



CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF ROCKHAMPTON

Safeguarding Policy

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1. Purpose

To identify potential risks of harm to children, young people and adults-at-risk within the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton ('Diocese') and to implement strategies to prevent or minimise those risks.

2. Scope

The Policy 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. Policy Statement

The Catholic Church has a mission-based moral and legal responsibility to create nurturing environments where children, young people and adults-at-risk are respected, where their voices are heard, and where they feel safe and are safe.

The Diocese holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults-at-risk as a fundamental responsibility of the Church. This commitment is drawn from, and inherent to, the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the dignity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel.

4. Principles

4.1. Right to safety and participation

A culture of safety within the Church ensures that children, young people (defined as a person under 18 years of age) and adults-at-risk can actively and fully participate in the life of the Church and realise their potential in a faith community. The Diocese has zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and maltreatment of children, young people and adults-at-risk and is committed to protecting them from harm.

4.2. Dignity of children, young people and adults-at-risk

The Diocese values the contribution and dignity of all children, young people and adults-at-risk and creates opportunities to involve them in decision-making about programs, activities and events that affect them. The Diocese recognises the need for empowerment of all children, young people and adults-at-risk, especially those at greater risk of abuse. Their involvement in decision-making can be a significant protective factor in preventing abuse within Church organisations.

4.3. Informing and involving parents (and guardians) in promoting child safety

The Diocese acknowledges that effective child safety and safeguarding should be undertaken in partnership with parents and guardians and seeks to engage parents as critical partners in promoting the safety of children, young people, and adults-at-risk. The involvement of parents and guardians of children and young people who are more vulnerable to experiencing abuse is particularly important.

4.4. Safeguarding responsibilities

The Bishop has primary responsibility for safeguarding within the Diocese. He appoints various bodies and positions to help him fulfil this responsibility in accordance with the National Response Protocol (Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd, 2020).

In keeping with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, 2019), it is important that safeguarding roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The Diocese's safeguarding roles and responsibilities are set out in *Appendix A*.

4.5. Safe personnel

4.5.1. Selection, recruitment and screening

The Diocese, in seeking to provide safe and enriching interactions with children, young people and adults-at-risk, sets out selection, recruitment and screening processes that consider the suitability and appropriateness of persons to work with children and young people in ministry or in an employment or voluntary role to minimise the risk of child abuse occurring.

4.5.2. Code of conduct

A code of conduct that addresses safeguarding provides guidance to clergy, employees and volunteers in the context of their involvement with children, young people and adults-at-risk in the Diocese.

4.5.3. Induction

Induction processes incorporate safeguarding awareness to build a foundation of understanding and commitment to the safety of children, young people and adults-at-risk.

4.5.4. Safeguarding training

In supporting clergy, employees and volunteers to promote the safety of children, young people and adults-at-risk and discharge their responsibilities in line with this policy, the Diocese provides a range of training and education activities that equip clergy, employees and volunteers with the skills and knowledge to promote the safe participation of children, young people and adults-at-risk.

4.5.5. Supervision

It is a requirement of this policy that those whose roles involve working with children, young people and adults-at-risk are provided with supervision and support to undertake their role in a manner which promotes the safety of children, young people and adults-at-risk and enables detection of behaviour that may be detrimental to them.

4.6. Safe activities

The Diocese safeguards children, young people and adults-at-risk by employing a risk management approach that systemically 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.

In addition to risk management process, the Diocese provides practice and behavioural guidelines in relation to programs, activities and events involving children, young people and adults-at-risk.

Refer to the Diocese's *Safe Activities Procedure*.

4.7. Responding to and reporting abuse

The safety of children, young people and adults-at-risk is paramount. All incidents, disclosures, allegations and concerns of abuse in relation to a child, young person or adult-at-risk will be taken seriously and acted upon consistent with the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton's moral, ethical and legal obligations to safeguard children, young people and adults-at-risk.

Refer to the Diocese's *Responding to Allegations Procedure*.

5. References

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd. (2020, November). The National Response Protocol: Church Authorities in Australia responding to concerns and allegations of child abuse. Australia. Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yDpv42X1CO4Zcv51uhDu5GMolGSA5Oz_/view

Catholic Professional Standards Ltd. (2019). National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. (1). Melbourne, Victoria.

6. Schedules

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

7. Policy Information

Subordinate Schedules	Appendix A: Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities Schedule Appendix B: Glossary of Terms Schedule
Accountable Officer	Professional Standards and Safeguarding Manager
Policy Type	Governance Policy
Approved Date	24/10/2022
Effective Date	25/10/2022
Review Date	25/10/2025
Relevant Legislation	
Related Policies	Personnel Screening Policy Blue Card Policy ICT Acceptable Use Policy Recruitment and Selection Policy Privacy Policy Presbytery Policy Social Media Policy Harassment, Bullying and Violence in the Workplace Policy Code of Conduct
Related Procedures	Safe Activities Procedure Responding to Allegations Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	

<p>Definitions</p>	<p>Child abuse</p> <p>Child abuse or maltreatment is defined as an act (or series of acts) that endangers a child or young person'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.</p> <p>Categories of abuse and maltreatment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical abuse • sexual abuse including grooming • emotional abuse including spiritual abuse • family violence • neglect • discrimination • bullying <p>Signs and indicators of child abuse or maltreatment are not always obvious. Physical abuse may be more visible than other forms of abuse (e.g. bruising). Neglect is harder to identify as it consists of a failure to provide adequate care and attention. Likewise, you may not witness discrimination or bullying in relation to disability, mental illness, family violence, skin colour or race, gender identity or sexual orientation. However, it may result in signs or indicators in the child's behaviour, for example social withdrawal and depression.</p> <p>All children and young people are vulnerable but there are some children and young people who have an even higher risk of abuse than the general population. They are children who have experienced abuse before or who have a disability, are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those experiencing poverty or homelessness or out of home care. Similarly, the child safety needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are more acute due to a history of racism, marginalisation and dispossession.</p>
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