



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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1. 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. We value diversity and do not tolerate discriminatory practices in the Diocese. 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
 - support the inclusion of same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse children and their families.

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.
- **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 DHHS) 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.
- **Professional Standards Committee (PSC):** a committee established to advise and support the Bishop of Sandhurst (the Bishop) 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.
- **Child Safety Officer of the Diocese:** an individual who champions safeguarding and coordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
- **Parish Child Safety Officers/leaders:** personnel who are responsible for important governance decisions within a Church entity and/or who lead and coordinate Church improvement initiatives, supporting parish priests and leaders of agencies or entities.
- **Clergy:** means those ordained in sacred ministry in the Church. They are either deacons, priests or bishops.
- **Religious:** Professed members of male and female Religious Orders.

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 have or may be expected to have contact with children in the course of activities undertaken by the Diocese, its parishes, agencies and entities. This may include parishioners, parents/guardians, volunteers, visitors, employees, contractors, Religious brothers and sisters, and clergy. 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 Sandhurst 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 Sandhurst on request. This Policy applies in addition to existing policies of the Diocese, including the following policies:

- Working with Children Protocol (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.2**)
- Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC)-Social Networking Policy (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.3**)
- National Police Record Check Policy (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.4**)

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, employees, contractors, volunteers, 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.5**)
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.6**)
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). For a summary of the CPSL safeguarding standards (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.7**)

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 or 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.8**).

7. Safeguarding responsibilities – Diocesan Leadership

- 7.1. The Bishop has appointed the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of child safeguarding practices. (For the PSC terms of reference refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.9**). This committee is advisory to the Bishop.
- 7.2. The Diocese has appointed a Child Safety Officer 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 PSC and the Child Safety Officer 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, employees and volunteers 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 Child Safety Officer 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 Child Safety Officer of the Diocese.
- 8.2. Parish Child Safety Officers established within each parish, agency or entity play a central role in assisting the parish priest, agency or entity leader with implementation of the requirements of this policy (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.10** volunteer role description of child safe team member).

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

- 10.1. The Diocese applies thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for employees, contractors and volunteer positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.
- 10.2. 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 – Safe Personnel Recruitment and Screening, Education and Training**) including:
- Screening documents
 - Interview process
 - Induction process
 - Working with Children Check (flowchart)
 - National Police Check
 - Training of all employees and volunteers

11. Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR)

- 11.1. All priests of the Diocese have an ACMR number. Priests from another Diocese undertaking religious duties are required to provide their ACMR number which supplies their WWCC details and suitability to work in the diocese, or until gaining the ACMR provide the standard warranty documentation. The Diocese maintains records of all ACMRs.

12. Code of Conduct for employees, volunteers, contractors, and clergy

- 12.1. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. All persons in ministry, working or volunteering within the Diocese, acknowledge their individual responsibility to comply with the Code of Conduct for employees, volunteers, contractors, and clergy. (refer to **Appendix B – Code of Conduct for Employees, Volunteers, Contractor and Clergy**).
- 12.2. 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, contractors or volunteers (refer to **Attachment A - Doc No.11**).

13. Professional Supervision

- 13.1. 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/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/Religious, the people with whom they exercise ministry, the wider Church and the community (refer to **Appendix C – Safe Personnel – Recruitment and Screening, Education and Training**). 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.

- 13.2. The Chair of the PSC maintains a register of qualified and approved supervisors who are available to clergy and others for pastoral Supervision.
- 13.3. The Diocese maintains records of professional in-service and supervision for members of the clergy.

14. Providing a Safe environment – Risk Management

- 14.1. 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 periodically reviews its risk management strategies for child safety and ensures that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.
- 14.2. People in parishes, agencies and entities of the Diocese who have any direct contact with children or whose regular responsibilities include visiting schools or parishes are required at least once each calendar year to review their risk management strategies for child safety and effect any changes in behaviour deemed necessary.
- 14.3. 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. Depending on the nature of their activity, good preparation may include:
 - Ensuring contact details for parents/guardians are accurate; if parents or guardians cannot be contacted ensure emergency contact details are accurate.
 - Ensuring that medical forms have been returned and contingency plans made for any children with a condition that may put them at risk.
 - Risk assessment completed prior to the event/activity.
- 14.4. The Diocese may become aware that a person (high risk individual) involved in a parish, has been charged with or is currently being investigated by Police for a sexual offence or convicted of serious offences that suggest the person poses a risk to others (e.g. children, vulnerable persons, parishioners). The Child Safety Officer of the Diocese is to be notified and will assist with a risk assessment of the situation.
- 14.5. Use of parish or diocesan facilities/land/property by third parties such as a community organisation, group or private provider are required to demonstrate to the parish/diocese that they take their responsibilities seriously to keep children and young people safe from harm.
- 14.6. Use of parish or diocesan facilities/land or property on a one-off basis. When persons hiring parish facilities/land or property are parishioners, they are covered by the parish Safeguarding Policy and its risk management plan. Other parties who are not parishioners must have their own risk management plan.

(refer to **Appendix D – Providing a Safe Environment for Children and Young People**).


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

- 15.1. 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**).
- 15.2. Mandatory Reporting is the legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the Department of Health and Human Services. For a list of mandatory reporters and further information regarding Mandatory reporting (refer to **Appendix F – Child Safety legislation in Victoria**).
- 15.3. 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 F – Child Safety legislation in Victoria**).
- 15.4. Vos Estis Lux Mundi (VELM) is a universal reporting process of the catholic church to be used by all Clergy (Bishops, Priests, Deacons) 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**).
- 15.5. 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 F – Child Safety legislation in Victoria**).

16. Review of this Policy

16.1. 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 Child Safety Officer of the Diocese.

