



This protocol is for Parish Priests
and Parish workers when
recruiting people to child-related
roles in the Parish

PROTOCOL: SAFE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

1.0 POLICY

- 1.1 The Archdiocese recognises that its greatest asset is the people employed to fill the myriad of roles across Parishes and Archdiocesan organisations.
- 1.2 A professional approach to the recruitment of personnel will be promoted at all times from the moment the decision is made to employ someone to ultimate engagement.
- 1.3 The underlying principle for employment within the Archdiocese will be the support of the Church's religious ethos and values.
- 1.4 The Archdiocesan Employment Services (with reference to the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations) can assist Parishes and Archdiocesan organisations with advertising, establishing interview panels, formulating questions, undertaking applicant checks and preparing employment packages.

2.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Prior to recruitment it is important to ascertain exactly what role the position will fulfil taking into account:

- How the role will fit with current structures
- The level of responsibility the position will have
- The inherent requirements of the role
- Whether the position be supervised and if so, by whom
- The need to review/upgrade the physical environment
- Whether the position will be part-time or full-time, temporary or casual
- The level of remuneration
- The level of induction or training that is envisaged

2.1 Position Description

- 2.1.1 It is a requirement that every position in the Archdiocese has a *position description*. From an applicant's perspective they are entitled to sight the description at the time of interview and a finalised version should be attached to the letter of appointment.
- 2.1.2 For child-related roles, ensure you include a statement about the Parish's commitment to being a child-safe environment, and that the safety and well-being of children is a priority of the Church.
- 2.1.3 In addition to the specific *position description* each *letter of appointment* will detail the expectations with respect to upholding the ethos and teachings of the Catholic Church; serving the parish/Archdiocese faithfully, efficiently and diligently and exercising all due care and skill in the performance of one's duties; carrying out all lawful and reasonable instructions given in relation to the one's employment; preserving and promoting the best interests of the parish/Archdiocese, and refraining from acting contrary to the interests of the parish/Archdiocese.

2.2 Advertising

- 2.2.1 Although advertising a position is not a legal requirement it is **strongly** recommended; the benefits include targeting a wider range of potential candidates as well as greater transparency and openness.
- 2.2.2 All curia positions can be advertised on the 'positions vacant' section of the Archdiocesan website. Dependent on the nature of the position the decision may be taken to advertise in other media.



2.2.3 Parish positions can be advertised in the local *Parish Bulletin*. Again, the decision may be taken to advertise more broadly.

2.2.4 Advertisements should set out the title of the position:

- summary of duties and responsibilities
- the selection criteria
- part-time/full-time/temporary/casual (hours if part-time)
- location
- attributes/qualifications/experience;
- expectations regarding ethos and mission;
e.g. This role requires an understanding of and support for the Catholic ethos...
- salary range
- that background checks will be undertaken;
e.g. This position will require the successful applicant to undergo a criminal record check...
- manner in which applications can be made e.g. mail, fax, email
- details of contact person
- what further information is available on request; e.g. position description
- closing date for applications

2.2.5 Identifying likely candidates by 'word of mouth' is a valuable tool. Regardless of how the candidates are obtained it is important that all applicants undergo the same interview process in the interests of fairness, transparency and thoroughness.

2.3 Interviewing

The interview process is intended to discern the best available applicant for the position. It should ensure fairness and transparency whilst providing the applicant with an opportunity to understand the position and, establish whether they really wish to work for the organisation.

2.3.1 Short List

A short list should be established after studying the resumes and accompanying correspondence. It is recommended that no more than four applicants should be interviewed and that an hour should be allowed for each interview. Depending on the seniority of the position it may be necessary to allow more time.

2.3.2 Panel

Interview panels should include two to three people. The panel members do not need to be all from the same organisation but people who understand the organisation (its members and their needs); people with good technical knowledge of the role; people with experience in recruitment. The interview panels should also have gender balance. Panel members must familiarise themselves with the applicant's resume prior to interview.



PROTOCOL: SAFE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

2.3.2 Questions

In order to garner the necessary information from a candidate it is important to pose relevant and searching questions. To achieve this, panel members must be familiar with the needs of the position.

