



CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF ROCKHAMPTON

Safe Activities Procedure

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1. Purpose

To establish a procedure to ensure that activities involving children, young people or adults-at-risk are safe.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to everyone who works or ministers within the Diocese or any of its parishes, agencies, or ministries, including clergy, religious, employees, contractors, students on placement, and volunteers.

Other Catholic entities including, but not limited to, Mercy Partners, Mercy Health and Aged Care Central Queensland, St Vincent de Paul Society, the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross, Edmund Rice Education Australia, Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle, Melbourne and the Catholic Military Ordinariate of Australia must comply with this Policy to the extent that their operations are situated within the Diocese.

3. Procedure Overview

This procedure establishes a risk management approach that systematically identifies and assesses risk associated with programs, activities and events involving children, young people and adults-at-risk to minimise opportunities for harm to occur. It also provides other practice and behavioural guidelines in relation to specific programs, activities and events involving children, young people and adults-at-risk.

4. Procedures

4.1. Risk Assessment and Management

A risk is anything, including the behaviour of others that can cause harm or loss to a person.

In assessing any activity or service provision within the Diocese, it is important to assess risk to consider how harm might occur, and why and when it could occur.

The Risk Assessment Matrix and Risk Assessment Summary Form should be used in the assessment of risks. Once the level of risk is determined, the risks can be prioritised and options that effectively control the situation can be considered for implementation.

Risk assessments must be conducted on all activities and services that involve children, young people and adults-at-risk. These must address the physical environment and sun safety. These assessments are to be kept on file by the activity leader and reviewed at least annually or when an adverse incident occurs, or the circumstances change significantly.

The risk of harm to children, young people and adults-at-risk can be minimised by:

- Ensuring that activities support the interests of those involved;
- Providing constant supervision by reliable and trained adults;
- Knowing where participants are at all times; and
- Implementing appropriate risk mitigation strategies within the environment to keep participants safe. For example, installing glass windows into doors to give visibility of a particular space.

A risk assessment for a typical parish activity is provided in *Appendix A*. The Identification of Training Needs for Safeguarding Risk Assessments Form should be used to assist with the identification of training needs for employees and volunteers.

For further advice on the completion of risk assessment and risk management, contact the Diocesan Human Resource Manager.

The Activities for Children Checklist Form provides a checklist to assist with planning for general/regular activities with children.

There may be times when Diocesan entities, other than a parish, conduct activities for children, young people, and adults-at-risk from the parish. In such a case it is imperative that a risk assessment be undertaken. The Special Event Safeguarding Checklist Form should be used as a checklist of issues to be considered for these special events. It is also important to know who is in attendance at activities along with who has delivered and who has collected the child, young person or adult-at-risk. The Sign In/Sign Out and Contact Tracing Register Form should be used for this purpose. The Parents/Guardians Consent Form should be completed for activities/groups giving basic details including contact details, special needs and medical needs.

4.2. Professional Standards Declarations

A cleric of the Diocese of Rockhampton who wishes to minister in another diocese outside the Province of Brisbane (i.e. outside the dioceses of Brisbane, Cairns, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, and Townsville) is required to apply for faculties of that diocese. The cleric is to present his Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR)/Application for Short Term Ministry form (or equivalent) to the bishop of that diocese.

A cleric of the Diocese of Rockhampton who wishes to minister in a diocese within the Province of Brisbane must provide his ACMR/Application for Short Term Ministry form (or equivalent) to the bishop of the relevant diocese and inform him as a matter of courtesy that he is intending to minister in the diocese.

If a priest or religious from outside the Diocese of Rockhampton intends ministering in a parish, Catholic school, Catholic agency, a Catholic organisation, prayer group or ministry of the Diocese of Rockhampton, they are required to contact the Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office and submit their Application for Short Term Ministry form before they exercise any ministry.

A priest or religious from outside the Diocese of Rockhampton cannot begin any pastoral ministry in this Diocese before they receive an official letter from the Bishop of Rockhampton indicating that they have the Bishop's permission.

A lay minister or any lay person intending on ministering in a parish, Catholic school, Catholic agency, Catholic organisation, prayer group or ministry in a public place requires official permission from the Bishop to do so. They are required to contact the Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office and submit their Application for Short Term Ministry before they exercise any ministry.

All priests and religious who hold an appointment by the Bishop of Rockhampton are required to complete annual mandatory safeguarding training consisting of:

- Face-to-face Safeguarding training,
- Safeguarding Policy awareness and compliance training

and comply with the Blue Card Policy.

4.2.1. Australian Catholic Ministry Register

The Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR) is an online system allowing Catholic Church authorities to verify that an individual coming to exercise ministry in their jurisdiction is currently in good standing.

The Diocese requires that any received application for ministry (with an active ACMR) still requires verification of a valid Queensland Blue Card.

4.3. Presbyteries

The Diocese's Presbytery Policy outlines the safeguarding requirements for parishes and clergy to ensure that presbyteries are managed appropriately.

