Catholic Diocese of Darwin

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Implementation and Accountability Strategies

Safe Churches
Safe Children

This document is written to support the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Prevention and Protection Policy.

Acknowledgements

The Diocese of Darwin in its development of Policy and Procedures and Implementation and Accountability Strategies for our Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults material is indebted to the Archdiocese of Brisbane for permission to use their material as the basis for our work. We gratefully acknowledge their generosity and continued support.

Scope

The Diocesan Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Prevention and Protection Policy applies to all clergy and workers (paid and volunteer), engaged in any ministry of the Diocese. It applies equally to persons in the diocesan offices and parishes as well as those with ministries across the diocese.

Catholic Education and CatholicCare NT have their own specific requirements in regard to safeguarding children and these too must meet Diocesan demands.

Core Principles

Children and vulnerable adults have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured and protected from harm.

In the implementation of the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy, the diocese is committed to:

- Working in partnership with families to promote the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- Providing safe and nurturing environments for children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- Implementing safe recruitment and selection practices for church personnel including volunteers;
- Demonstrating accountability through provision of protective systems and practices;
- Maintaining standards of conduct which show clear guidelines for ethical behaviour which reduce risk of harm to children , young people and vulnerable adults;
- Responding appropriately to disclosures of harm and abuse, and concerns of inappropriate behaviour toward children, young people and vulnerable adults and those experiencing or being exposed to family or domestic violence.

The following Strategies and Accountability procedures will be used in each parish to monitor the implementation of these core principles.

Audits of parishes will monitor implementation and effectiveness of strategies employed.

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STRATEGIES FOR PARISHES.

Implementation Strategy 1:   A Statement of Commitment

All Clergy, Religious, Diocesan workers[1] are bound by the "Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult Policy" statement:	Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by:
The Catholic Diocese of Darwin, consistent with gospel values and its Mission Statement, follows the example of Jesus in respecting the dignity of each child, young person and vulnerable adult. All members of the diocesan family will work together for the protection of these people and for the prevention of any form of abuse, neglect or exploitation – physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual – within our church communities and organisations.	☐ Displaying the policy statement in the church, parish office, meeting rooms; ☐ Publishing the policy statement in the parish newsletter at least twice a year; ☐ Providing a copy of the policy statement to all Diocesan workers including clergy and religious.

Implementation Strategy 2: A Code of Conduct

| All clergy and religious are bound by and comply with *Integrity in Ministry*, the code of conduct established by the national committee for Professional Standards.

 All diocesan workers are made aware of and are bound by the *Diocesan Code of Conduct* and *Integrity in the Service of the Church*. | Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by:

 ☐ Clergy and religious sign a statement saying they have read and understand the requirements of *Integrity in Ministry*;

 ☐ Diocesan workers have received a copy of the diocesan *Code of Conduct*;

 ☐ Employees have signed that they understand the Code of Conduct document;

 ☐ The parish volunteer register shows that training of volunteers includes practical examples of appropriate/inappropriate behaviour demonstrated by use of scenarios. |

Implementation Strategy 3: Policies for Recruiting, Selecting, Training and Managing Diocesan Workers.

Diocesan and Parish **employees** are recruited using approved and appropriate methods. Within 6 months of commencing employment, new workers must undergo safeguarding training. Under specific and named circumstances, an extension of time may be needed in some areas. Safe recruitment and selection practices are to be implemented to assist in the recruitment and selection of **volunteers** including: • Referee checks; • Interview with parish priest or delegate; • Ochre Card check if required (depends on the nature of the work); • Police check if required (depends on the nature of the work).	Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by: ☐ Use of specific interview questions designed to screen unsafe candidates; ☐ Minimum of 2 referee checks on Diocesan/Parish employees file; ☐ Existence of role description for each employee and volunteer position; ☐ Current Ochre Card held by each employee and volunteer as required; ☐ Records of police checks for those who require them are kept in files; ☐ Records of training for employees and volunteers are kept in files; ☐ Safeguarding training includes training in mandatory reporting;

Implementation Strategy 4: Procedures for Handling Disclosures and Suspicions of Harm

Diocesan and Parish workers, including volunteers are required to comply with NT Government legislation for mandatory reporting of harm or suspicions of harm. Diocesan Policy support documents provide a process to be used for reporting and documentation of disclosures of harm. Notification is made to the Diocesan Director of Professional Standards if the offender or suspected offender is engaged in church activities.	Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by: ☐ Ready access to forms and assistance with reporting is available and known to workers; ☐ Copies of reports are retained in a secure place in the parish/diocesan office; ☐ A local Safeguarding Coordinator is trained in this area of work and is known in the parish; ☐ Reports of notification to Director of Professional Standards, if required are filed with relevant documents.

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Implementation Strategy 5: A Plan for Managing Breaches of Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Any breach of the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy by a Diocesan worker, including volunteers is to be addressed in a fair and supportive manner. Full cooperation with relevant Territory and Australian Government legislation takes place. (See Integrity in the Service of the Church) A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the Church, including children and young people that fails to comply with the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy. This includes a breach in relation to: • the statement of commitment to safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults and their protection from harm; • the Diocesan Code of Conduct in relation to interacting with children and vulnerable adults; • procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing diocesan workers; • policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm and reporting of same; • risk assessment and plans for managing risks for high risk activities and special events; • safeguarding agreement (MOU) plan for formerly convicted perpetrator who seeks to re-join or join a parish; and • strategies for communication and support.	Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by: ☐ Applying natural justice to all persons involved in an alleged breach; ☐ Allowing those involved to provide their understanding of events; ☐ Making detailed notes in regard to details of the breach; ☐ Keeping all notes/records in an incident file in a secure place and, if an employee in their personnel file; ☐ Maintaining confidentiality in matters related to the breach; ☐ Ensuring an outcome will be provided as soon as possible; Outcomes for breaches will depend on the nature of the breach and may include: ☐ A reminder re component of the Safeguarding Policy e.g. Code of Conduct; ☐ Revised supervision regime; ☐ Further or review of education/training; ☐ Mediation between the parties involved; ☐ Review of policies and/or procedures; ☐ Disciplinary procedures and if needed report to Professional Standards Office; ☐ Notification to police, Professional Standards Office and dismissal in the case of proof of harm having been caused; ☐ Review of risk assessments and/or events guidelines.