- Divide the questions among the interviewers and ask all applicants the same questions. Be prepared to ask supplementary questions in order to explore or clarify an issue.
- Applicants will be nervous and it is important for the panel to put them at their ease by introducing themselves and asking questions unrelated to the position; about the weather, the trip to the interview etc.
- To ensure impartiality, avoid discriminatory or personal questions. Tailor questions to the needs of the position and organisation. When interviewing for a child-related role, ensure your questions are appropriately framed around child safeguarding and well-being. For assistance, refer to *Appendix A: Interview questions*.

2.3.3 Other Matters

In addition to the prepared questions it will be necessary to provide applicants with information pertaining to the position. For example:

- that a three (or six) month probation period applies
- the particular requirements of the role, such as attendance at after-hours meetings
- office hours, shut-down periods
- salary expectations, vehicle arrangements
- when the applicant might be able to commence
- relocation options & expenses
- that any engagement is subject to the successful completion of the child or criminal record checks
- the expectations of the Church (as detailed in the advertisement) in regards to Catholic ethos and how they impact upon the performance of the role
- the expectations with respect to upholding Catholic ethos and values in the use of the social media.

2.4 Catholic Ethos & Discrimination

2.4.1 Despite the raft of anti-discrimination legislation Catholic employers are entitled to seek employees who are supportive of the Church's religious ethos and values. That said, some positions will demand a higher level of understanding of the faith than others. Thought needs to be given to inherent requirements of any role and the level of support/knowledge/understanding of Catholic teachings and ethos that is required to perform the role.

2.4.2 It is essential that these issues are shared with all applicants during the recruitment interviews. Even where an applicant has a Catholic background, the employer must still articulate the expectations in terms of the organisation's mission. Reference must be made to the activities that will be organised for staff such as masses, prayers, liturgies etc. and the expectations regarding participation and attendance.

2.4.3 Where the expectations regarding faith or ethos have been fully discussed the Archdiocese is in a much stronger position to take future disciplinary action should it prove necessary.



PROTOCOL: SAFE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

2.5 Selecting an Applicant

On concluding the interviews the panel should discuss the merits of each applicant and thoroughly assess who is the most suitable candidate focusing on the criteria set out in the *Position Description*. The most suitable candidate is not necessarily the most experienced or the most qualified as personal attributes will determine how good a 'fit' there is between the candidate and the organisation.

2.6 Identity and Background Checks

It is archdiocesan policy that all employees engaged in child-related employment or working with vulnerable people be registered with the NSW or ACT authorities as required.

ACT - the Application for Registration with Access Canberra may be downloaded from <https://form.act.gov.au/smartforms/landing.htm?formCode=1318> or obtained from the Archdiocesan Office or Institute of Professional Standards and Safeguarding (IPSS). On completion the application, along with proof of identity and payment (paid employees) should be returned to a Canberra Connect shop front. Registered personnel will then be issued with a *Working with Vulnerable People* registration card.

NSW – the Application for the Working with Children Check may be downloaded from <https://wwccheck.cyp.nsw.gov.au/Applicants/Application>. Paid employees and volunteers in NSW apply Online for their own check every five years. Paid employees must pay a fee. A person applying for clearance is required to provide proof of identity (same as when applying for a NSW driver's licence) at a NSW motor registry or Government Access Centre. The Archdiocese will then verify the child-related worker's or volunteers' clearance number prior to their engagement. There can only be two results from the Working with Children Checks – a clearance or a bar. People with a bar may not work or volunteer in child-related roles.

2.7 Referee Checks

2.7.1 Prior to making an offer of employment it is critical that referees be contacted particularly former employers. An applicant's written references are not sufficient. For assistance with questions, refer to *Appendix B: Referee questions*.

2.7.2 Ideally the parish priest/manager should obtain an applicant's permission to contact referees. However, there is no legal constraint to contacting a former employer who is not listed as a referee. It is desirable to contact more than one former employer and have a set of questions prepared to ask referees.

2.8 Offer of Employment

2.8.1 Once the referee checks have been completed a verbal offer of employment may be made to the successful applicant.

2.8.2 On acceptance of the offer *Archdiocesan Employment Services* should be advised so that the appropriate documentation can be prepared and dispatched without delay. At this time the unsuccessful applicants should also be informed.