17. Approval

Approved by	Signature	Date
Bishop Shane Mackinlay		22 September 2020

18. Revision History

Policy - Version	Date	Revised By	Description of Revision	Next Review
Child safety Policy V 1.0	7/09/2020	Child Safety Officer	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	Child Safety Officer	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

Attachment A: Resources and Further Information

Reporting	The Bishop	Telephone: (03) 5445 3600 Email: bishop@sandhurst.catholic.org.au
	Child Safety Officer of the Diocese	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 Professional Standards Committee	Telephone: (03) 5441 2544
	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	WWC Protocol	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Doc No.3	ACBC – Social Networking Policy	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Doc No.4	National Police Record Check	https://sandhurst.catholic.org.au/item/1495
Doc No.5	Child Protection legislation – Victorian Child Safe Standards (CCYP)	https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/
Doc No.6	National Principles for Child Safe Organisations	National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
Doc No.7	National Catholic Safeguarding Standards/NCSS (Catholic Professional Standards Ltd)	https://www.cpsltd.org.au/
Doc No.8	Statement of Commitment to Child Safety	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Doc No.9	Terms of Reference for PSC	Terms of Reference (PSC)
Doc No.10	Child Safety Team Member – role description	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/login
Doc No.11	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	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix B	Code of Conduct for employees, volunteers, contractors, and clergy	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix C	Recruitment, screening, Induction and training of personnel	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix D	Risk Management - Providing a safe environment for children	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix E	Safeguarding and Complaints Management	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards
Appendix F	Child Safety legislation in Victoria	https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards

Appendix A: Children are safe, informed, and participate

1. Introduction

Involving children in programs, activities and events enables them to have input and to contribute to the development of child safe practices that reflect their needs. While it would be appropriate to engage children and young people attending youth group in discussing their safety needs and concerns, the approach with younger children may need to be creative, visual, and supportive such as using art activities.

Some of the ways in which this may be done include:

- 1.1. Consult with children in a tour of the location to decide which spaces are safe and which are not.
- 1.2. Encourage participation through:
 - Feedback forms
 - Group discussions
 - Suggestion box
 - Discuss the right to feel safe
 - Who can children talk to and how to speak up if something is wrong with them?
- 1.3. Provide children with guidance about what constitutes acceptable behaviour. This will vary with the age group and developmental level of the children in your activity.
- 1.4. Display and discuss the Children's code of conduct, acceptable and unacceptable behaviours appropriate for their age group.
- 1.5. Provide training and resources to personnel to ensure they are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views and raise their concerns.
- 1.6. A child's behaviour (whether verbal, physical, psychological, or sexual) which could be construed as bullying is not acceptable.
- 1.7. Where a child's behaviour is disruptive to the group activity, unsafe or otherwise breaches the Children's Code of Conduct, you will need to take steps to manage the behaviour. The steps you take should be appropriate having regard to the circumstances, behaviour and age of the child. Appropriate steps may include:
 - Directing other children away from a dangerous or disruptive situation.
 - Discussing with the child and asking him or her to stop.
 - Giving the child an opportunity to explain his or her behaviour.
 - Discussing the consequences of the behaviour with the child.
 - Removing the child from the activity to another supervised environment.
 - If the behaviour continues, calling the child's parent/guardian and asking them to remove the child from the activity.
- 1.8. If a child's behaviour is causing immediate danger to those around them you should ask for assistance and if necessary, contact the police (phone 000).

2. Useful resources for organisations, parents and carers promoting empowerment of children and engaging with children.

2.1. Tip sheets for child safe organisations include:

- Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Children
- Safety of Children with a Disability
- Safety of Children from Culturally and Linguistically diverse background
- Introductory self-assessment tool – 10 National Principles
- Empowerment and Participation of Children
- "[How to Guide](#)" for engaging children and young people

These tip sheets can be located at: <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards>

2.2. Resources for Parents and Carers:

- Charter for Children in Out-of-home Care
- What to look for in a child safe organisation
- Older children home alone
- Other People looking after your child - babysitters
- Teach your child how to keep themselves safe
- [Listening to Children](#)
- Guide for parents and carers

These resources for parents and carers can be located at <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards>

2.3. Creating Child Safe Parishes:

Posters for display in parish buildings

- Parish Strategy Poster
- All children have the right to feel safe and be safe
- Children's rights
- National Principles – Child Safe Organisations
- Child Safety reporting process

These child safe posters can be located at <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/login>: to be displayed in all parish buildings.

Authorised personnel can contact the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese for information regarding login details.

Contacts:

Child Safety Officer of the Diocese

Phone: 0438 951 010

Email: childsafety@sandhurst.catholic.org.au

CHILDRENS CODE OF CONDUCT

Relevant parts of this Code of Conduct also apply (with any necessary modifications/age appropriate) to children who are involved in parish or diocesan activities. Parish priests, agency heads and those leading activities should make children aware of the standards in the Children's Code of Conduct, and should display a copy of the Children's Code of Conduct at prominent places within parishes and diocesan agencies and, if practical, in venues where children's activities are conducted.

Sample Children's Code of Conduct

Children's Code of Conduct

I will:

1. Treat all others with respect and kindness
2. Listen to what other people have to say
3. Listen to all instructions given by an adult leading my activity and obey any rules
4. Make sure that an adult leading my activity knows my whereabouts at all times
5. Treat other people's property with respect
6. Always try my best to participate
7. Not use rude or offensive language
8. Not hurt, abuse, bully, tease anyone else
9. Not have or use tobacco, alcohol or banned drugs, or misuse other medication

Appendix B: Code of Conduct Employees, Volunteers, Contractors and Clergy

1. Introduction:

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. All persons in ministry, working or volunteering within the Diocese acknowledge their individual responsibility to comply with the Code of Conduct for employees, volunteers, contractors, and clergy.