4.4. Supervision – Two Adult Rule

General safe practice in all activities recommends the application of the *Two Adult Rule* that serves to keep children, young people and adults-at-risk, as well as the adults serving them, safe:

No fewer than two supervising adults must be present at all times during any parish-sponsored program, event or ministry involving children, young people or adults-at-risk.

It is best that the two supervising adults are not related to each other.

Why have this rule?

- It drastically reduces the risk of an incident of abuse (a potential abuser may lose interest if they are constantly in sight of a supervising adult);
- It protects the supervising adults against false allegations;
- It reduces the possibility of a claim of negligence;
- Parents and adults are more likely to volunteer to lead if they know they will have help on a regular basis;
- It provides help if there is an accident or emergency;
- It sends a clear statement that children, young people and adults-at-risk are important and valued.

What should you do if we have a hard time finding even one supervising adult?

- Invite a parent or other parishioner to join the activity as the second supervising adult;
- Speak to the Parish Priest/Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR)/Professional Standards and Safeguarding Manager to ascertain if there is a safe solution.

Although the *Two Adult Rule* is mandatory, all supervision of children should ensure safety and, therefore, groups of younger children require more supervising adults. Education guidelines state that teachers should work on a ratio of at least one adult to five Prep students and at least one adult to ten students (for Years 1, 2 and 3). For a group of 30 children aged eight years old, a minimum of three supervising adults would be required.

4.5. Co-location of Buildings

There are numerous examples in the Diocese of parish facilities being located adjacent to school facilities. This provides the opportunity for children and young people to venture into parish facilities without appropriate supervision. Where parish and school facilities are co-located, every reasonable effort should be made to ensure that fixed and secure boundaries are in place between parish and school facilities to prevent unrestricted access between the parish facilities and school. Clear signage should be used to identify appropriate access areas.

4.6. Behavioural Expectations

At the outset of any activity, expectations about appropriate and socially acceptable behaviour and taking responsibility for one's own behaviour should be made clear to children, young people and adults-at-risk. Additionally, the registration form completed by the parent or carer should include behavioural expectations.

Should a person's behaviour disrupt the activity or endanger the safety of the individual or others, a supervising adult will advise the individual to stop and encourage pro-social behaviours. Any intervention is required to be non-aggressive, non-humiliating and non-punitive.

4.7. Physical Contact

Physical contact with children, young people and adults-at-risk may be required in some circumstances. These may include management of an injury, to assist with toileting, and other exceptional circumstances. Where practical, a supervising adult should provide an explanation to the child/young person/adult-at-risk as to what the physical contact will be and why it will occur.

Consideration should be given to whether it is necessary to seek permission from the child, young person, adult-at-risk and/or parent/carer in relation to the physical contact and any supervision that is required in relation to the physical contact (depending on the nature of the contact).

Any physical contact with a child, young person, or adult-at-risk is expected to be developmentally appropriate, appropriate for the ministry activity, and in a manner that ensures the safety of all involved.

4.8. Transport

Clergy, religious, employees, students on placement and volunteers should not transport children, young people or adults-at-risk in their vehicles. There may, however, be an exceptional circumstance and when this happens specific permission must be obtained from the relevant parent/carer. In this event, the *Two Adult Rule* applies.

4.9. Change Rooms/Toilets

Children, young people and adults-at-risk should be afforded privacy when using toilets and change rooms. Responsible ministry requires that adequate and appropriate supervision be given in these circumstances. It is highly unlikely that a child would attend a Church activity without a parent/carer. If the child, young person or adult-at-risk requires direct supervision or assistance, their parent/carer should be sent to attend to them. If a parent/carer is not present then, in the exceptional case that assistance is required, the supervising adults should ensure that the person's privacy and dignity are maintained. The *Two Adult Rule* applies. Consideration should be given to the gender of the supervising adults.

4.10. Managing Injuries or Illness

Should a child, young person or adult-at-risk be injured, first aid should be rendered and parents/carer contacted immediately. An ambulance should be called if the injury/illness cannot be alleviated by simple first aid or if the parents/carer are not available to make that decision. The activity leader should have access to the completed registration/consent form that gives contact details and the authority to administer first aid. Sick or injured children, young people and adults-at-risk should be appropriately supervised until either the parent/carer or the ambulance service takes over their care.

The activity leader should complete an Incident Report Form.

Should a child, young person or adult-at-risk require medication during an activity, the medication must be safely stored.

4.11. Photography/Video

Parishes host a range of activities including liturgical, pastoral and formational activities. It is not uncommon for parents and other family members to take photographs of their children at celebrations. It is important to be aware that there are some people who may attend these activities and attempt to take inappropriate photographs or video footage of children, young people or adults-at-risk.

It is essential that the parish makes clear to all in attendance that taking a photograph can be construed as obtaining personal information and, therefore, photographs should be treated as any other item of personal, confidential information. Attendees are to be encouraged to use sensitivity when taking photographs and to confirm with the parents of children other than their own that they are comfortable having their child included in photographs taken by someone other than their own family members. A similar courtesy should also be extended to adults who may be included in the photographs.

