



Catholic Diocese of Darwin

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Prevention and Protection Policy

Introduction and Purpose

The Diocese of Darwin is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. This policy continues our long held practice of providing safe environments and activities which acknowledge the inherent dignity and rights of each person. Children and young people have the right to grow and to develop their full potential physically, emotionally and spiritually. All vulnerable people have a right to safety and freedom from abuse.

Policy Statement

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. The Diocese of Darwin has zero tolerance to abuse or exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults. 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.

Scope

This document applies to all clergy, religious, employees and volunteers who work in the diocese and complements the documents *Integrity in Ministry (Reprinted 2010)* and *Integrity in the Service of the Church (2011)*.

This policy applies to all aspects of church work, including, but not limited to activity within the church buildings and accompanying spaces, community work, pilgrimages, camps, home visiting, trips and holidays.

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

Definitions

Child: a person under the age of 18 years

Vulnerable Adult: an individual aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.¹

Core Principles

The Catholic Diocese of Darwin will:

- Work in partnership with families to promote the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults;

¹ Australian Government, 2014, Vulnerable Persons, Police Checks and Criminal Offences: Working with Vulnerable Persons. Retrieved from <https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/doing-business-with-dss/vulnerable-persons-police-checks-and-criminal-offences>

- Provide safe and nurturing environments for children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- Implement safe recruitment and selection practices for church personnel including volunteers;
- Demonstrate accountability through provision of protective systems and practices;
- Maintain standards of conduct which show clear guidelines for ethical behaviour which reduce risk of harm to children , young people and vulnerable adults;
- Respond 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.

Related Legislation, Policies and Documents

- i. The Care and Protection of Children Act (Northern Territory)
- ii. Information Sharing Guidelines (1 July 2012) (Northern Territory)
- iii. Disability Services Act (Northern Territory)
- iv. Adult Guardianship Act (Northern Territory)
- v. Domestic and Family Violence Act (Northern Territory)
- vi. Criminal Code Act (Northern Territory)
- vii. Towards Healing (Revised 2010) Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia
- viii. Integrity in Ministry (Reprinted 2010) Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia
- ix. Integrity in the Service of the Church (2011) Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia
- x. Making use of Integrity in the Service of the Church: Support Materials, a Document of the National Committee for Professional Standards, 2011.
- xi. Diocese of Darwin Safeguarding Commitment Statement
- xii. Diocese of Darwin Safeguarding Code of Conduct
- xiii. Diocese of Darwin Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy
- xiv. Diocese of Darwin Working with Children Clearance Policy
- xv. Diocese of Darwin Complaints Regarding Children and Youth Policy
- xvi. Diocese of Darwin Mandatory Reporting Harm to a Child or Young Person form