While the welfare of children is a fundamental priority for our community, it is incumbent on all adults to be vigilant about keeping children safe from harm. An aware culture where adults and children alike feel able to raise their concerns, and can see that those concerns are acted upon, is the best protection for children. Likewise, an environment in which parents and guardians are encouraged to be involved in their children's activities affords a level of openness and accountability that makes harmful conduct less likely.

Employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy are required to sign this code of conduct upon their commencement and biennially, to coincide with child safety training requirements.

2. Acceptable Behaviours

All employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- 2.1. Adhering to the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst (the Diocese) Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People and upholding the Commitment Statement to Child Safety at all times.
- 2.2. Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm.
- 2.3. Treating everyone in the organisation with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe pastoral environment).
- 2.4. Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification).
- 2.5. Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination).
- 2.6. Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, by ensuring reasonable care is taken to cater for any additional needs as required).
- 2.7. Ensuring as far as practicable that an adult is not alone with a child but if unavoidable, then ensuring an open and supervised environment can be maintained.
- 2.8. Ensuring activities which by their very nature give rise to one-on-one encounters such as the sacrament of reconciliation, are conducted in a manner and space in clear view of other people.

- 2.9. Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child.
- 2.10. Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the police.
- 2.11. Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic). See Appendix F.
- 2.12. Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations to the 'Head of Entity' in relation to the Reportable Conduct Scheme. See Appendix F.
- 2.13. Reporting any child safety concerns to your immediate manager, parish priest or to the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese.
- 2.14. If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that no child is at any further risk.

3. Unacceptable behaviours

All employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy must not:

- 3.1. Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- 3.2. Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be perceived as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children) or too dependent (for example by attempting to act as a surrogate parent).
- 3.3. Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as sexual or unnecessarily physical such as touching a child in an inappropriate or unnecessary fashion.
- 3.4. Put children at risk of abuse for example, by locking doors or being alone with a child.
- 3.5. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes, except where a child's developmental level or incapacity is such that he or she requires assistance and ensure the presence of another adult in such circumstances.
- 3.6. Manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating a child; corporal punishment is never acceptable.
- 3.7. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal details or social activities).
- 3.8. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- 3.9. Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.

- 3.10. Discriminate against any child because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- 3.11. Initiate contact with a child or their family outside of the duties associated with being an employee, volunteer or contractor, other than when there is an appropriate social relationship with that child or family.
- 3.12. Have any online contact (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) with a child or their family outside of the duties associated with being an employee, volunteer or contractor, other than when there is an appropriate social relationship with that child or family.
- 3.13. Use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account to conduct Diocesan/parish communications.
- 3.14. Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child or their family who is not socially related without notifying the Parish Priest or your manager.
- 3.15. Use a child's name, photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians.
- 3.16. Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- 3.17. Consume illicit drugs on Dioceses/parish premises or events.

If you become aware of circumstances that cause you to believe or suspect that a child is being, or is at risk of being harmed, whether physically, emotionally or psychologically, is suffering from serious neglect or is being sexually abused or exposed to violence, you should contact **Police 000** immediately and notify the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese 0438 951 010.

4. Declaration

I confirm that I have received and read a copy of this code of conduct and agree to abide by it.

Name (please print)	Signature	Date
Address		
Name of Witness (please print)	Signature	Date

Appendix C: Recruitment, Screening, Induction and Training of Personnel

1. Introduction – Recruitment and Screening of Personnel

- 1.1. The Diocese, parishes, agencies and entity leadership recognise that the selection, recruitment, and screening of suitable and appropriate persons to work and volunteer in child-related roles plays an important role in relation to child safety.
- 1.2. The Diocese, parishes, agencies and entities will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work. The commitment to child safety and screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such employee, volunteer, and contractor positions.
- 1.3. All applicants for paid positions are provided with copies of the Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People.
- 1.4. All applicants for volunteer and contractor positions are provided with a summary of the Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People.
- 1.5. Recruitment and screening resources have been provided to parishes, agencies and entities and can be located on the Diocesan website (secure site, see link below). Authorised personnel can contact the Diocesan Child Safety Officer of the Diocese for details regarding the username and password.

<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/login>

- 1.6. When recruiting and selecting employees, volunteers and contractors involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:
 - Advertise the position (including position description).
 - Interview applicants and obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications.
 - Call 2 referees to check suitability for shortlisted candidates to assess if the applicant is suitable for the role for working with children where this is relevant to the role.
 - Obtain a Police check where appropriate. (refer to National Police Check Policy) <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/item/1495>
 - Obtain a current Working with Children Check (WWCC). (refer to WWC Protocol Policy) <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards>
 - If the applicant has a current WWCC – check that it is valid by using the WWC Status checker. <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/about-the-check/resources/status-checker> input the surname and WWCC number to ensure currency of the WWCC.
 - Provide the successful applicant with a letter confirming appointment.

- Provide induction as soon as possible and before any work with children commences.

1.7. The recruitment and screening resources include:

- Flowchart to assist with the process of engaging new volunteers
- WWCC and Police Check policies
- Flowchart to assist with ensuring WWCC is current (no negative notices)
- Registration form includes recruiting process
- Description of role for employees and volunteers
- Role description of child safe team.
- Record of Interview (sample of interview questions)
- Conducting referee checks
- Letter of acceptance (including probation period)
- Induction into the role

Contact the Diocesan HR department on (03) 5445 3625 for advice on employment contracts.

1.8. WWCC (Working with Children Check) ensure that the successful applicant has notified WWCC Vic that they volunteer for the Diocese, parish, agency or entity. A letter confirming the addition of the volunteer to the Diocese, parish, agency or entity will be sent from WWCCV.