The responsibility for this notification lies with the Parish Priest but can be delegated, for example, to the activity leader. A suggested script is found in *Appendix B*.

Good practice includes the following:

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- For formal photography of a celebration for use by the parish, permission to take images of children must be sought using the Consent to Photography and Media Form, signed off by parents/carers and kept on file.
- The use of a designated photographer to take photographs for a particular ritual; for example, confirmation;
- The provision of identification to the designated photographer which must be worn during the ritual/event and returned to the parish afterwards. The identification is to demonstrate to those present that photographs are to be taken only for the purpose of the ritual/event;
- All photographs should be taken in a public setting;
- Images should be used for the intended purposes;
- Ensure all children, young people and adults-at-risk are appropriately dressed;
- Images should be carefully stored with consent attached or cross-referenced;
- Names, dates and other contextual information should also be stored;
- Images should only be passed to third parties for their use where this has been agreed as part of the consent process;
- Those whose identity may require protection should not be photographed;
- Should photographs of children, young people or adults-at-risk be displayed, their names should not be included other than with the parent/carer's express written consent;
- Refusal of consent should not in any way limit a child, young person or adult-at-risk's participation in activities;
- Parents and other members of the parish need to be made aware that protective measures over images are taken as there is evidence that information posted on the internet or published in a magazine/newspaper can be used to target children, to locate them as part of a grooming process, and to make child exploitation images.

Questions to consider:

- What is the reason for this photography?
- Do you have permission to take and use images of children, young people and adults-at-risk?
- Have you asked the child, young person or adult-at-risk how they may feel about the use of their image?
- Have you provided enough information about the image so the parent/carer can give informed consent?
- How will others interpret the image?
- Does the use of the image exploit the child, young person or adult-at-risk in any way?
- Will you put the child, young person or adult-at-risk at risk if you photograph them?
- Who will see promotional material containing the image?
- Have you considered issues of confidentiality under *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)* and *Privacy Act 1988*?

4.12. Social Media

All use of social media by Diocesan personnel must be in compliance with the Diocese's Social Media Policy, especially where it relates to children, young people and adults-at-risk.

4.13. Smoking, Alcohol Consumption and the Use of Medications and Drugs

Those running activities for children, young people and/or adults-at-risk should not use, provide or permit the use of alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs during these times. Where it is reasonably suspected that a worker/volunteer has attended under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (including medication) which may impair their judgement or impact on their performance, or is consuming alcohol or using drugs during a Church activity, this must be reported to the group leader who will act to make the situation safe in the first instance and then address the issue. This will include completing a safeguarding recording form and informing the PSR and Parish Priest who will follow the process of reporting. Similarly, where it is reasonably suspected that a child, young person or adult-at-risk has attended an activity under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or it is reasonably suspected that a child, young person or adult-at-risk is using drugs or alcohol during a Church activity, they need to be managed to ensure their safety and the safety of everyone in attendance, and consideration should be given to reporting the incident to the Department of

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Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs. If a worker requires medication, this should be safely secured and not accessible by children, young people or adults-at-risk.

5. References

Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference. (2021, February 15). *Social Network Policy for the Catholic Church in Australia*. Retrieved from Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference: <https://www.catholic.org.au/acbc-media/media-centre/social-networking-policy>

National Committee for Professional Standards: A Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops & the Leaders of Religious Institutes in Australia. (2004 [reprinted 2010]). *Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia*. Alexandria.

National Committee for Professional Standards: A Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops & the Leaders of Religious Institutes in Australia. (2011). *Integrity in the Service of the Church: A Resource Document of Principles and Standards for Lay Workers in the Catholic Church in Australia*. Alexandria.

6. Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

7. Procedure Information

Subordinate Schedules	Appendix A: Example Risk Assessment Matrix Summary Schedule Appendix B: Suggested Script for Use of Photography or Video Schedule
Accountable Officer	Professional Standards and Safeguarding Manager
Policy Type	Procedure
Approved Date	24/10/2022
Effective Date	25/10/2022
Review Date	25/10/2025
Relevant Legislation	Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld) Copyright Act 1968 Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 (Qld) Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) Electronic Transactions Act 1999 (Qld) Guardianship and Administration Act 2000 (Qld) International Property Laws Amendment (Raising the Bar) Act 2012 Privacy Act 1988 Public Guardian Act 2014 (Qld) Public Health Act 2005 (Qld) Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)
Related Policies	Safeguarding Policy ICT Acceptable Use Policy Presbytery Policy Social Media Policy
Related Procedures	
Related forms, publications and websites	Consent to Photography and Media Form Risk Assessment Matrix and Summary Form Identification of Training Needs for Safeguarding Risk Assessments Form Activities for Children Checklist Form Application for Short Term Ministry Form Special Event Safeguarding Checklist Form Sign In/Sign Out and Contract Tracing Register Form Parent/Guardian Consent Form Incident Report Form

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