



The Catholic Archdiocese of  
Canberra and Goulburn

# WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE REGISTRATION (NSW & ACT)

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## 1. POLICY

To ensure that archdiocesan personnel (including clergy and volunteers) meet the legislative requirements of the NSW and ACT jurisdictions for engagement in child related employment.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION

All active clergy, regular supply clergy, employees and volunteers who are engaged in child related employment (working with vulnerable people<sup>1</sup>) are required to be registered.

Work for religious organisations where children form part of the congregation or organisation is considered child related work, if the work is carried out:

- as a priest, religious leader or spiritual officer, or
- in any other role in the organisation involving activities primarily related to children, including youth groups, youth camps, teaching children & child care.

### 2.1 Application for Registration (ACT)

- The ACT Act requires those people participating in activities or services for vulnerable people to be registered.
- The Application for Registration with the Office of Regulatory Services may be downloaded from [www.ors.act.gov.au](http://www.ors.act.gov.au) or obtained from the Archdiocesan Office or Professional Standards Officer.
- On completion the application, along with proof of identity and the payment of \$73 (for paid employees) should be returned to a **Canberra Connect shop front**.
- Registered personnel will be issued with a *Working with Vulnerable People* registration card.

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<sup>1</sup> The ACT legislation refers to vulnerable people. A vulnerable person is a child under 18 or an adult who is experiencing disadvantage, and is accessing a service related to the disadvantage.

## 2.2 Working with Children – Applicant Clearance & Verification (NSW)

- Employees and volunteers in NSW need to **apply Online** for their own check every five years.
- A person applying for clearance is required to provide proof of identity (as when applying for a NSW driver's licence) at a NSW Motor Registry or Government Access Centre.
- The Archdiocese will verify the child-related employee's or volunteer's clearance number prior to their engagement.
- The same Working with Children Check applies to employees (priests) and volunteers.
- Those people who have been checked and cleared will be continuously monitored for serious sex or violence offences.
- 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.
- The check will cost a paid employee \$80. Volunteer workers will not be charged but they cannot undertake paid work with children.

## 2.3 The Registration Process

The registration process includes a national criminal history check following which individuals who pose an unacceptable risk may be stopped from working with children/vulnerable people.

## 2.4 Regulated Activities

A worker/volunteer needs to register in the following circumstances:

- 2.4.1 The activity or service is for children or vulnerable people (due to disadvantage).
- 2.4.2 The activity is provided by a community service, disability service, respite care service or **religious organisation**. *Where children form part of the congregation or organisation is **child-related work** if the work is carried out by a **parish priest** or **spiritual leader**, or in any other role involving activities primarily related to children (youth groups, youth camps, teaching children and child care).*
- 2.4.3 They provide childcare services.
- 2.4.4 They are engaged at a pre-school, primary school or secondary school.

## 2.5 Exemptions

- 2.5.1 Individuals who provide **administrative, clerical, maintenance** or other **ancillary services** do not have to register if their work does not ordinarily involve contact with children for extended periods.
- 2.5.2 Individuals who do not work for a period of more than a **total of five days** in a calendar year, if the work involves minimal direct contact with children or is supervised when children are present.
- 2.5.3 Parents or close relatives of a child who attends an education or care service when volunteering at or for activities of the school.
- 2.5.4 Parents or close relatives of a child who volunteers in connection with a team, program or other activity in which the child usually participates.
- 2.5.5 Visiting speakers, adjudicators, performers or other similar visitors to child-related work places if the work of the person is for a one-off occasion and is carried out in the presence of one or more other adults.

## **2.6 Employer Responsibilities**

A person must be registered if they are going to work with vulnerable people in a regulated activity or service on a regular basis. Individuals may work or volunteer for such work if the employer agrees and the person **is supervised at all times** whilst undertaking the activity.

Records of every clearance for every worker/volunteer will be retained by the Archdiocesan Office showing name, number, expiry date and date of verification.

Each position must be reviewed to establish whether it is specifically child/vulnerable person related. If so, then job advertisements, role descriptions and interview questions should reflect this fact.

The Archdiocesan Office will check the identity of each worker/volunteer. In the case of the ACT it will require the presentation and recording of the individuals registered card details and in NSW, verification online.

## **2.7 Compliance**

Both the worker/volunteer and the employer commit an offence if the worker/volunteer is permitted to engage in a regulated activity whilst not registered.