1.9. If the applicant is exempt from holding a WWCC due to being a teacher currently registered with the VIT (Victorian Institute of Teaching) ensure that the applicant has notified WWCC Vic that they volunteer for the Diocese, parish, agency or entity. This change is effective from 1st September 2019 see teacher notification at <https://service.vic.gov.au/services/teachers-notifications/> A letter confirming the addition of the volunteer to the Diocese, parish, agency or entity will be sent from WWCCV.

2. Supervision and people management

2.1. It is a requirement of the Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People that those whose roles involve working with children are provided with supervision and support, to undertake their role in a manner which promotes the safety of children. This supervision and support mean these persons:

- Are provided with a probationary period for new employees and volunteers, to allow time to assess suitability for the position.
- Are provided with information and/or training designed to equip the person to meet the requirements of their role.
- Participate in a mentoring or 'buddy' system for all new personnel.
- Are provided with opportunities to raise concerns formally or informally about harm to children.

3. National Police Check

3.1. At the Diocesan and parish level, a National Police Records Check is compulsory for every:

- Priest, including a member of a Religious Order on initial and every subsequent appointment; and
- Seminarian on extended ministry placement.
- Employee, contractor, volunteer and religious working in a parish setting in accordance with the National Police Check policy. This would include adults who are staying overnight with children.

3.2. The National Police Check Policy provides these details, for further details refer to the National Police Check Policy. Further information

<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/item/1495>

4. Australian Catholic Ministry Register ACMR

4.1. All priests of the Diocese have an ACMR number. Priests from another Diocese undertaking religious duties are required to provide their ACMR number which supplies their WWCC details and suitability to work in the diocese, or until gaining the ACMR provide the standard warranty documentation. The Diocese maintains records of all ACMRs.

5. Working with Children Check (WWCC)

5.1. People who work or volunteer in Church activities that involve children are required to hold a WWCC under the Working with Children Act 2005.

5.2. It is an offence under the WWC Act to engage in “child related work” without a WWCC. The responsibility rests with both the individual and those who engage him or her.

5.3. All Parish Priests, employees and contractors who may have contact with children of the Diocese are required to have a current Working with Children Check (WWCC). The Diocese maintains records and follows up one month prior to expiry by contacting the priest, employee, or contractor as a reminder that the WWCC is due to be renewed.

5.4. Parishes, agencies and entity leadership is responsible for ensuring they have a register of WWCC for employees, volunteers and contractors. A register is to be maintained and followed up when WWCC are due for renewal.

5.5. For further information to ensure that you comply with the requirements of the Working with Children legislation see WWCC protocol at

<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards>

6. Induction and Training of Personnel

6.1. The Diocese provides parishes, agencies and entities with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to, address child safety matters. This includes induction, ongoing training, and professional learning to ensure that employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy understand their professional and legal obligations, responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

6.2. All employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy working in ministry across the Diocese are required to complete the Essentials of Safeguarding on-line training modules upon commencement and on a biennial basis. This training is designed to provide foundational knowledge to:

- Understand their duty of care in relation to safeguarding, children, young people, and vulnerable persons across the Diocese.
- Identify behaviour that constitutes child abuse or neglect including grooming.
- Understand the indicators of abuse.
- Respond to and report allegations or concerns regarding abuse.

The on-line training may pose challenges to volunteers without access to a computer or those who are not familiar with technology. The Diocese can provide a Power Point presentation to assist parish leadership groups with hosting learning sessions at a time that suits those volunteers. The Parish, agency or entity is responsible for keeping records of training.

7. Working Safely with Children and Young People (on-line training)

7.1. In addition to the Essentials of Safeguarding training, employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy whose role involves work or specific ministry with children, will be required to complete the Comprehensive on-line training module upon commencement and every 2 years.

The training is designed to provide additional knowledge about:

- Conducting safe programs
- Role boundaries
- Risk assessment in relation to child safety
- Practice and behavioural guidelines
- Empowerment of children and young people

For information regarding on-line training modules or for information on PowerPoint presentations contact the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese.

8. Catholic Professional Standards Ltd. (CPSL)

8.1. CPSL Introductory Safeguarding training and the Applying the Standards training: Members of the Professional Standards Committee and the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese are required to attend these training sessions.

9. Contacts:

Child Safety Officer of the Diocese

Phone: 0438 951 010

Email: childsafety@sandhurst.catholic.org.au

HR Officer of the Diocese

Phone: (03) 5445 3625

Email: hr@sandhurst.catholic.org.au

Appendix D: Risk Management, Providing a safe environment for children and young people

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The protection and promotion of children's wellbeing is the responsibility of all adults. Adults who are involved in children's activities within the Diocese, parish, agency or entity of the Diocese are responsible for creating a harmonious and nurturing environment.
- 1.2. Diocesan, parish, agency or entity activities that involve contact with children may include the following (*This list and these examples are not intended to be exhaustive*):
 - Activities organised or conducted at parish, agency or entity level, be they on Church land or facilities or elsewhere, including associated communications over and use of the internet and telephone. These may include children's liturgies, youth group meetings, preparations for sacraments, and altar service.
 - Activities organised or conducted at a diocesan level, be they on Church land or facilities, or elsewhere, including associated communications over and use of the internet and telephones. These may include retreats, youth group meetings and pilgrimages.
- 1.3. Use of parish or diocesan facilities, land or property:
 - Parishes agencies and entities are an important part of the local communities because they provide a location for community members to engage in a range of activities run by community organisations, local groups or private providers.

