for overseas clergy and religious will as far as practicable be the same as those for Australian personnel. The Diocese will obtain background checks from the relevant country and overseas Church Authority.
- The Diocese will securely record and regularly monitor the status of Working with Children Checks and National Police Checks for all personnel.
- The Diocese will pro-actively share risk-related information with other entities when seminarians, clergy and religious move between seminaries, formation programs and Church jurisdictions.

<sup>7</sup> Culturally safe practices are practices that reflect an understanding and identification of diverse life circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse.

<sup>8</sup> In this section, 'volunteer' means any individual who provides an unpaid service to [name of Category 2 Church Authority] on a more than occasional basis. It does not include individuals who are involved as volunteers in one-off events or are supervised at all times by another appropriately screened adult.



## Appendix D – Safeguarding training and support

At a minimum, the training will cover:

- The Diocesan Code of Conduct and Integrity in the Service of the Church
- providing a culturally safe environment in which diverse circumstances and experiences are respected
- identifying risks to children’s safety, factors that may increase a child’s vulnerability to abuse and potential indicators of child abuse, including grooming and harmful behaviours by other children
- identifying risks to adults, factors that may increase the risk of discrimination, exploitation and abuse of adults at risk (especially those with living with disability; diminished capacity and/or cognitive impairment; in residential facilities; or experiencing domestic violence), and potential indicators of adult abuse/exploitation
- the nature, factors and impact of institutional abuse, including abuse of power
- managing risks to children and adults at risk
- supporting children and adults at risk to express their views, participate in decision making and raise concerns
- responding to disclosures of abuse
- reporting obligations
- complaint handling
- information sharing and record keeping.

### **Safeguarding training and development for seminarians, clergy and those in formation with, or members of, religious institutes**

Candidates before and during seminary and religious formation and ordination/professions of vows will be screened for their suitability to engage in work that involves contact with children and adults at risk.

Where an applicant or candidate for seminary/formation programs does not continue through to ordination/profession of vows, the Diocese will draw on broad-ranging professional advice in complying with a positive duty to disclose relevant information to other Church Authorities.

Seminary and initial formation programs will include appropriate curriculum throughout the formation program to build candidates’ safeguarding knowledge and skills, including pastoral responses to victims/survivors of sexual abuse. Attitudes, beliefs and values and behaviours involving the abuse of powers will be explicitly addressed.

During initial and refresher safeguarding training, personnel, including clergy and religious, paid staff, contractors and volunteers, will be provided with information and equipped with skills to identify safety concerns and potential indicators of abuse or harm; support children and adults at risk to express safety concerns; handle disclosures and meet their internal and external reporting obligations.

## Appendix E - Concerns about Children and Adults at risk

Concerns about **children and young people** - definitions:<sup>9</sup>

- **Sexual abuse:** when someone involves a child or young person in any sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children or young people are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity.
- **Physical abuse:** a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child or young person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation. Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints.
- **Emotional abuse or psychological harm:** behaviour (such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour) that damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional disturbance or psychological trauma. In general, it is the frequency, persistence and duration of the behaviour that is instrumental in defining the consequences for the child or young person.
- **Neglect:** when a parent or caregiver cannot regularly give a child, the basic things needed for his or her growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, adequate supervision, and enough parenting and care.
- **Ill-treatment:** when a parent or caregiver engages in conduct towards a child that is unreasonable and seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel, e.g., making excessive or degrading demands, engaging in a pattern of hostile or degrading comments or behaviour, or using inappropriate forms of behaviour management.

Concerns about the **safety of older people and adults with disability** may relate to the following:<sup>10</sup>

- **Financial abuse**
  - threatening or coercing re: assets or wills
  - taking control of the person's finances against their wishes and denying access to their own money
  - abusing Powers of Attorney
  - stealing goods, e.g., jewellery, credit cards, cash, food, and other possessions
  - unauthorised use of banking and financial documents
  - the recent addition of a signature on a bank account
- **Psychological abuse**
  - Pressuring, intimidating or bullying
  - Name calling, and verbal abuse
  - Treating the adult person like a child
  - Threatening to harm the person, other people or pets
  - Engaging in emotional blackmail such as threatening to withdraw access to grandchildren, family, friends, services, telephone or placement in an aged care facility
  - Preventing contact with family and friends, or denying access to the phone or computer
  - Withholding mail
  - Preventing a person from engaging in religious or cultural practices
  - Moving the person far away family or friends.

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from [https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/reporting-child-at-risk/harm-and-neglect/ArticleDocuments/1021/Identifying\\_reportable\\_allegations.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/reporting-child-at-risk/harm-and-neglect/ArticleDocuments/1021/Identifying_reportable_allegations.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y) and <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/>

<sup>10</sup> NSW Ageing and Disability Commission <https://www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au/tools-and-resources>

- **Neglect**
  - Failure to provide basic needs, i.e., food, adequate or clean clothing, heating, medicines
  - Under- or over-medicating
  - Exposure to danger or lack of supervision, such as leaving the person in an unsafe place or in isolation
  - An overly attentive carer in the company of others
  - Refusal to permit others to provide appropriate care.
- **Physical abuse**
  - Pushing, shoving, or rough handling
  - Kicking, hitting, punching, slapping, biting, and/or burning
  - Restraining: physical or medical
  - Locking the person in a room or home or tying to a chair or bed
  - Intentional injury with a weapon or object
  - Overuse or misuse of medications.
- **Sexual abuse**
  - Non-consensual sexual contact, language or exploitative behaviour
  - Rape and sexual assault
  - Cleaning or treating the person's genital area roughly or inappropriately
  - Enforced nudity of the person against their consent.

Concerns about adults may also relate to 'transient risks' due to life circumstances or experiences such as:

- relationship breakdown
- bereavement
- experience of domestic or family violence
- homelessness
- mental illness
- unemployment
- dependency on alcohol or other substance
- pregnancy/early parenthood

## Appendix F: Safeguarding Implementation Plan

The Diocese will monitor compliance with the Safeguarding Policy and continual improvement of its safeguarding practices through the Safeguarding Implementation Plan constituted by the following:

1. The Safeguarding Council and Safeguarding Champion will oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices. The Safeguarding Council's responsibilities include:
  - promoting safeguarding within the organisation
  - monitoring safeguarding practices, responses and resources, including the Safeguarding Policy and safeguarding training and support for personnel, to ensure they reflect best practice and current legislative/statutory requirements
  - reviewing trends in complaints about the safety of children or adults at risk (without breaching privacy or jeopardising ongoing complaints), and
  - providing advice to the Bishop of Parramatta on safeguarding matters
  - any other relevant matters related to safeguarding.
  