PROTOCOL: SAFE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

SELECTION CRITERIA MATRIX			
Position:		Interviewer:	
Applicant:		Date:	
Selection Criteria	Weighting (out of 5)	Score (out of 5)	Total (weighting x score)
<i>People skills</i>			
<i>Qualifications</i>			
<i>Relevant experience</i>			
<i>Cultural fit</i>			
Final Score	/ 125		

- 1) The panel lists all relevant selection criteria (essential and desirable).
- 2) The panel allocates a weighting to each criteria.
- 3) Each interviewer scores the applicant.
- 4) The weighting and score are multiplied to provide a total per criteria.
- 5) The total column is added to determine a final score.

The final scores of all applicants are compared.



ATTACHMENT A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions are a guide only; it is not always necessary to ask all questions. However, it is recommended that a range of questions is asked. This list is split into general questions (1-10) and child-related questions (11-13).

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

General

1. What do you know about us?
2. Why do you want to work with us?
3. What aspects of your experience do you think is particularly relevant to this role?
4. Working for the church can be different to the commercial environment. Do you see any issues in working for the Church? [Alternative question: This role requires you to provide (spiritual leadership / be a faith role model / teach faith, etc). Are there any lifestyle or other issues regarding Catholicity that might affect your suitability for this role?]
5. This role involves [list physical requirements]. Are there any health or medical issues that may impact on your ability to undertake this work?
6. Explore technical skills (e.g. Word, Excel, Publisher, Powerpoint, Outlook, other programs)
7. Describe yourself using 5 adjectives.
8. What do you find inspiring or supportive in your current work environment or the person you work for?
9. One of work's biggest challenges is managing priorities and meeting deadlines. Can you talk about your experience with this?
10. Have you ever been the subject of an employer disciplinary process?

Child-related employment questions

11. Why did you decide to work with children?
[Alternative questions: Can you tell us about your recent experience of working with children?
OR What has working with children or young people taught you about yourself?]
12. Tell me about a time when a child or young person behaved in a way that caused you concern. How did you deal with that? Who else did you involve?
[Alternative question: Tell me about a time when you have been working with children and your authority was seriously challenged. How did you react? What strategies did you employ to bring things back on course? With hindsight, how might you have improved your response?]
13. If a parent made a complaint or allegation about a fellow member of staff, what would you do?
[Alternative questions: If you had concerns about a colleague with regards to his or her behaviour or attitude towards the children in his or her care, how will you deal with this?
OR Safeguarding children is an important part of our work. Can you give me some examples of how you would contribute to making the organisation a safer environment for children?]
14. Do you have any questions for us?



ATTACHMENT B: REFEREE QUESTIONS

If the applicant will be engaged in child-related work, it is recommended that:

- the referee must not be related to the applicant;
- for employees, at least 2 referees must be from a previous employer;
- records relating to each reference (e.g. the name and position of the referee, how long they have known the applicant) are kept by the person who conducted the reference checks.

These questions are a guide only; it is not always necessary to ask all questions. However, it is recommended that a range of questions is asked to ascertain suitability for the position.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

General

1. What is your relationship with the applicant?
 - a) How do you know the applicant?
 - b) How long have you known the applicant?
 - c) Are you related to the applicant?
2. Have you worked directly with the applicant?
3. Please describe the applicant's work ethic
4. Is the applicant a good team player, and do you think they relate well to others in the workplace?
5. Would you say the applicant is reliable?
6. What do you think might frustrate the applicant?
7. How do you think the applicant would manage under pressure, for example to achieve tight deadlines to achieve a desired outcome?
8. Would you re-employ the applicant?
9. Has the applicant been the subject of an employer disciplinary process?

Child-related employment questions

[If the applicant's previous position required them to work with children, and/or the role for which they have applied involves working with children ask the following questions].

10. This role involves working directly with children. Can you tell me about the applicant's behaviour and interaction with children?
11. Can you talk about this applicant's suitability to work with children? Do you have any concerns about this applicant working with children?
12. Do you know of any pending or unsubstantiated child-protection complaints against this applicant?
13. Are there any other comments you would like to make?