



Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People

The Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People is subject to review prior to the review date as a result of relevant feedback from stakeholders, changes in legislation and review of critical incidents. Comments and feedback are welcome.

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We are committed to the
**NATIONAL CATHOLIC
SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS**

Introduction

- 1.1. The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst (the Diocese) holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our organisation. Our commitment is drawn from, and inherent in, the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice, and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel.
- 1.2. The Church's social doctrine constantly points out the need to respect the dignity of children. In the family, which is a community of persons, special attention must be devoted to the children by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity. The Diocese values children as an important part of its life. The Diocese recognises the need for empowerment of all children especially those who are more vulnerable. Their involvement in decision-making can be a significant factor in preventing abuse within Church organisations. It also values and respects parents and guardians as the first teachers of the faith to their own children and young people and will seek to engage parents and guardians in promoting the safety of children and young people. We provide:
 - information to parents and guardians about child safety practices, policies and procedures including reporting processes (via website, information sheets, resources for parents and guardians.) refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.1**.
- 1.3. The Diocese is committed to the protection of all children and young people and has a zero tolerance of child abuse. To achieve this, we:
 - promote the safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.
 - promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families.
 - welcome children with a disability and their families to promote their participation.
 - welcome all children and their families, without discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation, intersex status, or gender identity.
- 1.4. The Diocese has a zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and takes action when discrimination or exclusion is identified.

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Policy:

- **Child** – Children and young people who are under the age of 18 years. Throughout this policy, any reference to either 'child' or 'children' is a reference to children and young people under the age of 18.
- **Child Abuse** – Refer to section 3 for definition and explanation.
- **Child related role/direct contact with children** – Child related role (having direct contact), engaging in activities or providing services directed mainly towards children. Direct contact can refer to physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic contact which takes place as part of the regular duties of the individual's role.
- **Parent/guardian/carer** – has its ordinary meaning, that is, a person who has the authority and responsibility for the day-to-day care of a child.
- **Parish or diocesan activities involving children** – includes any activity involving children that is conducted or organised by, or under the auspices of, a parish or agency (which includes diocesan agencies and auspiced bodies) of the Diocese.
- **Use of parish or diocesan facilities/land/property** – includes any activities conducted by other persons or groups using parish or diocesan name or property. This includes third parties using premises on a regular or on a one-off-basis.
- **Child protection:** Statutory services (such as DFFH) designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm.

- **Safeguarding:** Includes measures to protect the safety, human rights, and well-being of individuals, which allow people - in this context children - to live free from abuse, harm, and neglect.
- **Safeguarding Committee:** a committee entrusted with delegated authority to develop, oversee, and monitor policies, procedures and practices which safeguard children engaging with the Diocese and to ensure safeguarding functions are embedded in the governance structures and practices of the Diocese.
- **Safeguarding Co-ordinator of the Diocese:** an individual who champions Safeguarding and to ensure that the policies and procedures approved by the Safeguarding Committee are communicated to relevant staff members including clergy, religious, paid and volunteer staff. Also, to provide or co-ordinate training and education, both induction and ongoing professional development, to clergy, religious, employees and volunteer staff.
- **Parish Child Safety Officers:** Personnel appointed within the parish by the canonical administrator to assist and support him in the implementation of the requirements of this policy and to liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator.
- **Clergy:** means those ordained in sacred ministry in the Catholic Church. Including bishops, priests, and deacons.
- **Religious:** Professed members of male and female Religious Orders.
- **Seminarian:** a student in training for ministerial priesthood in the Catholic Church, normally residing in a Seminary.
- **Employer:** The entity that pays the employee “name on the payslip”.
- **Employee:** A person that is hired to provide a service to a company either on a full time, part-time, or casual basis in exchange for payment.
- **Volunteer:** is an individual who willingly gives their time for the common good and without financial gain. (This can include online volunteering, spontaneous volunteering, and social entrepreneurship)
- **Contractor:** A person who is self-employed and provides services to clients. They operate differently to employees and are seen as owners and run their own business.