2. Providing a safe environment – Matters for consideration

2.1. Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is a formal and structured approach to identifying and managing risks within fields such as OHS and Child Safety. The Diocese is committed to ensuring that:

- Child risk management processes are implemented to better equip the Diocese, parishes, agencies, and entities to prevent, detect, reduce and or eliminate potential child safety risks.

The Child Safety Officers within the Diocese, parishes, agencies and entities are best placed to identify and assess the risks to children within their context and are required to undertake child safety risk management in relation to:

- The overall operation of the Diocese, parish, agency, or entity e.g. ensure the recruitment process is followed for employees and volunteers (see Appendix C) including appropriate training, WWCC, Police Checks etc. for employees and volunteers prior to working with children.
- Day to day activities of the Diocese, parish, agency or entity (e.g. Mass, sacramental programs, youth groups, children's liturgy)
- Stand-alone events e.g. fete, working bee, excursions, fund raising.

2.2. Planning/risk assessment

When planning an activity, consider the possible risks associated with the activity and how likely those risks are to eventuate. Consider what actions you can take or how you can

structure the activity to minimise those risks and, if a situation should arise, to manage it effectively.

Consider each circumstance on its merits. See sample risk assessment at <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/login>). Authorised personnel can contact the Diocesan Child Safety Officer of the Diocese for details regarding the username and password

2.2.1. Effective Risk Assessment involves the following:

- A key way to manage risk management is through a risk register, which is a central record of all identified child safety risks and an assessment of each risk. It will also record the control measures identified and implemented to control each risk.
- A Parish child safe risk register can be a standalone document or be integrated with its other risk management requirements such as Occupational Health and Safety and financial management. The risk register can be a hard copy document, a spreadsheet, or a database system, but the most effective format is a table providing a great deal of information in just a few pages.
- A risk register provides an effective means of understanding child safety risks and threats and responding to problems as they arise. It assists with the decision-making process and enables parishes to handle risk in the most appropriate way. It should be reviewed and updated regularly and be available to employees, volunteers and contractors at all times.

2.2.2. In developing the Risk Register, the following may assist:

- One person may be nominated to lead the development and monitoring of the risk register
- The development may include consultation with the parish Council, employees, volunteer representatives, parents and children.
- All parish activities should be considered to identify if Child Safety Risks may exist.

2.2.3. The Following steps should be undertaken:

- a. Identify the parishes safety risks
 - What are the concern areas or hot spots?
 - What could go wrong?
 - List these in the register, in the appropriate categories.
- b. Identify appropriate risk mitigation measures or internal controls
 - What strategies, practices, or procedures are already in place to control the risk?
 - What additional controls need to be put in place to reduce the risk further?
 - List all of these in the appropriate column.
- c. Use the Risk Register to help train employees and volunteers, and to assist in planning and reviewing parish activities.

- d. Review the Register each year to add any additional identified risks, delete those no longer relevant and to update the controls in place.

2.3. Managing High risk individuals

The Child Safety Officer of the Diocese is to be contacted to assist with managing the risk. See Guidelines for Managing High Risk Individuals.

<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards>

2.4. Some useful strategies to mitigate or reduce risk:

Ensure that children in your care are appropriately supervised at all times.

2.4.1. Adult/children ratio

Plan all activities on the basis that more than one adult will be present at all times. Consider how many adults will be required to properly care for the children at the activity, taking into account the children's ages, the nature and location of the activity, and any children with special requirements.

2.4.2. Physical Environment

Ensure that the physical environment is safe, taking into account the age and developmental level of children involved in your activities. For instance, can younger children safely be contained in an area? Are there any obvious hazards such as sharp edges, poisonous or hazardous substances, water hazards or similar? Take steps to manage any risks you identify. (see Hire Hall Agreements in secure site) <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/login>).

2.4.3. Taking photos of children

The Diocese recognises that taking photos and recording children's milestones within parish life and at Church activities are important. However, some families have legal and safety issues which could put a child at risk if an image is made public or posted online. Before taking or making public any images of children ensure you have the parent or guardian's consent. A sample Consent to Use Child's Image form (Part D) of the consent/incident/complaints form can be located at <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards>

2.4.4. Collection of children

At the conclusion of activities, release children only into the care of a parent/guardian or the person with the express permission of the parent or guardian. A sample Emergency Contact form (Part B) of the consent/incident/complaints form can be located at <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards> and used to record who may (and may not) collect the child.

For older children over the age of 16 years where a parent/guardian consents to the child leaving the activity unsupervised, ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for them to return home. If you are in any doubt about to whom you may release the child, or whether his or her arrangements for leaving are safe and appropriate, you should always check with the child's parent/guardian.

If you are taking a child home at the end of an activity, ensure that a parent/guardian has given consent (whether oral or written) and that, as a general rule, you are not alone with the child.

3. Other elements of risk for children to be considered

3.1. Medical conditions

3.1.1. The paragraphs below constitute general guidelines about the process you should follow if you are called upon to care for a child who is at particular risk due to a medical condition. This process will assist in creating an environment where medical conditions may be effectively planned for and managed. These paragraphs are not intended to replace professional or medical advice for specific circumstances, but to prompt those caring for a child with a medical condition to seek guidance from the child's parents/guardians and from appropriate authorities, and to put in place an appropriate individual management plan.

3.1.2. You should always ask parents/guardians to document any medical conditions. A sample Confidential Medical Conditions Form (Part C) can be located at reporting information consent/incident/complaints form keep completed forms accessible throughout the activity.

