



ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS PREVENTION AND PROTECTION POLICY

July 2014



Version 1.0 Effective July 2014.

This document is subject to amendment at certain times. The current version can be found on the Archdiocesan Intranet.

FOREWORD

As Archbishop I am committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults from preventable harm and I wholeheartedly support the many clergy, religious, employees and volunteers of the Archdiocese of Brisbane who daily demonstrate this same commitment.

I am delighted to approve this Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy. Superseding our previous child safety policy, it prescribes best practice in prevention of harm to, and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. I commend it to you as a valuable tool for your work with these people.

The updated *Code of Ethical Behaviour for employees and volunteers who work in service of the Church* within this policy underlines your responsibility to report incidents should you receive a disclosure of abuse. Training for the implementation of the policy, monitoring and regular auditing for compliance are important practices. You are required to do everything possible to ensure our success in this aspect of the Church's work.

I am grateful for the ways in which you dedicate yourself to the service of the church in Brisbane and assure you of my continued prayers for your work.

May the God of peace bless you and those entrusted to your care.

As always in the Lord,

Archbishop of Brisbane

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Materials developed by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, Ireland: *Safeguarding Children* and the Diocese of Austin: *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* have been used with permission in this document. The Archdiocese of Brisbane is deeply grateful for the generosity of these colleagues.

We are very grateful for the consultation, support and guidance of the following people during the development phase of this document January to April of 2014:

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INTRODUCTION

The Archdiocese of Brisbane is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. This policy, procedures and tools document is the next step in refining our long held practices of providing a safe environment and activities which respect and acknowledge the inherent dignity of each human being.

The policy applies to everyone who works in the pastoral structure of the Archdiocese. Nothing in the policy affects the expectations of *Integrity in Ministry – a document of principles and standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia. (June 2004)*.

The document applies to clergy, religious, employees, students on placement and volunteers in parishes and agencies of the Archdiocese.

It is intended to provide a uniform standard of best practice in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. It contains our policy statement which articulates the core principles, church documents and legislation upon which it is based. The safeguarding procedures are built around three key standards – safe recruiting and selection practices; code of behaviour; and safe activities and environments. The suite of tools which follows offers practical examples of administrative materials which will assist parishes and agencies in adhering to this policy and meeting their obligations for best practice and compliance.

POLICY STATEMENT

...for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.

Mark 10:14

Children ,young people and vulnerable adults are a gift from God with an intrinsic right to dignity of life, respect and security from physical and emotional harm. They are to be treasured, nurtured and safeguarded.

This means that everyone in the church must ensure that the fundamental rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults are respected. This will be achieved through the development of respectful relationships and a commitment to safety embracing appropriate boundaries, behaviours and practices, in accordance with the Archdiocese of Brisbane *Code of Ethical Behaviour for employees and volunteers who work in service of the Church* as well as adherence to the legislative imperatives of the State.

This policy statement is approved by Archbishop Mark Coleridge for mandatory implementation by the Church and its agencies throughout the Archdiocese of Brisbane. It covers the measures needed to safeguard against abuse. The Archdiocese aims to ensure that none of its personnel or volunteers engages in behaviour that could allow abuse to occur or actions that could be misinterpreted by children, their families or other adults as constituting, or leading to abuse. We take every possible effort to safeguard against abuse and harm.

CORE PRINCIPLES

Children, young people and vulnerable adults have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured and safeguarded by all.

The Archdiocese of Brisbane is committed to taking the necessary steps to:

- ⇒ demonstrate that the right of the child to protection from harm is paramount;
- ⇒ safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- ⇒ foster best practice;
- ⇒ demonstrate accountability through establishing effective structures and practices;
- ⇒ support Archdiocesan organisations and personnel in safeguarding children;
- ⇒ uphold safe recruitment and selection practices for all Church personnel including volunteers because the Archdiocese is committed to employing people who will keep children safe from harm;
- ⇒ uphold and maintain standards of conduct which set out clear guidelines regarding ethical behaviour as an essential part of keeping children safe;
- ⇒ operate a safe play and learning environment that ensures children's safety.

DEFINITIONS

Agencies

- ⇒ Archdiocesan Committees
- ⇒ Archdiocesan Development Fund
- ⇒ Archdiocesan Services – Resource Development, Finance and Accounting, Human Resources, ICT, Property and Building;
- ⇒ Brisbane Catholic Education
- ⇒ Centacare – Child Care Services, Community Services, Family Relationships, Pastoral Ministries and Centacare corporate services;
- ⇒ Episcopal Office – Archbishop, Auxiliary Bishops, Vicar General, Vicar for Clergy, Clergy Life and Ministry;
- ⇒ Evangelisation Brisbane – ministry support services to parishes and deaneries; and
- ⇒ Financial Administrator's Office.

Abuse Sexual assault, sexual harassment or any other conduct of a sexual nature that is inconsistent with the integrity of the relationship between Church personnel and those who are in their pastoral care.

Sexual abuse includes sexual behaviour involving the person and another person in the following circumstances:

- ⇒ The other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person;
- ⇒ The relevant person has less power than the other person;
- ⇒ There is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.

Child in need of protection A child who has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm. This may include detrimental effects on the child's body or the psychological or emotional state that are evident or are considered to be likely to become evident in the future.

Harm Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation. It may be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

Standards Those expectations and behaviours of clergy/religious and lay church workers/volunteers as articulated in the National Committee for Professional Standards publications: [Integrity in Ministry](#), [Integrity in the Service of the Church](#) and the Archdiocese of Brisbane Code of Ethical Behaviour.

Vulnerable Adults Those aged 18 or over, who may be in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability; or who may be unable to take care of him/herself or protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

GOSPEL VALUES

The values of love, dignity and justice as demonstrated by Jesus underpin this policy. Jesus especially showed care for the poor, powerless and vulnerable. He particularly loved children in their purity and innocence - ...for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. (Mark 10:14). All people are called to cherish and safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults from anyone who would harm them.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

National Committee for Professional Standards, [Integrity in Ministry](#). A document of principles and standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia. June 2004.

National Committee for Professional Standards, [Integrity in the Service of the Church](#). A resource document of principles and standards for lay workers in the Catholic Church in Australia. September 2011.

National Committee for Professional Standards, [Towards Healing](#). Principles and procedures in responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia. January 2010.

LEGISLATION

[Child Protection Act \(QLD\) 1999](#)

[Child Protection Reform Amendment Bill 2014](#)

[Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act \(Qld\) 2000](#)

[Public Health Act \(Qld\) 2005](#)

[Family Services Act \(Qld\) 1987](#)

[Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#)

REFERENCES

Truth Justice and Healing Council. Child Safe Institutions. [Issues Paper 3](#)

[Safeguarding Children](#). Standards and guidance document for the Catholic Church in Ireland. September 2008

South Australian Catholic Church [Child Protection Council Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People](#).

Archdiocese of Brisbane Catholic Education Council. [Student Protection Policy September 2011](#)

Other Archdiocesan policies

Carmody Report www.justice.qld.gov.au

Child Wise <https://www.childwise.net>

REVIEW **To be reviewed annually.**
 Next review July 2015.