2. The Bishop has delegated the responsibilities below to the Head, Office for Safeguarding, who performs the role of Safeguarding Coordinator for the Diocese:
  - maintaining knowledge of current legislation, statutory and other guidance in relation to safeguarding and ensuring these are reflected in the Safeguarding Policy and related documents
  - acting as a contact person for anyone in the Diocesan community who has questions about safeguarding or concerns about the safety of children or adults at risk
  - ensuring the Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, Risk Management Strategy and Complaint Management Framework are regularly reviewed by the Diocese according to the specified timeframes in each document
  - monitoring the currency of Working with Children Checks and National Police Checks held by personnel
  - monitoring participation by personnel in safeguarding training according to the designated schedule
  - regularly reviewing complaints to identify systemic issues related to safeguarding, and improving policies and practices as needed, and
  - engaging with other relevant organisations and seeking specialist advice about safeguarding good practice.

The Safeguarding Coordinator's contact details where appropriate will be provided to families, carers and the broader the Diocesan community.

The Bishop retains overall responsibility for the Safeguarding Implementation Plan.

## Appendix G: Requiring and upholding appropriate standards of behaviour

The Diocese expects all personnel, including volunteers, to uphold the human rights, dignity and well-being of all people and safeguard children and adults at risk from abuse and harm. Personnel will be providing with ongoing supervision and support to meet their safeguarding responsibilities. Annual performance reviews for personnel will include responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults at risk relevant to their role.

### Code of Conduct

All personnel, including clergy and religious, paid staff, contractors and volunteers, must comply with the Diocese's Code of Conduct. The Code provides clear information about the kinds of conduct towards children and adults at risk that are not acceptable, ranging from concerning behaviour that may be a breach of the Code, to behaviour that may also amount to a criminal offence if proven.

### Children and young people

#### *Unacceptable behaviour*

Personnel, clergy and religious, paid staff, contractors and volunteers must not engage in the following conduct:

- any form of physical or sexual abuse
- grooming of a child for sexual abuse
- using sexually suggestive or explicit language
- engaging in conversations about sexual experiences or sharing sexual images
- being alone with a child or young person away from the presence of other adults, including for the purpose of transportation showering/using the toilet with an open door in the presence of a child or young person
- privately visiting or spending time with a child or young person
- helping children with intimate care if the child is capable of doing it on his or her own (e.g., toileting or changing clothes)
- not respecting the privacy of a child or young person (e.g., when using the bathroom or changing)
- physically disciplining a child or young person
- making excessive and/or degrading demands of a child or young person
- making or using any kind of drug, alcohol or cigarettes available or with children or young people
- engaging in private electronic or online contact with a child or young person
- engaging with a child or young person in a way that is overly intimate or could be seen as overly intimate
- involving favouritism or any form of special treatment
- taking photos of a child or young person who is in the care of the organisation outside of official duties or without consent

#### *Acceptable behaviour*

Personnel, clergy and religious, paid staff, contractors and volunteers must:

- report to the Parish Priest/agency/ministry leader or your supervisor any concerning conduct that is brought to your attention and any circumstances where you suspect that a child or young person is currently at risk of harm (see Section 9)
- take reasonable steps to protect children, young people from foreseeable risk of injury
- ensure that physical contact with children and young people is reasonable for the purpose of their management or care, and is appropriate given their age, maturity, health or other characteristics, e.g.:
  - assessing a child or young person who is injured or ill
  - comforting an upset child
  - guiding a child or young person in a non-threatening manner
  - protecting a child or young person from imminent danger to himself/herself or to others
  - demonstrating or guiding a particular action or skill as part of drama or other activities within the lesson
- complete their duties in accordance with the directions provided by the Parish or supervisor
- consider the risks of proposed activities and tasks and develop strategies to manage these risks, and
- adhere to an appropriate standard of dress when engaged in ministry (see Code of Conduct for more information).

## Adults at risk

### Unacceptable behaviour

Personnel, clergy and religious, paid staff, contractors and volunteers must not engage in the following conduct:

- any form of physical or sexual abuse
- making excessive and/or degrading demands
- exploiting an individual's emotional vulnerability to form an intimate relationship
- any misuse of authority or power that exploits, manipulates or coerces a person to engage in any activity, or which disrespects their human rights and dignity
- not respecting the person's privacy
- any form of financial abuse or exploitation

### Acceptable behaviour

Personnel, clergy and religious, paid staff, contractors and volunteers must:

- report to the Parish Priest/agency/ministry leader or your supervisor any reportable conduct that is brought to your attention and any circumstances where you suspect that a child or young person is currently at risk of harm (see Section 9)
- take reasonable steps to protect adults at risk from foreseeable risk of injury
- ensure that physical contact with adults at risk is reasonable for the purpose of their care, and is appropriate given their age, health, disability or other characteristics. For example:
  - physical contact should be consistent with any specific management plan for the person, and
  - physical intervention (including physical restraint, removals or escorts) should be avoided and used only as a last resort to ensure safety and protection of the person and others.
- complete their duties in accordance with the directions provided by the Parish or supervisor
- consider the risks of proposed activities and tasks and develop strategies to manage these risks, and

- adhere to an appropriate standard of dress when engaged in ministry (see Code of Conduct for more information).

Generally, one-to-one interactions with an adult at risk should not take place unless in an open or visible space, or within the clear line of sight of another adult. This includes ministries and/or services such as counselling, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, coaching, spiritual direction and mentoring.<sup>1</sup> However, this will depend on the individual's circumstances, preferences and right to privacy. Prudent judgement is encouraged on a case-by-case basis.

*The Code of Conduct complements the guidance provided in Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia and Integrity in the Service of the Church: A Resource Document of Principles and Standards for Lay Workers in the Catholic Church in Australia.*

All personnel, including clergy and religious, paid staff, contractors and volunteers, are required to sign an annual acknowledgement that they have reviewed the Code of Conduct, agree to comply with it, and understand that breaching the Code will constitute misconduct and result in disciplinary proceedings up to and including dismissal and possible criminal proceedings. In relation to clergy and religious, all breaches will be referred to the Vicar-General to initiate the relevant process.

The Code of Conduct will also be covered as part of their initial and refresher safeguarding training.

The Code of Conduct will be reviewed whenever a breach is identified and at least every five years.

<sup>1</sup> Where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated using the first form of the Rite of Penance, that is, the Rite for Reconciliation Individual Penitents, this may occur in a chapel or other space within a church that is set apart for this purpose, but physical contact between the cleric and penitent is not permitted.

