



Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

## **Diocesan Safeguarding Committee Terms of Reference**

The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst (The Diocese) is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all persons, especially children, young people<sup>i</sup>, and adults at risk<sup>ii</sup>. The Diocese is committed to nationally established Standards and Protocols of the Catholic Church, as well as being compliant with all State Government legislation.

The Diocese has a zero tolerance of abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and reported in line with its legal obligations, its moral obligations, and Catholic Church policies. The Diocese is committed to preventing abuse and identifying risks early to reduce and remove them.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee (The Committee) oversees the policies and procedures of the Diocese in relation to safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk. Complaints about current Church personnel are directed to the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Complaints about historical incidents are directed to the Professional Standards Officer in the Diocesan Archives.

### **Terms of Reference**

The Committee has the following Terms of Reference:

1. To assist all clergy, employees, and volunteers in the Diocese, including its parishes and agencies, to make the implementation of safeguarding practices for children, young people, and adults at risk and accountability for their implementation, a key responsibility, and a priority of ministry.
2. As a consultative group, to advise and assist the Bishop of Sandhurst in his duty of creating and sustaining safeguarding practices and policies in the parishes and institutions of his Diocese.

3. To assist the Safeguarding Co-ordinator to draft appropriate Policy and Codes of Conduct relating to the safeguarding of children, young people, and adults at risk.
4. To assist and advise the Safeguarding Co-ordinator in the oversight of the implementation of Diocesan policies and practices regarding safeguarding in parishes of the Diocese.
5. To assist the Safeguarding Co-ordinator in the preparation of materials for parishes and Diocesan audits, based on the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS), for such bodies as Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL).
6. To ensure that the Diocese maintains an accessible and effective point of reference for persons affected by alleged incidents of misconduct such as physical abuse or sexual abuse by Church personnel.

## **Role and Purpose**

The Committee is a formally constituted Committee of the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst, reporting to the Bishop of Sandhurst.

The Committee is an advisory group to the bishop.

The Committee oversees and monitors policies and practices relating to the NCSS and ensures those same policies and practices are embedded in the operational and ministerial practices of the parishes of the Diocese.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator reports to the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee on the management and implementation of the NCSS and safeguarding practices in the parishes of the Diocese.

On a regular basis the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee meets with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator to monitor continuous improvement of the Diocesan Safeguarding Implementation Plan.

## **Meetings**

The Committee meets at least three times a year, with additional meetings organised on a need's basis.

A quorum of the Committee consists of the Chair and three members.

Since it is an advisory body to the bishop, any advice to him would be by way of the consensus of the members.

All records of meetings are maintained by the Diocesan Chancery office.

## Membership

The Committee has between 4 and 8 members including the Chair, all appointed by the bishop.

The Bishop of Sandhurst is not a member of The Committee.

All appointments to The Committee are made by the bishop acting on recommendations made to him by the Chair and the current members of The Committee.

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator is a member of The Committee (ex-officio).
- The Diocesan Archivist and Professional Standards Officer is a member of The Committee (ex-officio).
- At least one member of the Committee should be external to the diocesan structure and not an employee of any Diocesan parish, agency, or entity.
- Other membership of The Committee is drawn from key bodies in the Diocese (Parishes, Catholic Education Sandhurst, CatholicCare Victoria). The Committee should include at least one person with Safeguarding and/or legal experience
- At least one member of The Committee should be clergy.
- Other possible areas of expertise on The Committee include public health, Catholic education, parishes, and social work.
- Membership of The Committee is for a three-year term, renewable.
- The Diocese arranges for secretarial support for Committee meetings.

### Contacts

#### **Chair of the Safeguarding Committee**

Tel: 0400 505 464

Email: [fbrowne@ceosand.catholic.edu.au](mailto:fbrowne@ceosand.catholic.edu.au)

#### **Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator**

Tel: 0438 951 010

Email: [childsafety@sandhurst.catholic.org.au](mailto:childsafety@sandhurst.catholic.org.au)

#### **Professional Standards Officer in the Diocesan Archives**

Tel: 03 5445 3611

Email: [archives@sandhurst.catholic.org.au](mailto:archives@sandhurst.catholic.org.au)

## 1. Approval

Approved by	Signature	
Bishop Shane Mackinlay – V.1.3	Signed copy held in the Chancery Office	1st May 2024

## 2. Revision History

Version	Date	Revised By	Description of Revision	Next Review
V. 1	25/05/2020	Professional Standards Committee	New policy	25/05/2022
V.1.1	13/08/2021	Diocesan Safeguarding Committee	Amendments to PSC now Safeguarding Committee. Child Safety Officer is now Safeguarding Co-ordinator and delete reference to “provide advice on historical child abuse allegations.”	13/08/2023
V.1.2	22/03/2023	Diocesan Safeguarding Committee	Amended policy to replace ‘vulnerable adults’ to ‘adults at risk’	22/03/2025
V.1.3	22/04/2024	Diocesan Safeguarding Committee	Input the definition of children and adults at risk	22/04/2026

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<sup>i</sup> Children and Young People refers to any person under the age of 18 years of age.

<sup>ii</sup> An adult is any person over the age of 18 years. An adult at risk refers to a person over the age of 18 years who is at an increased risk of experiencing abuse or exploitation, including by virtue of their age, disability, diminished capacity, cognitive impairment, cultural background, life, or personal circumstance.