<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards>

3.1.3. If a child has a condition that requires particular care, an appropriate individual management action plan should be prepared and implemented. You will need to consider:

- Are you able to put in place arrangements to minimise or remove the risk to that child, such as ensuring that substances that can cause allergies (for example, nuts and nut products) are not at, or brought, to the activity? Speak to the child's parents and seek medical guidance about what arrangements are suitable for the condition.
- Are you (or another adult who will be available throughout the activity) appropriately qualified, willing and competent to properly care for the child, and to deal with an emergency situation should it arise? For instance, if you are caring for a child at risk of anaphylaxis, have you put in place an emergency anaphylaxis action plan and are you or at least one other adult trained in the administration of an EpiPen (or similar device)?
- If not, you will need to consider how to make appropriate arrangements for the child's care. You will need to discuss this with the child's parents/guardians and may need to seek professional guidance. Practical solutions may be found, for instance:
 - If you are caring for a child at risk of anaphylaxis, a parent/guardian might agree to remain with the child during the activity.
 - Adopt a no-sharing-of-food policy and a nut-free policy particularly where there are children at risk.
 - Engage appropriate carers who regularly care for children at risk and ensure they have undertaken appropriate training.

- Employees and volunteers are required to undertake the Essentials of Safeguarding on-line training.
- Employees and volunteers who have child specific activities as part of their role are required to undertake on-line comprehensive training.
- When you have formulated an individual management plan, it is advisable to write it down and keep it accessible throughout your activity. Ensure that the child's parents are satisfied with the plan and that all other adults who may be called on to supervise the child are aware of the plan.

3.1.4. If you have any questions about making appropriate and safe arrangements for children with medical conditions or allergies, please contact the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese. Further information about some particular conditions can be located at: www.allergy.org.au and www.asthma.org.au.

3.2. Food hygiene

3.2.1. If your activity will involve eating or sharing food, ensure that appropriate food hygiene is maintained, including, for example, keeping food refrigerated where necessary and adults and children washing hands before handling food. If any child in your group has a food allergy or intolerance you will need to put in place arrangements (as discussed in paragraph 3.1.3) to prevent the child coming into contact with the food. Further information can be located at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety>

3.3. Sun protection

3.3.1. Consider whether sun protection will be necessary and, if so, make appropriate arrangements. Sunscreen and a hat should be worn by adults and children when exposed to the sun during daylight savings periods (or in tropical environments, all year round).

3.4. Use of the internet

3.4.1. All parish or diocesan internet services (and particularly those which may be used by children or young people) should have appropriate filtering devices in place. If using services provided by other organisations, ensure that filtering devices are in place.

3.4.2. Educate children in safe and responsible internet practices. The same principles that apply to relationships and conduct generally apply to online situations; for instance, children should never arrange to meet someone they have met online in a chat room or social networking site and must not access sites containing pornographic material. Make it clear that behaviour that is unacceptable or unsafe offline is also unacceptable or unsafe online.

Please see, <https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/online-safety-guide>

3.4.3. As with any unlawful behaviour, any illegal activities conducted over the internet or through use of a computer should be reported to the head of entity and the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese.

3.4.4. Further information is available regarding email and internet use at <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/item/1495>

3.5. Use of parish or diocesan facilities, land or property

3.5.1. Community groups or private providers (e.g. judo/music/dance classes etc.) that have contact (or likely contact) with children and young people are required to:

- Be provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People (or summary) to set expectations for the care and safety of children and young people.
- Demonstrate/confirm that those involved (e.g. employees, volunteers) have a current and valid Working with Children Check.
- Provide a copy to the parish, agency or entity that they have a child safety policy consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Be briefed about onsite child safety.

3.5.2. Using a diocesan parish, agency or entity facility on a one-off-basis such as an organisation, group, private provider or members of the general public:

- These groups are not required to comply with the diocesan/parish Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People. However, usage or hire agreements need to reflect that the hirers are responsible and should take all steps to ensure that children and young people are safe.

Examples of scenarios exempt from compliance with this policy are:

- A family has hired the church hall to celebrate a special occasion (e.g. birthday, christening).
- Govt. Electoral organisation uses the facility for one day to run a polling booth.

For support and advice, contact the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese on 0438 951 010 or email childsafety@sandhurst.catholic.org.au

4. Contacts

[Child Safety Officer of the Diocese](#)

[Phone: 0438 951 010](tel:0438951010)

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

Appendix E: Safeguarding and Complaints Management

1. Introduction

1.1. The Diocese aims to deal with all reports under the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (the Policy) fairly and appropriately, with the following objectives:

- Ensuring fair process for persons against whom allegations are made; and
- Preventing misconduct where this is possible.
- Dealing effectively with any allegations which are substantiated, including, responding compassionately to anyone who has been affected.
- Providing a positive experience of the Church and creating a strong community of faith.

1.2. Principles

- If there is any reasonable belief that a criminal act may have been committed, the concerned party is advised to contact Victoria Police.
- When it is established that an employee, volunteer, or contractor has breached any obligation, duty or responsibility within the Policy, this may result in disciplinary consequences such as targeted training, counselling, supervision, termination of his or her employment (or role as a volunteer).
- Where a seminarian, clergy or a member of a religious order is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty, or responsibility within the Policy this may result in disciplinary consequences such as being stood down pending an investigation.
- If a complaint related to child sexual abuse against a seminarian, clergy or a member of a religious order is substantiated on the balance of probabilities, or they are convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse, that individual will be permanently removed from ministry. Practicable steps will be taken to prohibit these individuals from holding themselves out as being a person with religious authority.
- If there is any reasonable belief that the breach involves Reportable Conduct (refer to section 7) the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) is to be contacted within the stipulated timeframe.
- Where a seminarian, clergy or a member of a religious order is convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse, the Bishop will present a case to the relevant dicastery for laicisation, or Superior General for dispensation from vows.