## Appendix H: Handling disclosures

If any person engaged by the Diocese receives a disclosure of abuse or harm, they should:

- listen calmly, patiently and supportively, letting the person use their own words
- let the person know they are doing the right thing by speaking up
- address any concerns the person has about their safety, especially if they are worried about the consequences of disclosing
- explain what the next steps will be, including that they may need to tell certain other people about the disclosure to keep the person and others safe, but that the information will otherwise be treated confidentially, and
- ask the person what they need to feel safe and involved in the process for responding to their disclosure.<sup>11</sup>

---



<sup>11</sup> Adapted from NOCS Guide, p40

# What do I say and do when someone discloses to me?

When a person starts to disclosure about abuse, we feel the need to reply and respond in a way that does not compound the issues for the person disclosing. With that in mind:

## Some tips to remember:

(Please note: these are not exhaustive and there are other phrases/approaches that can be used)

 <b>Don't</b>	 <b>Do</b>
<p><b>State:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WOW!</li> <li>• How did you manage that?</li> <li>• I can't handle this</li> <li>• I don't believe you</li> <li>• That doesn't sound right</li> <li>• Why come forward now?</li> </ul>	<p>Try to remain calm and focused on what the person is saying to you - don't formulate a response until they have finished talking.</p> <p>If it is too hard for you to hear what the person is saying - tell them that this is really important, and we need to speak to someone who knows what to do - let's call/see/visit &lt;the other person&gt; and we can talk to them. Don't feel bad, not everyone can listen to a disclosure - it is better for the person disclosing that someone who can manage it hears it.</p>
<p><b>Don't tell the person</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That can't be true</li> <li>• I know that person, he wouldn't do that</li> <li>• You have made this up</li> <li>• I don't believe you</li> <li>• You just have to forget it</li> <li>• Just get over it - don't think about it</li> <li>• Let's pray about it and try to find forgiveness for the person</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tell the person the following</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That must have been really hard to tell me that</li> <li>• I believe what you are saying (even if you are not sure)</li> <li>• It was not your fault</li> <li>• You are very brave for telling me this</li> <li>• This is what we are going to do now</li> </ul>
<p><b>If the person wants to keep on speaking – don't ask the following questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often did that happen?</li> <li>• Did it hurt?</li> <li>• Didn't your mother (or someone) suspect?</li> <li>• Why did you let them do that?</li> <li>• You must have asked for it in some way</li> <li>• Did you ever say no?</li> </ul>	<p><b>If the person wants to keep on speaking, let them – always ask <u>open ended questions</u> or use statements like:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell me more about that?</li> <li>• What else happened? (if they appear like they need to talk)</li> <li>• That must have been really hard for you to tell me that</li> <li>• Thank the person for sharing this with you</li> <li>• This is really important - I need to write this down</li> <li>• This is what is going to happen - I have to tell someone about this. (Fill in what your policy/protocol says)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Keep it to yourself:</b></p> <p>You are required to tell someone about what you know - morally and ethically we need to let the person disclosing know that what happened to them is not Ok and is against the law and we have to tell someone else.</p>	<p><b>Seek out help:</b></p> <p>You will need to talk to someone about what you have heard - you need to let the person disclosing know that you must tell someone else.</p> <p>There will be reporting obligations - like Police/FACS and your agency so let the person know what reports you have to make.</p> <p>The person will need support after disclosure - let them know what you can do.</p>
<p><b>After the disclosure</b></p> <p>Become the therapist to the person who disclosed - unless you are qualified and employed as a counsellor DO NOT become a counsellor - always stay in your role - you can listen, but you need to refer onwards.</p>	<p><b>After the disclosure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let the person know that you are there for them (within the confines of your role).</li> <li>• Listen if they need to talk but let them know they need to discuss this with their counsellor (this can be organised for them if they do not already have a counsellor).</li> </ul>



## Other things to consider:

- **Disclosure is hard** on a person so they may be quite tired or weary after they have spoken to you
- **Silence is OK**
- It's really important to **listen 100%** to the person – formulate your response after the person has stopped talking
- **Slow down** – don't rush and remember to breathe
- **Write down** what they say – it's important for the referral to others that we know exactly what the person has said – that way they don't have to repeat their story again and again
- **Stay calm**
- **Talk to someone else** – never ever keep a disclosure to yourself – talk to someone appropriate about what you have been told.

**Where are you** when the person is disclosing.

**Who else is around** and who can hear – consider your environment – other people – particularly children and young people should not hear. That may mean you might have to move to another spot – that's just a bit more private – down the end of the hall or somewhere like that

### What do you do next time you see the person?

Don't bring it up BUT do ask them how they are going? If they start to talk to you again about what happen to them – ask them:

- **Who else have the spoken to about this?**
- **Who are they seeing for assistance (counsellor/therapist etc) – if they say no one because they have you –you can say to them**
  - You might need to talk to a professional about this - if they don't want to, let them know that you are not a professional and that working through this is hard and whilst you can support them, they will need a professional to help them to process it so they can move forward. Even if it is just strategies to manage their feelings/thoughts
  - Remember it's hard for the person who has disclosed – they picked you to tell because they trusted you and because you responded appropriately, they might come back to you
  - Always remember to reassure them, support them but therapy must be done by a professional – who understands trauma and works in a trauma informed way.

### What can I do for me after a person has disclosed?

1. Make sure you have reported the disclosure to the appropriate persons/agency that is outlined in your protocol.
2. Talk to your supervisor/someone appropriate – listening to a disclosure is hard and it can sometimes trigger a response in you that you don't understand.
3. Be kind to yourself.
4. Feel privileged - because for the person who told you their story, they trusted you enough to share their deepest secret with you and that is a privilege.

Remember the 3Rs:

**Reassure, Record and Report**

## Appendix I: Reporting obligations – Reportable Conduct Procedures

### Concerns about children

#### Criminal offences

Criminal offences include:

- An offence of a sexual nature (under any state, territory or Commonwealth law) committed against, with or in the presence of a child, e.g.:
  - sexual touching
  - sexual assault
  - aggravated sexual assault sexual intercourse and attempted sexual intercourse
  - production/dissemination/possession of child abuse material using children to produce child abuse material
  - filming the private parts of a person without their knowledge
  - grooming or procuring children under the age of 16yrs for unlawful sexual activity
  - sexual activity deemed non-consensual on the basis of special care relationships
- Assault, meaning:
  - the intentional or reckless application of physical force without lawful justification or excuse, or
  - any act which intentionally or recklessly causes another to apprehend immediate and unlawful violence.
- Neglect, meaning failure by a person with a legal duty of care to provide the necessities of life that causes death, serious injury or the likelihood of serious injury.
- Failing to protect a child from abuse: An adult working in an organisation doing child-related work will commit an offence if they know another adult working there poses a serious risk of abusing a child (under 18 years), and they have the power to reduce or remove the risk, and they negligently fail to do so.
- Concealing a child abuse offence: All adults are required to report information to the police if they know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child (under 18 years) has been abused, unless they have a 'reasonable excuse'. A 'reasonable excuse' is defined by legislation.

