



Archdiocese of Brisbane

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Prevention and Protection Policy

At a Glance



It really does take a whole community!

The Key Elements to the Policy and its implementation are:

- 1 • Clear Policy Statement
- 2 • Safe Recruiting and Selection Practices
- 3 • A Code of Ethical Behaviour
- 4 • Safe Activities and Environments
- 5 • Responsible Management of Disclosures
- 6 • Monitoring, Auditing and Reporting

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- 1 • Clear Policy Statement

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.

• Safe Recruiting and Selection Practices

Good recruitment and screening processes will help screen out those who are unsuitable to work with children in Parishes/Agencies. Essential steps to be taken to ensure safe recruitment practices of both paid and unpaid staff include:

- Application Forms for both paid and volunteer roles
- Role descriptions or Volunteer Task Descriptions for roles within the Parish/Agency
- Working with Children Blue Card check or appropriate application for exemption
- Declaration Form (re prosecution history or previous disciplinary procedures) for those working with children
- Specific interview questions which delve into child safe issues
- Letters of appointment which clearly articulate the conditions of the work to be carried out
- Clear and thorough induction process to the role so that policies and expectations of behaviour are understood by the incumbent
- Register of personal details

• Code of Ethical Behaviour

Those who serve in the Archdiocese of Brisbane shall:

1. **Commit to justice and equity** by exhibiting the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity in their personal and professional conduct.
2. **Uphold the dignity of all people and their right to respect** by conducting themselves in a moral manner consistent with the discipline, norms and teachings of the Catholic Church.
3. **Commit to safe and supportive relationships** by not taking advantage of any pastoral or authoritative role for their own benefit; and by adhering to the requirements of the law of Queensland regarding reporting any suspected abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
4. **Respond with integrity to those who are poor, alienated or marginalised** by not acting in an abusive or neglectful manner; and by sharing concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behaviour with the appropriate person in their organisational structure.
5. **Strive for excellence in all their work** by accepting their personal responsibility in the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse and harm; by providing a professional work environment that is free from harassment; and following the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.
6. **Maintain appropriate professional boundaries in all contact settings including virtual** by:
 - ~ demonstrating behaviour consistent with role and responsibilities;
 - ~ avoiding inappropriate emotional attachment;
 - ~ not forming or engaging in relationships of a personal or sexual nature;
 - ~ maintaining distance between work time and activities and personal time and activities;
 - ~ not accepting gifts or entering into financial relationships or transactions;
 - ~ not disclosing inappropriate personal information; and
 - ~ avoiding touch in a manner, which is not a legitimate occupational requirement.



• Safe Activities and Environments

Risk assessments must be conducted on all activities and services provided within the Archdiocese involving children and vulnerable adults. These assessments are to be kept on file and reviewed annually.

TWO ADULT RULE

General safe practice in all activities involves the application of the **Two Adult Rule** which serves to keep children and vulnerable adults as well as the adults serving them safe. Wherever practical no fewer than two adults are to be present at all times during any church sponsored program, event or ministry involving children and/or vulnerable adults. It is best that these two adults not be related. Why have this rule?

- Drastically reduces the risk of an incident of abuse (A potential abuser will lose interest if they are constantly in sight of another adult);
- Protects the adults against false allegations;
- Reduces the possibility of a claim of negligence;
- Parents and adults are more likely to volunteer to lead if they know they will have help on a regular basis;
- Provides help if there is an accident or emergency;
- Sends a clear statement that children/vulnerable adults are important and valued.

What do we do if we are a small church with a hard time finding even one adult leader?

- Assign an adult roamer who visits each room during CLOW or other children's activities, to function as additional helpers;
- Leave doors open;
- Put glass windows in the doors.



• Responsible Management of Disclosures

1. Receive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move to a suitable environment; - Be calm and patient; - Allow the person to tell their story; and - Listen supportively.
2. Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make notes, using their own words; - Review what was disclosed; and - Ask for the persons contact details.
3. Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect that the person may not disclose full details; - Respect the person's need for privacy and confidentiality; and - Acknowledge the person's courage and strength.
4. Reassure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reassure the person that it is OK to disclose; - Address any concerns about the person's safety; and - Reassure the person that you will act.
5. Refer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explain that you will need to refer their disclosure to someone who can help; - Provide the contact details for the Professional Standards Office; - Notify your next senior person and/or report to the appropriate authority; and - Keep a copy of your notes

Reporting a Disclosure or Suspicion of Harm.

Sexual Abuse	Other forms of abuse/harm/misconduct
<i>As a citizen you are able to report directly to the police yourself.</i>	<i>As a citizen you are able to report directly to the police/Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services yourself.</i>
Report to the next senior person and ensure that the Safeguarding Recording form (Appendix 10) is completed.	Report to the next senior person and ensure that the Safeguarding Recording form (Appendix 10) is completed.
Supervisor makes a notification to the Director of Professional Standards.	Supervisor makes a notification to the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer.
Director of Professional Standards reports to the police, or makes a notification to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services	A notification is made to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Child Safety may report the matter to the police.
Professional discernment may indicate that the child or vulnerable adult should be referred onto Centacare Family and Relationship Services (CFRS) for support. This decision will be taken in consultation between the Safeguarding Children Officer, Director of Professional Standards, the person reporting and CFRS.	



• Monitoring, Auditing and Reporting

Parishes will undergo an annual internal audit. This Audit will be conducted by the Safeguarding Officer. For areas of non-compliance, a time-frame to comply will be negotiated with the Parish. On-going non-compliance will be noted in the Safeguarding Officer's Quarterly report to the Archbishop's Safeguarding Advisory Committee.

Independent external audits for Parish compliance commenced in June 2016. All Parishes will undergo an external audit within a five (5) year period.



• Contacts

- Police – Brisbane Central Child Protection & Investigation Unit: **3258 2533**
- Professional Standards Office: **3336 9474**
- Office of the Public Guardian: **Brisbane – 1800 661 533**
- Whistle Blower – Stoptline **1300 304 550** AOB@stoptline.com.au
- Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer: **3324 3752**
safeguarding@bne.catholic.net.au

All Policy related documents can be found on www.brisbanecatholic.org.au/support/safeguard