1.3. A flow chart setting out how and to whom to make reports can be found on page 7.

2. Who may make a report?

2.1. Any person may make a report. If an allegation involves sexual or other abuse of a child, you should not investigate the matter yourself or raise it with parents/guardians or the alleged abuser directly. You should report the matter using the procedures set out in page 7.

2.2. If a report is made in good faith, the making of a report is not unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics. The reporter cannot be held legally liable. Confidentiality is provided for reporters in the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. This prevents the

disclosure of the name or any information likely to lead to the identification of a person who has made a report in accordance with the legislation except in very specific circumstances.

3. What should you report?

3.1. Possible breaches of the Policy, or matters of concern can arise, in any number of ways. These might include:

- A disclosure made by a child.
- Observing events that lead to an objectively reasonable belief being formed that a child is being harmed or abused, or is at risk of being harmed or abused (whether by a family member or by another person); or
- Witnessing an event or incident.

3.2. Regardless of the way in which an issue arises, circumstances that cause concern should always be reported including:

- Any suspected material breach of Policy.
- Any allegation of sexual misconduct.¹
- Suspected grooming activity.
- Any disclosure by a child, or an objectively reasonable belief you have formed, that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse of any kind.¹
- Any allegation of violence inflicted by an adult upon a child.¹
- Any allegation in which an employee, volunteer or contractor has been under the influence of drugs (illicit or misused medication) or alcohol while responsible for children.
- Any incident in which a child has been harmed or injured (either physically or psychologically) or is at risk of harm or injury.¹
- Any allegation of conduct which is or might be unlawful,¹ by employees, volunteers and contractors and:
- Any conduct which would or might give rise to a mandatory requirement to report under the Children Youth and Families Act.²

4. Dealing with disclosures by children or a reasonable belief that abuse is or may be occurring in a setting to which this Policy applies

4.1. A reasonable belief may be formed by one or more of the following:

- a. A child makes a disclosure to you that sexual, physical or psychological abuse is occurring, or
- b. An objectively reasonable belief is formed that a child is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed.

¹ Any matters which involve sexual or other abuse by Church personnel fall within the purview of the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and all matters should be reported to CCYP. For further information regarding the reportable conduct scheme please refer to [CCYP reportable conduct](#)

² For further information regarding the mandatory reporting requirements under the CYF Act, please refer to <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting>

- c. A complaint or allegation is made about behaviour that compromises the safety, health, or wellbeing of children.
 - d. A perpetrator discloses that they are harming a child.
 - e. A child creates drawing or stories that involve themes or events involving abuse.
 - f. An adult discloses historical abuse that occurred when they were a child.
- 4.2. If a child has made a disclosure, be aware that the child may be feeling ashamed, guilty and scared, and may be worried about the consequences of telling someone about the abuse. Stay calm and listen carefully to the child. Tell them you believe them and that they did the right thing by telling you. Do not make promises you cannot keep such as promising that you will not tell anyone else. Refer to <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/reporting-misconduct-and-or-abuse>. “What to do in the event of an incident of child abuse”

5. To report sexual and other abuse of children

- 5.1. Making a report of suspected child abuse involves notifying police, statutory authorities and the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese in a timely manner (as soon as practicable after forming a reasonable belief, unless the child is in immediate danger contact Police on 000). An incident reporting form can be located at the below link.

<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/reporting-misconduct-and-or-abuse>

- 5.2. The Child Safety Officer of the Diocese is responsible for supporting reports of misconduct and/or abuse, in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and liaising with statutory authorities e.g. Victoria Police, Reportable Conduct Scheme – Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP).

- 5.3. Reporting misconduct and/or abuse:

5.3.1. If the complaint involves an adult bringing forward a complaint of child sexual abuse suffered as a child, contact the Child Safety officer of the Diocese.

5.3.2. to report misconduct and/or child abuse of children and young people contact the Police 000 and the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese.

5.3.3. Sexual and other abuse by employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy must be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP).

5.3.4. Clergy are also obliged under the provisions of VELM (Vos Estis Lux Mundi) to report abuse by other clergy to church and civil authorities. VELM is a universal reporting process of the Catholic Church to be used by all Clergy (Bishops, Priests, Deacons) 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. See link to VELM <https://www.catholic.org.au/vosestisluxmundi>

5.3.5. For further information on reporting the above please see the below link:

<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/reporting-misconduct-and-or-abuse>

6. How can a report be made?

- 6.1. Notify the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese, who can provide guidance about how to report a breach of Policy or a matter of concern, the process for reporting and dealing with any concerns or breaches of the Policy will vary depending on the type of conduct and who is responsible for the conduct.
- 6.2. An incident recording form for reportable conduct can be located at <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/reporting-misconduct-and-or-abuse> (red portal) this can be used to record details of any incident or matter of concern in relation to child safety.
- 6.3. Login to the on-line reporting portal to the commission for Children and Young People. See Diocesan website to report child related abuse and/or misconduct. <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/reporting-misconduct-and-or-abuse> and complete the on-line form in one sitting.

7. Reportable Conduct Scheme (RCS)

- 7.1. The RCS requires religious organisations to respond to allegations of child abuse made against their workers, volunteers and contractors, and to notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) of any allegations, which will enable the CCYP to oversee those responses.
- 7.2. Reportable Conduct applies to the following people:
 - Employees
 - Volunteers
 - Contractors
 - Office holders
 - Ministers of religion
 - Officers of a religious body
- 7.3. There are five types of reportable conduct:
 - Sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child
 - Sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
 - Physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
 - Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
 - Significant neglect of a child
- 7.4. The “Head of Entity” i.e. the person in charge of the Diocese (Bishop) or in charge of the local parish (Parish Priest) or a Diocesan agency or entity (Director) has a legal responsibility to notify current and historical incidents of suspected child abuse or misconduct by clergy, employees, volunteers and contractors in the Diocese to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) within 3 business days and follow up with an investigation and provide the outcome of the investigation to CCYP within 30 days.