**Reporting Risk of Significant Harm to the Child Protection Helpline:** Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person (or a 'class of children') is at Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) a report will be made to the Child Protection Helpline operated by the Department of Communities and Justice.

The relevant Parish Priest, agency/ministry leader or Head of agency in consultation with the Office For Safeguarding is responsible for determining if a ROSH report is required and if so, ensuring that the report is made. However, this responsibility does not prevent personnel from immediately making a ROSH report.

From 1 March 2020, the definition of a mandatory reporter in NSW includes persons in religious ministry or persons providing religious-based activities to children. This includes clergy and those in appointed (voluntary) leadership roles.

A mandatory reporter has a duty to report, as soon as practicable, the name, or a description, of the child and the grounds for suspecting that the child is at risk of significant harm.<sup>12</sup> Mandatory reporters are legally protected against retribution for making or proposing to make a report.

---

<sup>12</sup> Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 section 27(2)

## Definition of Risk of Significant Harm

A child or young person is at risk of significant harm if the circumstances that are causing concern for their safety, welfare or wellbeing are:

- Present to a significant extent.
- Sufficiently serious enough to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of a family's consent.
- Not minor or trivial.
- Reasonably expected to produce a substantial and demonstrable adverse impact on the child's safety, welfare or wellbeing.
- A single act or omission or an accumulation of these.

The Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) or ChildStory should be used to decide whether or not a report should be made and if so, the category of risk – <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>

**Notifying reportable allegations/convictions to the Children's Guardian:** The Bishop, as the 'Head of Entity' must notify the Children's Guardian if he receives a report or becomes aware of a reportable allegation or reportable conviction against any clergy, paid employees, volunteers or contractors delivering services to children who hold or are required to hold a Working with Children Check. The notification must be made within 7 business days of the Bishop being made aware of the report.<sup>13</sup>

## Definition of reportable allegation/reportable conviction

A reportable allegation is an allegation that a worker has engaged in conduct that may be reportable conduct. A reportable conviction means a conviction (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction), in NSW or elsewhere, of an offence involving reportable conduct.

Reportable conduct is:

- a sexual offence
- sexual misconduct
- ill-treatment of a child
- neglect of a child
- an assault against a child
- an offence under section 43B or 316A or the Crimes Act 1900,
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.<sup>14</sup>

NB: Reportable conduct covers the conduct of employees and towards children both at home and at work.

The Head of Entity must conduct an investigation or arrange for an investigation to be conducted. The entity report must be provided to the Children's Guardian within 30 days after the head of the entity receiving the reportable allegation (or conviction), unless the head of the relevant entity gives the Children's Guardian an explanation for not completing the report and the expected timeframe for completion.

The investigation report must include information about the facts and circumstances of the reportable allegation, the findings made by the head of the entity, and an analysis of the evidence and the rationale for the findings.

<sup>13</sup> Unless there is a 'reasonable excuse' (s29(4) Children's Guardian Act 2019)

<sup>14</sup> Part 4, Children's Guardian Act 2019.

The Bishop has arranged for the Head, Office For Safeguarding, to manage all reportable allegations (and other child protection concerns), including whether the notification should be made and handling the investigation processes, for all parishes, ministries and certain agencies. The Head, Office For Safeguarding, works closely with the leader of the Parish or Ministry/agency in completing the investigation process, however these leaders are responsible for implementing the outcome of the investigation regarding their personnel.

The Bishop has delegated the authority for handling child protection matters in schools to the Executive Director, Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP). The Safeguarding Team at CEDP work in collaboration with the Head, Office For Safeguarding.

For further details about identifying, responding and investigating reportable allegations, see the Reportable Conduct Procedure.

NB: For information about the handling of child protection concerns which are not considered to be 'reportable allegations,' see the Complaint Management Framework.

### **Concerns about adults at risk**

The Head, Office For Safeguarding is responsible for assessing if a concern about the safety of an adult at risk should be reported to an external agency such as Police, a health service or adult safeguarding agency. The assessment will have regard to:

- legislative requirements
- whether an alleged offender is employed or engaged by the Diocese
- the views and wishes of the involved adult
- any diminished capacity on the part of the involved adult to make an informed decision
- the seriousness of the concerns, and
- any potential or actual risks to other children or adults.

NB: For information about how concerns are handled relating to the protection of adults at risk which are covered by independent oversight and regulatory arrangements, see the relevant agency's safeguarding procedure.

For concerns relating to adults at risk that are not considered to be 'reportable' see the guidance contained in the Complaint Management Framework.

### **Historical child abuse**

Where the Diocese of Parramatta becomes aware of an allegation of historical child abuse (abuse experienced by a child who is now an adult), it will take the following steps:

- A Risk of Significant Harm report will be made to the Child Protection Helpline if there are grounds for suspecting that a child or class of children are at current risk of significant harm (e.g., because an alleged offender has current access to children).
- A report will be made to Police in the following circumstances:
  - If the Diocese knows or believes that a child under 18 years has been abused (sexual abuse, serious physical abuse or extreme neglect of a child) or knows or believes that they have information that might materially assist in securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of the offender, unless there is a 'reasonable excuse' for not reporting to Police. A 'reasonable excuse' includes knowing or reasonably believing that:
    - the information has already been reported under mandatory reporting obligations, such as to the Child Protection Helpline or under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, or the person believes on reasonable grounds that another person has reported it
    - the information is already known to Police

- the alleged victim is an adult at the time of providing the information and doesn't want it reported to the Police, or there are grounds to fear for their safety or another person's safety if they report to Police.<sup>15</sup>
- If the Diocese knows that an adult working at the Diocese poses a serious risk of abusing a child (sexual or serious physical abuse).<sup>16</sup>
- The Head, Office For Safeguarding is responsible for ensuring that a Risk of Significant Harm report and/or Police report is made, if required, in response to a historical child abuse matter.

### **Safety concerns about older people or people with disability**

In addition:

- Safety concerns for an adult in an aged care facility, respite and day care service or support services delivered in the home should be reported to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.
- Safety concerns that relate to the provision of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) service should be reported to the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission.
- Safety concerns that relate to the abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult with disability or older person living in their home (conduct by a member of the person's family, other informal supports, or members known to them from the community) should be reported to the Ageing and Disability Commission].

