



*This protocol is for Parish Priests and Parish workers when engaging volunteers who may be working in the presence of children.*

# PROTOCOL: ENGAGING PARISH VOLUNTEERS

## **1.0 Protocol**

- 1.1 The contribution of volunteers in parishes and across the Archdiocese is recognised and greatly valued.
- 1.2 Healthy and safe working environments will be provided for volunteers along with the requisite induction and training.
- 1.3 The Archbishop's Office of Evangelisation is available to assist parishes and other Archdiocesan entities in the implementation of the relevant policies and procedures.

## **2.0 Definition**

- 2.1 A volunteer is defined as a person who has agreed to undertake a task of their free will, receiving no financial remuneration except reimbursements (for approved out of pocket expenses) and honoraria or gratuities (financial payments intended as honorary rewards for voluntary services.)
- 2.2 Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, volunteers are defined as workers [Section 7 (1) "A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as: (h) a volunteer ..."  
As such the Archdiocese has a duty of care to provide a safe environment for volunteers.

## **3.0 Implementation**

### **3.1 Engagement**

- 3.1.1 Volunteers should be interviewed by the Parish Priest (or representative) and engaged in accordance with the policies and practices of the Archdiocese. In particular the Archdiocesan Privacy Policy should be brought to their attention and their obligations under this legislation in the knowledge that their personal information will be dealt with in accordance with these same principles.
- 3.1.2 Depending on the nature of the role the engagement process should include a degree of screening, for example:
  - Verbal reference check
  - Criminal record check. In those instances where it was deemed desirable to have a criminal record check undertaken the parish/archdiocesan entity should incur the cost.
  - Volunteer declaration.

### **3.2 Induction and Records**

- 3.2.1 Volunteers should be informed about their roles and provided with appropriate training and induction. It is important that volunteers have the skills and knowledge to safely undertake their volunteer role.
- 3.2.2 Parishes and other archdiocesan entities should maintain files on all volunteers. The records may include paper files and databases files and include personal details; training and induction details, and registration under ACT legislation WWVP or NSW legislation WWCC as necessary:
  - In the ACT volunteers visiting homes and potentially working with vulnerable adults as well as children would need to register with the ACT authorities. In the case of volunteers residing in NSW parishes they would need to complete the WWCC if working with children.



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## 3.3 Payments

- 3.3.1 Volunteers should not be given payments, allowances or benefits (including board and lodging, discounted school fees etc.) in return for their services but may be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred including travel costs, child-care costs, meals etc.
- 3.3.2 As indicated above volunteers are 'workers' under the harmonised WH&S legislation. As such it is important that they are provided with a safe working environment and are informed of their WH&S obligations and those of the Archdiocese. Information should be provided about the matter of hazards, accidents and incidents, duty of care, harassment and grievance. The relevant Archdiocesan policies should be made available to volunteers.

## 4.0 RELEVANT POLICIES

- Child Protection - Code of Conduct
- Discrimination
- Accidents & Workers' Compensation
- Privacy
- Working with Children and Vulnerable People Registration (NSW & ACT)