3. Child abuse

- 3.1. Child abuse or maltreatment is defined as an act (or series of acts) that endangers a child’s physical or emotional health or development and/ or a failure to provide conditions to the extent that the health and development of the child or young person is significantly impaired or placed at risk.
- 3.2. Categories of abuse and maltreatment include:
 - physical abuse refers to any non-accidental physically aggressive act towards a child. Physical abuse may be intentional or may be the inadvertent result of physical punishment. Physically abusive behaviours include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, and kicking.
 - sexual abuse refers to a person who uses power, force, or authority to involve a child in any form of unwanted or illegal sexual activity. This can involve touching or no contact at all. This may take the form of taking sexually explicit photographs or videos of children, forcing children to watch or take part in sexual acts and forcing or coercing children to have sex or engage in sexual acts with other children or adults.
 - grooming refers to a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging a child as a precursor to sexual abuse. It includes establishing a ‘special’ friendship/relationship with the child. Grooming can include the conditioning of parents and other adults to think that the relationship with the child is ‘normal’ and positive. The process can take as little as a few days or as long as months or even years.
 - neglect refers to a failure by a caregiver to provide the basic requirements for meeting the physical and emotional developmental needs of a child. Physically neglectful behaviours include a failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene, or medical attention.

- psychological abuse refers to inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts and a failure to provide adequate non-physical nurture or emotional availability. Psychologically abusive behaviours include rejecting, ignoring, isolating, terrorising, corrupting, verbal abuse, and belittlement.
- Spiritual abuse refers to the abuse of a child that is perpetrated by an individual in a position of authority and trust within the Church, supposedly in the name of God. It can cause a child to have lifelong loss of faith and/or feel distanced from the Church.
- exposure to family violence is generally considered to be a form of psychologically abusive behaviour, where a child is present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse, or psychological maltreatment, or is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member's violent behaviour.
- discrimination and bullying - Discrimination and bullying are examples of other forms of mistreatment that may impact a person physically and/or emotionally. Some examples of discrimination/bullying include a person or group of people repeatedly acting unreasonably towards another person; the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety. Unreasonable behaviour includes victimising, humiliating, intimidating, or threatening.

4. Scope

4.1. The scope of this Policy is intentionally broad. It applies throughout the Diocese to all persons who engages in any roles or activities undertaken by the Diocese, its parishes, agencies, and entities. This may include parishioners, parents/guardians, visitors and includes employees, volunteers, contractors, clergy, seminarians and Religious. It does not apply to Catholic Education Office Sandhurst or any Catholic Systemic School to which the policies of the Catholic Education Office Sandhurst apply. CatholicCare Victoria is subject to its own range of policies in accordance with requirements for mandatory reporting of abuse and registration at the Commonwealth and State Government levels as an accredited Community Service Organisation. These policies are available from Catholic Education Sandhurst and CatholicCare Victoria on request. This Policy applies in addition to existing policies of the Diocese, including:

- Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC)-Social Networking Policy (**refer to Attachment A - Doc No.2**)

5. Purpose

5.1. This Policy is designed to:

- Promote the wellbeing and safety of children involved in Church activities with the aim of preventing abuse and empowering children.
- Assist people who arrange and participate in children's activities (and those who engage them), to plan and carry out their work with confidence; and
- Provide a framework for clergy, seminarians, Religious, employees, volunteers, contractors, parents, and guardians by which they may have confidence in the conduct of their children's activities.

5.2. This Policy is intended to be broad in scope, but it cannot hope to explicitly treat the endless variety of activities, settings and situations that might occur in parishes, agencies, and entities across the Diocese. A prudent approach is required to apply it to particular circumstances and given the broad variety of activities and people in the Diocese, what is appropriate in one set of circumstances may not be appropriate in others. Parishes may need to supplement this Policy to encompass their specific circumstances.

5.3. This Policy is not intended to cover those activities where the child is under the direct care and supervision of a parent or guardian, for example, when children are attending a social gathering after Mass with a parent or guardian.