The Head, Office For Safeguarding is responsible for ensuring that a report about the safety of an older person or person with a disability is made, if required.

### **Concern that an adult at risk may harm themselves or another person**

In an emergency, the Diocese will contact Police and or health authorities such as an ambulance if there is concern that an adult at risk may harm themselves or another person.

### **Other concerns about adults at risk**

Where appropriate, the Diocese may seek specialist advice and/or provide referrals to other agencies that can provide support to adults at risk. To facilitate this, the Office For Safeguarding will maintain a list of community-based services, government agencies and other organisations that can offer information, advice and/or receive referrals:

- Mental Health Line (mental health information and referral service)
- Link2Home (homelessness information and referral service)
- NSW Domestic Violence Line (information and referral service for people experiencing domestic violence)
- 1800 Respect (support for people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, sexual assault, domestic or family violence or their advocates)
- Men's Line (counselling service for men with emotional and relationship concerns)
- Alcohol and Other Drugs Information Service (counselling, support, referrals and information for those affected by alcohol or other drugs)
- Bereavement Information and Referral Service
- National Perinatal Mental Health Line (information and counselling for new or expecting parent struggling with the challenges of becoming a new parent)
- Elder Abuse Helpline (support, referral and information for anyone who experiences, witnesses or suspects the abuse of an older person by someone they know and trust)
- SAMSN – for male survivors of child sexual abuse and their supporters.
- Blue Knot Helpline (for people who have experienced childhood trauma).
- Lifeline

<sup>15</sup> Crimes Act, s316A.

<sup>16</sup> Crimes Act, s43B.



# REPORTABLE CONDUCT - SUBJECT OF ALLEGATION

## NOTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

You will be advised as soon as appropriate if you are the subject of a reportable allegation. You will be given details about the following:

- the general nature of the allegations
- an explanation of the investigation process
- any change in your duties during the investigation process
- the name of your contact officer from the Diocese
- referral details to receive support

We will also identify and make available to you any policies, procedures, codes of conduct, that are relevant to the alleged conduct.

If allegation raises risk of significant harm or criminality, reports to Child Protection Helpline and Police will be made.

OCG to be notified within 7 days of the allegation becoming known to Head of Entity.

## INVESTIGATION

Investigation process starts – the overall timeframe is usually less than 90 days but can be longer if matter is more complex. A simple matter may be completed within one month. Ongoing coordination needs to take place if police and/or DCJ are also investigating the allegations.

Evidence gathering takes place. This usually involves interviewing the alleged child victim first and other witnesses; requesting sharing information from authorities and other prescribed bodies, identifying and analysing other evidence.

You will be advised of the name of the appointed investigator if this has not already occurred. At an appropriate stage in the process (and before your interview), you will be provided with further details about the allegations. You are welcome to provide any documentary or other evidence during the process.

You will be invited to participate in an interview and given an opportunity to comment on the allegations and related evidence.

After all available evidence is assessed, you will be notified of the investigation outcome and any potential action. If an adverse outcome is proposed, you will usually be given 14 days to make further submissions on proposed findings.

A final decision will be made and provided to you in writing.

The reportable conduct investigation outcome will be provided to the alleged victim and/or their parent/carer as appropriate.

Within 30 days the OCG requires the investigation report or an interim report on progress.

Final investigation report and findings made must be provided to the OCG Reportable Conduct Division by Entity.

Any sustained findings of sexual misconduct/sexual offences or serious physical abuse must be notified to the OCG's WWCC Division to inform the WWCC process.

## CLOSURE AND FINAL REPORTING

- If necessary, remedial action will be taken regarding your conduct, including risk management or disciplinary action; system or policy improvements may be made; and ongoing monitoring and support may be provided to the alleged victim.
- Investigation outcomes will be recorded.

REGULAR PROGRESS UPDATES



# REPORTABLE CONDUCT - ALLEGED VICTIM/PARENT/CARER

## NOTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

All complaints alleging child abuse or maltreatment by an employee or volunteer of the Diocese are handled by safeguarding specialists. A complaint can be made via [complaints@parracatholic.org](mailto:complaints@parracatholic.org) ☎ (02) 8838 3419

You will also be asked to provide your email or phone number, and how you would like us to make contact with you.

Your complaint will be acknowledged within 7 days. We will:

- Explain the investigation process and how you or the relevant child would like to be involved.
- Give you the details of supports we can arrange for you or the child involved, including counselling referrals
- Identify and make available to you any policies, procedures, codes of conduct, that are relevant to your complaint.
- Tell you about any notification and reporting obligations to authorities, such as the OCG, police, DCJ.
- Ongoing coordination needs to take place if police and/or DCJ are also investigating the allegations.
- Explain the likely timeframe and next steps, including how any risks will be managed, when appropriate.

If allegation raises risk of significant harm or criminality, reports to Child Protection Helpline and Police will be made.

OCG to be notified within 7 days of the allegation becoming known to Head of Entity.

Within 30 days the OCG requires the investigation report or an interim report on progress.

REGULAR PROGRESS UPDATES

Investigation process starts – the overall timeframe is usually less than 90 days but can be longer if matter is more complex. A simple matter may be completed within one month.

Evidence gathering takes place. This usually involves identifying and securing all relevant evidence identified; planning the involvement of the child, including conducting a child interview; and then conducting interviews with any other witnesses; requesting information from authorities; and identifying and analysing other evidence.

You will be advised of the name of the appointed investigator if this has not already occurred. You are welcome to provide any documentary or other evidence during the investigation process.

The subject of allegation is usually interviewed last once all relevant evidence has been gathered. They will be invited to participate in an interview and given an opportunity to comment on the allegations and related evidence.

After all available evidence is assessed, a decision will be made and communicated to the subject of allegation.

The reportable conduct investigation outcome will be provided to the alleged victim and/or their parent/carer as appropriate.

Final investigation report and findings made must be provided to the OCG Reportable Conduct Division by Entity.

Any sustained findings of sexual misconduct/sexual offences or serious physical abuse must be notified to the OCG's WWCC Division to inform the WWCC process.

## CLOSURE AND FINAL REPORTING

- If necessary, remedial action will be taken regarding your conduct, including risk management or disciplinary action; system or policy improvements may be made; and ongoing monitoring and support may be provided to the alleged victim.
- Investigation outcomes will be recorded.

## Appendix J: Complaint Handling Procedures

The Diocese has a robust procedure for receiving, recording, managing, resolving and monitoring complaints, including disclosures or allegations of current or historical abuse towards children or adults. These processes are documented in the **Complaint Management Framework and Policy** and the **Reportable Conduct Procedure**. The Diocese will ensure that the processes are communicated in ways that are appropriate and accessible to the diverse needs of our community, including children and adults with diminished capacity/cognitive impairment. As part of their initial and refresher safeguarding training, personnel will be familiarised with the Complaint Management Framework and their related responsibilities.