7.5. If you are not sure whether to report a matter, assistance is available from the Child Officer of the Diocese.

8. What happens when a report is made?

8.1. When a report is made (refer to the flowchart on page 7). the person receiving the report should:

- Listen carefully to the report and ensure it is fully understood.
- Consider whether it is appropriate or necessary to advise relevant authorities.
- Assess the risk and determine what action will be taken to ensure the safety of children (if any).

Document all action taken; and

- Ensure complete and accurate records are created and maintained for all incidents, complaints, responses and decisions.
- Maintain the confidentiality of all parties (including the person making the report, and any person to whom the report relates) to the extent this is possible. In some cases, it may be necessary to inform relevant authorities or others within the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst or the person to whom the report relates. Depending on the nature of the allegation it may be necessary to:
 - Inform the police, if the behaviour is or might be criminal.
 - Consider whether a mandatory report must be made to the DHHS under the CYF Act. (See Appendix F)
- If it is a reportable conduct scheme complaint refer the incident/allegation to the head of entity (see 7.4) and the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese. The head of entity has a legal responsibility to report to the CCYP within 3 business days of being notified of an incident/allegation in relation to reportable conduct.

See reporting information 'What to do in the event of an allegation/incident'
<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/reporting-misconduct-and-or-abuse>

9. To report all other matters

9.1. All matters other than those not covered by the RCS should be reported as follows:

- Any matter that arises within a parish of the Diocese should be reported in the first instance to your Parish Priest (unless the matter involves the Parish Priest, in which case it should be reported to the Bishop). The Parish Priest will listen to the allegations and decide what action to take. If, after a reasonable time has elapsed, you are not satisfied with the Parish Priest's response to your report you may then refer the matter to the Bishop.
- Any matter that arises within an agency or entity of the Diocese should be reported in the first instance to the head of entity (unless the matter involves the head of entity, in which case it should be reported to the Bishop). The head of entity will listen to the allegations and decide what action to take. If, after a reasonable time has elapsed, you are not satisfied with the response to your report, you may refer the matter to the Bishop.

9.2. Matters relating to Parish Priests, head of entities, or any other matters should be reported as follows:

- Any report that relates to a Parish Priest should be reported in the first instance to the Bishop of the Diocese.
- Any report that relates to head of entity should be reported to the Bishop of the Diocese.

9.3. Any medical emergency, a missing child, or any other emergency situation should be recorded and reported in the first instance to the appropriate authorities (such as police, fire or ambulance by dialling 000). As soon as possible thereafter, the child's parent/guardian should be notified, and a report should be made (at the latest within 24 hours) to the Parish Priest and the Child Safety Officer of the Diocese. See consent/incident/complaint form <https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-and-professional-standards>

10. Contacts

10.1. **Victorian Police – Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT)**
<https://www.police.vic.gov.au/sexual-offences-and-child-abuse-investigation-teams>

10.2. **Child Protection (DHHS) Regions**

- North Division 1300 664 977
- East Division 1300 360 391
- Emergency after hours 13 12 78

10.3. **Child Safety Officer of the Diocese – phone MOB 0438 951 010**

- Email childsafety@sandhurst.catholic.org.au

10.4. **Responding to historical abuse**

- Diocesan Archivist and Professional Standards Officer
Phone: (03) 5445 3611
Email: archivist@sandhurst.catholic.org.au
- Victoria Police SANO Task Force investigates historical abuse that has occurred in religious and non-government organisations
Phone: 1800 110 007
Email: sanotaskforce@police.vic.au

10.5. **Reportable Conduct Scheme (CCYP)**

- Phone: (03) 8601 5281
- Email: contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au

11. Alternatively, a victim/survivor may choose to contact **Towards Healing** or the **National Redress Scheme**:

The Diocese of Sandhurst acknowledges the lifelong trauma that survivors of abuse and their families have suffered as well as the failure of the Catholic Church in the past to protect, believe and respond justly to victims of sexual abuse and misconduct. The Diocese commits itself to working with victims of abuse for healing and justice in their lives.

The Diocese is a party to several programs aimed at assisting victims of abuse to find healing, justice and compensation in their lives. Two such programs are:

11.1. Towards Healing

Towards Healing is a Church protocol for dealing with complaints of abuse by clergy, religious and other employees and volunteers of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Sandhurst.

Phone: 1800 816 030

Refer to <https://www.catholic.org.au/professional-standards/towards-healing>

11.2. National Redress Scheme

The National Redress Scheme is in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Applications can be made any time before 30 June 2027.

Phone: 1800 737 377

Refer to <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/>

CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCESS



For more information on the Child Safe Standards visit <http://www.cyp.vic.gov.au/> or see A GUIDE FOR CREATING A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION 3/08/2020

Appendix F: Child Safety Legislation in Victoria and other Jurisdictions

These information sheets provide summary information in relation to relevant child safety legislation in Victoria and useful links that can be used to gather additional information.

1. Mandatory Reporting - Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and s 67ZA of the Family Law Act 2005 (Cth) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting>
2. Reportable Conduct Scheme – Child wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/>
3. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) - s 490 (Failure to Protect) s327 (Failure to Disclose) and s 49M (Grooming) <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/crimes-act-1958/292>
4. Working with Children’s Act 2005 (Vic) <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/working-children-act-2005/063>
5. Protecting children and young people within a family context <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Documents/protectionofchildren.PDF>
6. Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989 <https://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Our%20work/childfriendlycrc.pdf>
7. Vos Estis Lux Mundi (VELM) – [Vos Estis Lux Mundi](#)