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Implementation Strategy 6: Policy and Procedures for Compliance with Screening Requirements

An Ochre Card register of Diocesan workers in kept by parishes showing expiry date, re-applications made and a method for tracking renewals. A copy of current Ochre Card register for each parish is sent to the Diocesan office each year. A register of Police Checks, where needed, is maintained showing expiry dates reapplications and a method for tracking renewals. A copy of current Police Check register for each parish is sent to the diocesan office each year.	Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by: ☐ Worker's particulars are kept on file in the parish/diocesan office; ☐ Registers of Ochre Cards showing details of expiry dates are available; ☐ Register of required Police Checks show detail as required; ☐ A record of time of forwarding Ochre Card list and Police Check list to the Diocesan Office is available.

Implementation Strategy 7: Prepare a Risk Management Plan for Activities and Special Events Involving Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Parish Priest/Administrator is responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are conducted on all activities involving children and vulnerable adults. Those involved in running these activities are to understand the risk assessment requirements to mitigate identified hazards.	Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by: ☐ Consistent implementation of the Two Adult rule; ☐ Following best practice regarding photography at events involving children and vulnerable adults as outlined in policy; ☐ Risk assessments for regular events are completed using the assessment tool provided in the Diocesan Resource Documents; ☐ Risk assessments are kept in the parish office and reviewed annually for on-going events; ☐ Risk assessments are completed for special events and documentation kept.

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Implementation Strategy 8: Offender Risk Management

In keeping with the Safeguarding Policy and our Pastoral Mission, the church will actively manage those who pose a risk to the safety of children and vulnerable adults in church communities. Where a person is known to pose a risk, the Vicar General and the Integrity Officer will work with the parish to develop an appropriate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the parish Priest/Administrator and the offender. Such an agreement is required in circumstances where an individual intends worshipping within or being an active member of any church community or setting, specifically: - where there are significant concerns, allegations or convictions which indicate a possible risk of harm to others; - when a convicted sex offender or violent prisoner is released and intends to attend church; - where members of the clergy or religious have been temporarily withdrawn from ministry pending conclusion of enquiries or a safeguarding matter; - where, post enquiry, concerns remain about a member of clergy or religious but not such that they should be dismissed; - where an individual is subject to any current investigation or assessment of risk for a safeguarding matter.	Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by: ☐ A Memorandum of Understanding exists when needed; ☐ The Diocesan leaders advise the Parish Priest/Administrator if they are aware that a person posing a risk may be attending their parish and support the Parish Priest in developing a MOU to assist in ensuring safety of all; ☐ Diocesan leadership and Safeguarding officer supporting the Parish Priest/Administrator to enact the MOU; ☐ Diocesan leadership working closely with the Police/Probation Officer to implement the MOU.

Implementation Strategy 9: Professional Development

All diocesan workers working with children and vulnerable adults are required to participate in training in safeguarding matters.	Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by: ☐ Training records are kept and are up to date.

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Implementation Strategy 10: Communication and Support

The Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Prevention and Protection Policy and support documents are communicated publicly. The Accountability Strategies are available to communities.	Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by: ☐ Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy is displayed in churches and parish meeting rooms; ☐ Current copies of the Policy, support documents and Accountability Strategies are available on the Diocesan website; ☐ Each parish has a Safeguarding Coordinator who is made known to and offers support to the community independent of the parish Priest.

Implementation Strategy 11: Monitoring and Reporting

The implementation of the Policy, strategies and actions are monitored by the Diocesan Integrity Officer and annual reports provided to the diocese on the status of that implementation.	Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by: ☐ The Diocese maintains data associated with the implementation of the Policy, Implementation strategies and actions; ☐ A program of annual internal audits is undertaken and appropriate record kept.

Implementation Strategy 12: Independent External audit

The implementation of policy, guided by the implementation and accountability strategies, will be subject to the independent external audit be a firm contracted for this purpose. The audit cycle will ensure each parish is undertakes an external audit within a ten year period.	Evidence of compliance with this requirement is demonstrated by: ☐ An independent external audit of the implementation of policy, strategies and actions is conducted; ☐ The result of the audit are published on the Diocesan website or other public medium.

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Associated Documents

i. Integrity in Ministry (Reprinted 2010) Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia

ii. Integrity in the Service of the Church (2011) Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia

iii. Making use of Integrity in the Service of the Church: Support Materials, a Document of the National Committee for Professional Standards, 2011.

iv. Towards Healing. Principles and procedures in responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic church in Australia. National Committee for Professional Standards, January 2010

Legislation

i. The Care and Protection of Children Act

ii. Adult Guardianship Act

iii. Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: It's everybody's responsibility, Department of Children and Families

iv. Criminal Code Act (Northern Territory)

Diocesan Documents

i. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Prevention and Protection Policy

ii. Code of Conduct

iii. Working with Children

iv. Work Health and Safety Policy

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