When a complaint, disclosure or allegation is received, the Diocese of Parramatta will:

- Record all key details, including details about the complainant, any additional communication or support required, the subject of the complaint, the complaint issues, how the complaint was resolved/investigated, how risks were managed and the complaint outcome.
- Acknowledge the complaint when it is received or as soon as possible afterwards using the preferred communication method nominated by the complainant.
- Provide the complainant with a contact person and information about the complaint-handling process, the likely next steps and expected timeframe for resolution.
- Assess the complaint to determine whether it raises any immediate risks to the safety or wellbeing of a child or adult.
- Identify and take any necessary steps to address and manage risks.
- Offer support to the complainant and anyone else affected by the complaint
- Take appropriate outcome-based or evidence-based action to resolve the complaint. The action taken will depend on a range of factors including:
  - the seriousness and/or complexity of the complaint
  - the people affected by the complaint
  - the outcomes sought by the complainant
  - whether other authorities or agencies need to know about the complaint or be involved in responding to it
- Finalise the complaint (which may include risk management and/or disciplinary action)
- Explain the outcome and review options to the complainant and the subject of complaint if they are dissatisfied
- Identify and implement any changes or improvements to policies or practices that are required to address systemic issues arising from the complaint.

If the complaint is not about something the Diocese can respond to, we will inform the complainant and (wherever possible) refer them to a person or organisation that can help as quickly as possible.

Wherever possible, the Diocese will try to resolve complaints promptly and as soon as possible after the complaint is made. However, where the complaint relates to a serious allegation or incident, this may not be appropriate. In such circumstances, complainants will be kept informed about what is happening with their complaint and where there are delays, timeframes will be clarified.

Complaints will be dealt with in a trauma-informed manner that is respectful to both complainant and respondent; prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk; and observes the principles of procedural fairness. Where necessary and appropriate, the Diocese will cooperate with other relevant organisations and seeks specialist advice in resolving complaints, including but not limited to Police, the Department of Communities and Justice and Office of the Children's Guardian.





# SERVICE GUARANTEE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

## REGISTRATION AND ASSESSMENT

Complaints can be made via [✉ complaints@parracatholic.org](mailto:complaints@parracatholic.org) ☎ (02) 8838 3419  
You will also be asked to give your contact details.

Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 7 days.  
You will be given a copy of the Diocesan complaint handling policy and an explanation of the complaint process. You may be asked to provide further information. For example details about your issues of complaint; relevant evidence; and the outcomes sought.

An appropriate supervisor/manager will undertake a preliminary assessment of your complaint. This process can take between 5 to 10 days, depending on the amount of information and complexity.

Your complaint will be allocated to an internal or external complaint handler/investigator as appropriate. A decision will be made about whether an investigation or informal resolution is the best approach.

You will be advised about the next steps in the complaint process, including who will be undertaking the investigation and/or resolution of your complaint within 10 days after the assessment has been completed.

### INVESTIGATION

### ASSISTED RESOLUTION/MEDIATION

REGULAR PROGRESS UPDATES

Investigation process starts – the overall timeframe is usually less than 90 days but can be longer if more complex.

Your direct involvement will be determined e.g. participating in a meeting/interview.

Evidence gathering takes place (including interviewing witnesses, the subject of complaint, and identifying and analysing documents/records).

A final determination will be made after all evidence is reviewed. You will be advised of the outcome, reasons, any remedial or other action to be taken, and internal/external review options.

Informal resolution process starts – the overall timeframe is usually 30 days but can be longer if more complex.

Your direct involvement will be determined e.g. participating in a meeting/conciliation.

Resolution meeting/conciliation held and agreed outcomes reached.

Final written advice about the outcomes and any other undertakings made will be provided.

REGULAR PROGRESS UPDATES

## COMPLAINT CLOSURE

If necessary, remedial action will be taken regarding the subject of complaint; ongoing monitoring and support to the complainant will be provided; and complaint outcomes will be recorded.



# COMPLAINT PROCESS FLOWCHART FOR SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT

## NOTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

You will be advised within 7 days that you are the subject of a complaint. You will be given details about: the broad nature of the complaint; an explanation of the complaints process; a contact officer from the Diocese; and referral details to receive support. We will identify and make available to you any policies, procedures, codes of conduct, that are relevant to the complaint.

After an assessment is made, you will be advised whether the complaint is to be formally investigated or if an informal resolution has been recommended. You will be informed about how the complaint will be dealt with, including who it will be handled by and the likely timeframe.

At an appropriate stage in the process (and before your interview), you will be provided with further detail about the allegations made if necessary. You are welcome to provide any documentary or other evidence during the process.

## INVESTIGATION

Investigation process starts - the overall timeframe is usually less than 90 days but can be longer if matter is more complex.

Evidence gathering takes place. This usually involves interviewing the complainant first and other witnesses; and identifying and analysing documents/records.

You will be invited to participate in an interview and given an opportunity to comment on the issues of complaint and related evidence.

After all available evidence is assessed, you will be notified of the investigation outcome, and any potential action that is proposed. If an adverse outcome is proposed, you will usually be given 14 days to make further submissions.

A final decision will be made and provided to you in writing.

## ASSISTED RESOLUTION/MEDIATION

Informal resolution process starts - the overall timeframe is usually 30 days but can be longer if more complex.

Your advice will be sought about the form the resolution process will take and your direct involvement will be determined. An initial meeting with you is a common starting point.

Facilitated meeting/conciliation; or separate meetings between parties and complaint handler take place where agreed outcomes are reached and undertakings made.

Final written advice about the outcomes and any other undertakings made will be provided.

REGULAR PROGRESS UPDATES

REGULAR PROGRESS UPDATES

## COMPLAINT CLOSURE

If necessary, remedial action will be taken regarding your conduct or to systems and processes; ongoing monitoring and support will be provided to the complainant; and complaint outcomes will be recorded.

## Appendix K: Modern Slavery

Modern slavery describes situations where persons use coercion, threats or deception to exploit victims and undermine their freedom.

Practices that constitute modern slavery can include:

- human trafficking
- slavery
- servitude
- forced labour
- debt bondage
- forced marriage, and
- the worst forms of child abuse

Modern slavery is a term used to describe serious exploitation. It does not include practices like substandard working conditions or underpayment of workers, though these practices are also harmful and may be present in some situations of modern slavery. For further information on workplace rights and obligations in Australia, please visit the Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman website.