- 5.4. It is expected that all persons who participate in (or could reasonably be expected to participate in) parish or diocesan activities involving children will read this Policy, seek further information regarding anything that is not understood, and comply with it.

6. Policy Commitments

- 6.1. The Diocese acknowledges that we have a responsibility to prevent child abuse. This requires proactive approaches across policies, procedures, and practices consistent with the requirements of the:
- Child Safe Standards and the reportable Conduct Scheme (Commission for Children and Young People) CCYP (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.3**)
 - National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.4**)
 - National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). For a summary of the NCSS see Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) safeguarding standards (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.5**)
- 6.2. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Diocese has developed this policy to guide the implementation of Child Safety Policies, procedures and practices within parishes, agencies, and entities in the Diocese with the aim of preventing child abuse, empowering children, responding to concerns and disclosures or allegations of child abuse of child-related misconduct. The policy should be read in conjunction with the attachments and Appendices of this policy. The Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is available on the website (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.6**).

7. Safeguarding responsibilities – Diocesan Leadership

- 7.1. The bishop has appointed the Safeguarding Committee at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of child safeguarding practices. (For the Safeguarding Committee terms of reference refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.7**). This committee is advisory to the bishop.
- 7.2. The Diocese has appointed a Safeguarding Co-ordinator who is responsible for co-ordinating, overseeing and monitoring the duty of the Diocese to ensure the proper safeguarding of children.
- 7.3. Through the Diocese Safeguarding Committee and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator of the Diocese, the Bishop supports and assists parishes, agencies, and entities to: -
- Implement safeguarding practices and processes outlined in this policy.
 - Coordinate the response to allegations and reports of child safety related misconduct and child abuse in relation to clergy, seminarians, Religious, employees, volunteers, and contractors across the Diocese.
 - Monitor and continually improve safeguarding practices and processes.
 - Ensuring thorough rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of employees and volunteers.
 - Ensuring that employees and volunteers of the Diocese have access to appropriate learning material to develop their knowledge, openness to, and ability to address, child safety matters.
 - Ensuring the Diocese meets the specific requirements of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS).

8. Safeguarding responsibilities – Parish, agency, and entity Leadership

- 8.1. Parishes, agencies, and entity leadership are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy to protect children from abuse. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator of the Diocese visits each parish, agency, and entity regularly to assist in complying with the NCSS. Each parish, agency and entities Child Safety Officer, parish priest or leader is required to summarise its compliance on an annual basis to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator of the Diocese.

- 8.2. Parish Child Safety Officers are appointed within each parish by the canonical administrator to assist and support him in the implementation of the requirements of this policy and to liaise with the Safeguarding Coordinator of the Diocese (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.8** volunteer role description of child safe team member which includes a Parish Child Safety Officer).

9. Children are safe, informed and participate

- 9.1. Ensure children are informed about their rights and promote appropriate behaviour by children (refer to **Appendix A – Consulting with Children and Young People / Children’s Code of Conduct**).

10. Creating culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families

- 10.1. The Diocese is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is celebrated and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children include:
- 10.2. Encourage an Acknowledgment of Country at Mass and events
- 10.3. Consulting with families and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to identify opportunities to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and practices
- 10.4. Providing opportunities for children to share their cultural identity and express their culture, including through Diocesan/parish activities
- 10.5. Supporting children who wish to explore their culture, including with their family and relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations
- 10.6. Provide training for staff and volunteers on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and its importance to their wellbeing and safety
- 10.7. Celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week
- 10.8. Seek feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and communities on their experience at Diocesan/parish events, particularly how they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

11. Safe Personnel - Screening and Recruitment of employees, volunteers, and contractors

- 11.1. The Diocese applies thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees, volunteers and contractors when engaging in child-related roles, having direct contact, engaging in activities, or providing services directed mainly towards children. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for employees, volunteers, and contractors’ positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy or a summary of the policy.
- 11.2. Parishes, agencies, and entity leadership groups are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy to ensure that children are protected from abuse. A flowchart to assist Parishes engaging new employees/volunteers is available (refer to **Appendix C – Recruitment and Screening, Education and Training of Personnel**).
- 11.3. For further information on who is required to undergo a National Police Check refer to **Appendix F**.
- 11.4. For further information on Working with Children Checks and who is required to pass a check refer to **Appendix G**.

12. Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR)

- 12.1. All clergy and Religious of the Diocese have an ACMR number. Clergy and Religious from another Diocese undertaking religious duties are required to provide their ACMR number to the Chancery office, this supplies a testimony of suitability to work in the Diocese, or until gaining the ACMR

provides the standard warranty documentation. The Diocese maintains records of all ACMRs. (**Refer to Appendix G**).

13. Code of Conduct

- 13.1. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Employees, volunteers, contractors, clergy, seminarians and Religious, acknowledge their individual responsibility to comply with the Code of Conduct. (Refer to **Appendix B – Code of Conduct**).
- 13.2. This Policy is intended to complement the principles and standards that apply to clergy, religious brothers, and sisters such as those set out in *Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia and Integrity in Service of the Church* which may apply to employees, volunteers, or contractors (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.9**).

14. Professional Supervision

- 14.1. For clergy and Religious, professional supervision assists in the maintenance of boundaries of the pastoral relationship and enhances the quality of their ministry. A member of the clergy and Religious commitment to conscious and critical reflection on their ministry and ministry experiences is recognised as being important for the wellbeing of the member of clergy and Religious, the people with whom they exercise ministry, the wider Church, and the community. There is a requirement for every pastorally active priest to participate in no less than 6 hours of supervision or reflection practice per year either individual or as a group.
- 14.2. The Director of Clergy Life and Ministry maintains a register of qualified and approved supervisors who are available to clergy and others for pastoral Supervision.
- 14.3. The Diocese maintains records of professional in-service and supervision for members of the clergy and Religious.

15. Providing a Safe environment – Risk Management

- 15.1. The Diocese is committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to child safety across the whole environment (physical and online) and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. The Diocese documents, implements, monitors, and reviews its risk management strategies annually for child safety and ensures that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.
- 15.2. People in parishes agencies or entities of the Diocese who is involved in child related roles/direct contact with children or whose regular responsibilities include visiting schools or parishes are required to review their risk management strategies annually for child safety and effect any changes in behaviour deemed necessary.
- 15.3. Appropriate preparation and planning for activities will enable parishes, agencies, and entities to act in accord with this policy and assist them to manage any unexpected circumstances should they arise. (Refer to **Appendix D – Providing a Safe Environment for Children and Young People**).

16. Responding to and reporting child safety related misconduct and/or child abuse

- 16.1. The safety of children is paramount. All concerns, allegations or complaints of child abuse will be taken seriously and acted upon consistent with the Diocese moral, ethical and legal obligations to safeguard children. When an adult is concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable ground' is not the same as having proof but is more than a mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. (Refer to **Appendix E – Safeguarding and Complaints Management**).

- 16.2. Mandatory Reporting is the legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the Department of Family, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection). For a list of mandatory reporters and further information regarding Mandatory reporting (refer to **Appendix H – Child Safety Legislation**).
- 16.3. Reportable Conduct Scheme (RCS) requires organisations to respond to allegations of child abuse made against their workers and volunteers, and to notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) of any allegations which will enable the CCYP to oversee those responses. (Refer to **Appendix E – Safeguarding and Complaints Management**).
- 16.4. Vos Estis Lux Mundi (VELM) is a universal reporting process of the catholic church to be used by all members of the clergy and all Religious (male and female) who are obliged to report on crimes of abuse towards children and vulnerable adults committed by other clergy and Religious. (Refer to **Appendix E – Safeguarding and Complaints Management**).
- 16.5. The following are now offences under the Crimes act 1958 (revisions)
- Failure to Disclose offence: any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 years of age has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to the police is a criminal offence.
 - Failure to Protect offence: the offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 years or age under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit an offence if they know of the risk, but negligently fail to reduce or remove it.
 - Grooming offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Many perpetrators of sexual offences against children purposely create relationships with victims, their families, or carers to create a situation where abuse could occur. For this reason, parents, carers, or other family members who have been targeted by perpetrators to gain access to a child are also victims. (Refer to **Appendix H – Child Safety legislation in Victoria**).