Modern slavery can occur in every industry and sector and has severe consequences for victims. Modern slavery also distorts global markets, undercuts responsible business and can pose significant legal and reputational risks to entities.

Entities have a responsibility to respect human rights in their operations and supply chains, as outlined in the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*. This includes taking steps to assess and address modern slavery risks.

Taking action to combat modern slavery also makes good business sense. Entities that take action to combat modern slavery in their operations and supply chains can protect against possible business harm and improve the integrity and quality of their supply chains.

They can also increase profitability, investor confidence and access to financing opportunities.

The Australian Government is taking a global leadership role in combating modern slavery. There is no place for modern slavery in the Australian community or in the global supply chains of Australian goods and services.

### The Modern Slavery Act 2018

- The Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018 (the Act) entered into force on 1 January 2019. The Act established a national Modern Slavery Reporting Requirement (Reporting Requirement).
- This Reporting Requirement applies to large businesses and other entities in the Australian market with annual consolidated revenue of at least AUD\$100 million.
- The Reporting Requirement supports the Australian business community to identify and address their modern slavery risks, and maintain responsible and transparent supply chains.
- Entities required to comply with the Reporting Requirement, including the Commonwealth Government, must prepare annual Modern Slavery Statements.
- These statements must set out the reporting entity's actions to assess and address modern slavery risks in their global operations and supply chains. The Australian Government publishes these statements through an online central register. Modern slavery ([homeaffairs.gov.au](http://homeaffairs.gov.au))

Section 16 of the Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act sets out the mandatory criteria for modern slavery statements. These statements must include:

- Identification of the reporting entity;
- A description of the structure, operations and supply chains of the reporting entity;
- The risks of modern slavery practices in operations and supply chains;
- A description of actions taken by the reporting entity to assess and address those risks, including due diligence and remediation process.
- A description of how the organisation will assess the effectiveness of those actions. For example, the development of policies and processes to address modern slavery risks and provide training to staff and volunteers about modern slavery.

### **The Diocese of Parramatta released a statement on Modern Slavery in 2020:**

<https://parracatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Diocese-of-Parramatta-Modern-Slavery-Statement.pdf>

### **Other resources:**

1. <https://www.catholic.org.au/acbc-media/media-centre/media-releases-new/2129-bishops-back-efforts-to-eliminate-modern-slavery/file>
2. <https://www.acan.org.au/modernslavery>
3. <https://acrath.org.au/?s=Modern+Slavery>
4. News Articles:
  - <https://www.abc.net.au/4corners/behind-closed-doors/9424204>
  - <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-01/chef-underpaid-at-nowra-restaurant-adithya-kerala/10056934>
  - <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-16/couple-sentenced-over-forcing-fijian-woman-to-be-servant/11019432>

## Appendix L: What is Grooming

Bravehearts (<https://bravehearts.org.au/what-is-grooming/>) describes grooming as:

“The ‘preparation’ phase of child sexual assault and exploitation, undertaken by the perpetrator to gain the trust of the child or young person, and to establish secrecy and silence. It is not always only the child or young person who is groomed. Parents and carers or other significant adults (including organisations) may also be groomed by someone intending to harm a child.

Grooming may cause a child to;

- feel as though they have an important and special relationship with the person who is harming them;
- experience confusion over the nature of their relationship;
- internalise the abuse as their fault, feeling responsibility for any harm experienced and fearing they will be blamed, punished or not believed;
- fear that they will be separated from their family or home if they speak out; and/or
- believe that disclosure will cause harm to someone or something they love and care for, such as family members or pets.

Grooming includes a range of behaviours and/or verbal or written communications with the child or young person (or significant adults). The intention of this communication is to make sexual contact with the child or young person, whilst maintaining the child or young person’s silence.

Grooming may take a number of forms:

- Building the child’s trust: Using presents, special attention, treats, spending time together and playing games with non-sexual physical contact.
- Favouritism: The offender treats the child as an adult; treating them differently and making them feel like a unique friend, making the child feel more special than others.
- Gaining the trust of the child’s carer/s: Careful to be ‘seen’ as a close, caring and reliable relative or friend of the family.
- Isolation (from family, friends): To ensure secrecy and lessen chances of disclosure or belief.
- Intimidation and secrecy: The offender may use coercion e.g. threatening looks and body language, glares, stalking and rules of secrecy.
- ‘Testing the waters’ or boundary violation: ‘Innocent’ touching, gradually developing into ‘accidental’ sexual contact.
- Shaping the child’s perceptions: The child is often confused as to what is acceptable and can take on self-blame for the situation, as his/her viewpoint can become totally distorted.

It can be challenging to establish if a child is being groomed until after a sexual assault has occurred, as a perpetrator grooming a child often displays similarities of genuine caring behaviour.”

### Other resources:

1. <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/what-is-sexual-grooming/>
2. <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/exploitationgrooming.aspx>
3. <https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/htcb/htcb17>
4. <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/NSW.0110.01012.1188.pdf>

## Appendix M: The Diocese Risk Management Approach

All risks are assessed and managed on a continuing basis. Risks will be measured, escalated, and reported. The system used to support the measuring, escalating, and reporting is Triline GRC ('Triline'). The performance of the risk framework will be reviewed to continually refine towards best practice.

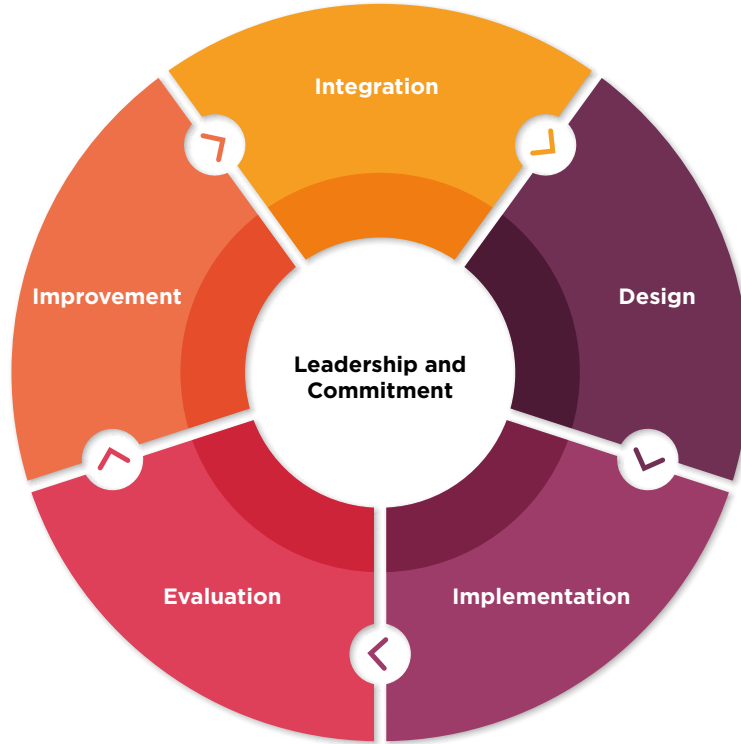
### The Diocese Risk Management Principles

The principles:

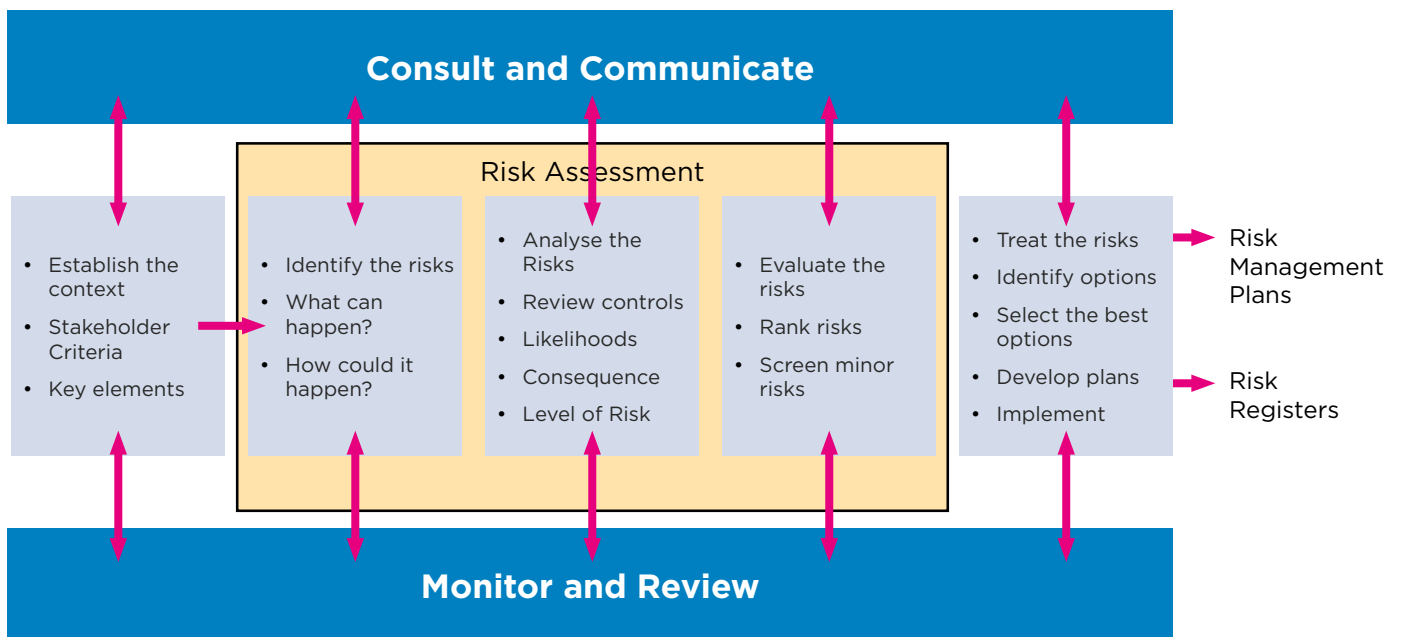
- a) Are Integrated. Risk Management is embedded in the Diocese activities and processes and is not treated as a stand-alone function. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and risk management is present on a strategic and operational level.
- b) Are structured and comprehensive. The approach leads to consistent, comparable and reliable results.
- c) Are based on the best available information. The Diocese's information sources for the inputs to the process of managing risk includes but is not limited to:
  - Historical data
  - Observation
  - Stakeholder feedback
  - Expert judgement
  - Experience.
- d) Are customised. Risk Management is aligned with the internal and external context, in addition to its risk profile.
- e) Take human and cultural factors into account. The Diocese recognises that the capabilities, perceptions and intentions of external and internal people can either facilitate or hinder the achievement of its objectives.
- f) Are inclusive. Includes involvement of decision makers and stakeholders at all levels. g) Are dynamic. As the internal and external context changes, so do its risks. Risk monitoring and reviewing will identify new emerging risks and changes in existing risks.
- h) Facilitate continual improvement. Processes are reviewed and modified as required. Systems, resources and capability / skills are also reviewed to ensure continuous improvement.
- i) Enable Ministries and Agencies to tailor risk management systems and practices to a level that is commensurate with the scale and nature of their risk profile.

## The Diocese Risk Management Framework

Consistent with the Principles above the Framework shown below provides a structured and disciplined approach, aligning strategy, processes, people, technology and knowledge for managing the uncertainties that the Diocese faces.



**Risk Management Process** The risk management process is consistent with the ISO31000:2018 Standard and is summarised below:



## Risk Matrix

LIKELIHOOD	5 - Almost Certain	5 - MEDIUM	10 - HIGH	15 - HIGH	20 - EXTREME	25 - EXTREME
	4 - Likely	4 - LOW	8 - MEDIUM	12 - HIGH	16 - HIGH	20 - EXTREME
	3 - Possible	3 - LOW	6 - MEDIUM	9 - MEDIUM	12 - HIGH	15 - HIGH
	2 - Unlikely	2 - VERY LOW	4 - LOW	6 - MEDIUM	8 - MEDIUM	10 - HIGH
	1 - Rare	1 - VERY LOW	2 - VERY LOW	3 - LOW	4 - LOW	5 - MEDIUM
		1 - Insignificant	2 - Minor	3 - Moderate	4 - Severe	5 - Catastrophic
<b>CONSEQUENCE</b>						

### Consequence Risk Rating Key (Refer to Point 10.5)

20 - 25 EXTREME: Must be brought to the immediate attention of the Bishop, DFC and reassessed.

10 - 19 HIGH: Oversight and monitoring of progress by the Heads of Agencies and Chief of Operations and Finance are required and reporting to the Bishop for monitoring.

6 - 9 MEDIUM: Identify management responsibility, monitor and review response action as necessary

3 - 5 LOW: Manage through existing processes and procedures.

1 - 2 VERY LOW: Unlikely to require allocation of resources.

For details of any of the above please refer to the Parramatta Diocese Risk Management Policy and Framework

<https://thedioceseofparramatta.sharepoint.com/forms-resources/policies/Documents/Risk%20Management%20Policy%20and%20Framework.pdf>



## Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Lined writing area consisting of 20 horizontal blue lines.







**This page is intentionally left blank.**

**This page is intentionally left blank.**





DIOCESE of  
PARRAMATTA

# Office for Safeguarding