17. Review of this Policy

18. The Diocese will review this policy every two years and when required. The Diocese welcomes any comments or suggestions for improvement. Any suggestions may be forwarded to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator of the Diocese.

19. Approval

Approved by	Signature	Date
Bishop Shane Mackinlay	<i>Bishop Shane Mackinlay</i> (Signed copy on file at the Chancery Office)	14/12/2022

20. Revision History

Policy - Version	Date	Revised By	Description of Revision	Next Review
Child Safety Policy V 1.0	1/07/2018	Professional Standards Committee	New Child Safety Policy	1/07/2020
Code of Conduct for Caring for Children V 1.1	1/07/2018	Professional Standards Committee	New Code of Conduct for Caring for Children Policy	1/07/2020
Child safety Policy V 1.0	7/09/2020	Professional Standards Committee	Child Safety Policy – cancelled and replaced with Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People	N/R

Code of Conduct for Caring for Children V 1.1	7/09/2020	Professional Standards Committee	Code of Conduct for Caring for Children Policy – cancelled and replaced with Safeguarding policy for Children and Young People	N/R
Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People V 1.0	7/09/2020	Professional Standards Committee	New Policy - Replaces the Child Safety Policy and the Code of Conduct for Caring for Children Policy	7/09/2022
Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People V 2.0	13/08/2021	Safeguarding Committee	Amendments to Policy including Appendices C, D, E and added Appendix F & G	13/08/2023
Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People V 2.1	14/01/2022	Safeguarding Committee	Amendments to Appendix E to include Pathways Victoria. Appendix G update to Exclusion Notice.	14/01/2024
Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People V 2.2	30/11/2022	Safeguarding Committee	Amendments to include Standard 1 of the Victorian Standards	30/11/2024

21. Attachment A: Resources and Further Information

Reporting	The Bishop	Telephone: (03) 5445 3600 Email: bishop@sandhurst.catholic.org.au
	Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Telephone: 0438 951 010 Email: childsafety@sandhurst.catholic.org.au
	Diocesan Archivist and Professional Standards Officer	Telephone: (03) 5445 3611 Email: archivist@sandhurst.catholic.org.au
	Chair of Safeguarding Committee	Telephone: 0400 505 464 Email: fbrowne@ceosand.catholic.edu.au
	Commission for Children and Young People	Telephone: (03) 8601 5281 Email: childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au
Documents		Website:
Doc No.1	Guide for parents and carers	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Doc No.2	ACBC – Social Networking Policy	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Doc No.3	Victorian Child Safe Standards (CCYP) and reportable conduct.	https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/
Doc No.4	National Principles for Child Safe Organisations	National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
Doc No.5	National Catholic Safeguarding Standards/NCSS (Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd.)	https://www.acsltd.org.au/
Doc No.6	Statement of Commitment to Child Safety	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Doc No.7	Terms of Reference for Safeguarding Committee	Safeguarding Terms of Reference
Doc No.8	Child Safety Team Member – role description	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/login

Doc No.9	Link to Code of Conduct - <i>Integrity in Ministry and Integrity in Service of the Church</i>	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix A	Children are safe informed and participate. (Policy - Safeguarding Children and Young People)	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix B	Code of Conduct. (Policy - Safeguarding Children and Young People)	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix C	Recruitment, screening, Induction, and training of personnel. (Policy - Safeguarding Children and Young People)	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix D	Risk Management - Providing a safe environment for children. (Policy - Safeguarding Children and Young People)	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix E	Safeguarding and Complaints Management. (Policy - Safeguarding Children and Young People)	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix F	National Police Check (Policy – Safeguarding Children and Young People)	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix G	Working with Children Protocol (Policy – Safeguarding Children and Young People)	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix H	Child Safety legislation in Victoria (Policy - Safeguarding Children and Young People)	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards