



1. Purpose	<p>This Complaints Management policy provides direction on how the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (ACG) receives, records, manages, resolves and reports on complaints of abuse towards children and vulnerable adults.</p> <p>This policy is to be read in the context of the <i>Child Protection Code of Conduct</i>, <i>Integrity in Ministry</i> and <i>Integrity in the Service of the Church</i>.</p>
2. Scope <ul style="list-style-type: none">Refer sect 21	<p>The Policy applies to all staff members*, engaged to work in, or provide services to the ACG, including but not limited to Parishes, Youth Ministry, Special Religious Education (SRE) and the Chancery, noting each Archdiocesan Agency (Catholic Education, Marymead and CatholicCare) may have their own Code relevant to the delivery of their services.</p>
3. Child Safe Standard	<p>This policy supports the ACG's commitment to the Child Safe Standards.</p>
4. Complaints to be reported	<p>All complaints should be reported. This includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Disclosure of abuse involving a staff member, whether current or historical;Inappropriate behaviour by staff members around children;Suspicion of abuse or harm by a staff member to a child or vulnerable adult.
5. Reporting Obligations	<p>Depending on the nature of the complaint, the ACG will follow its reporting obligations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">civil authorities ie Police, ACT/NSW child protection authorities, ACT/NSW Reportable Conduct Schemes and/or ACT/NSW Education authoritiesReligious authorities such as Catholic Safeguarding Limited.
6. Responsible Workers	<p>All staff members are responsible for ensuring complaints against children or vulnerable adults are directed to the appropriate authority for response. The IPSS Manager is responsible for ensuring all staff members are aware of their reporting obligations.</p>
7. How to make a complaint	<p>An adult, child, young person, or any staff member can make a complaint or raise a concern via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Face to face meeting with Parish Priest, IPSS Manager, Youth Minister or Formation Coordinator (SRE);Phone call to the Parish Priest, IPSS Manager on (02) 6239 9806, or Formation Coordinator (SRE) on (02) 6239 9826;Email – ipss@cg.org.au or, for SRE - catechists@cg.org.auLetter to GPO Box 3089, Canberra City ACT 2601 (note template at Appendix A for SRE)
8. Steps taken when receiving a complaint	<p>When a person makes a complaint, they will be listened to and a written record of the complaint will be made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">If the complaint involves criminal behaviour towards a child, it will be immediately reported to police and to the relevant child protection agency within the necessary time limits.<ul style="list-style-type: none">In the ACT the relevant child protection agency is Child and Youth Protection Services.



COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ In NSW the relevant child protection agency is the Department of Communities and Justice.● If the complaint involves inappropriate behaviour and/or a breach of the Code of Conduct by a staff member, then the manager will need to follow all reporting requirements.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ In the ACT, abuse towards children by a staff member may need to be reported to the ACT Ombudsman.○ In NSW abuse towards children by a staff member may need to be reported to the Office of the Children's Guardian.● On reporting, the IPSS Manager will:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ initiate any required investigation, not reliant on police clearance○ assess the risk of the respondent's current involvement with children, young people and/ or vulnerable adults.○ advise the Vicar General and Professional Standards Advisory Panel● The IPSS Manager will connect the complainant (and their family) with services that can provide them with support to manage difficult or traumatic experiences. This may include counsellors, support groups and agencies if they are feeling worried or unsafe.● In the case of clergy, the reporting obligations of <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i> will be fulfilled.
9. Investigating the complaint	<p>An allegation of criminal behaviour against a child will be reported to police for investigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The IPSS Manager will request the advice of police and/or the relevant child protection agency in relation to the next steps. <p>The complaint will be investigated (with Police clearance if required) to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Whether a person has breached the Child Protection Code of Conduct or another policy or procedure;● Whether they pose a risk to the safety of children; and● What action, if any, is required to prevent harm to children. <p>Where the complaint is not of a criminal or mandatory reporting nature, the IPSS Manager will gather statements to address the complaint.</p>
10. Procedural fairness	<p>During all stages of the complaints process, both parties will be treated fairly and afforded procedural fairness. Procedural fairness involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Presuming the respondent is innocent until the complaint is substantiated.● Giving the respondent an opportunity to respond to allegations.● Providing the outcomes/findings in writing.● The right to a review.
11. Objectivity and fairness	<p>All complaints will be addressed objectively, fairly and impartially. All conflicts of interest must be declared and resolved. Complainants are to be protected from victimisation or harassment.</p>



COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

12. Ensure appropriate confidentiality	Care will be taken to observe privacy legislation and confidentiality. Information will not be shared with any parties not relevant to the investigation. Advice from police will be sought in criminal matters before sharing information to ensure an investigation is not compromised.
13. Adult complainant and historical child abuse	<p>In the event of an adult bringing forward an historical complaint of a criminal nature, the complainant will be encouraged to make a report to police. All other civil reporting requirements, if any, will be followed.</p> <p>Support will be made available to support the complainant through this process.</p>
14. Conduct risk assessments	Risk assessments will be conducted at the time of the complaint, during the investigation and at the end of the investigation.
15. Precautionary action while investigation is in progress	<p>Any precautionary action will depend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The nature and seriousness of the complaint;• Any special or diverse needs of children or adults at risk who the respondent will be working with;• The nature of the position and the level of oversight over the respondent; and• The respondent's disciplinary history and any risks involved.
16. Removal of staff member	<p>Where the complaint against either a child or vulnerable adult is serious, the staff member may be stood down during the investigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where the complaint is serious and substantiated, the respondent will be removed from Ministry within the Archdiocese.• Where a staff member is convicted of an offence related to child abuse they will be dismissed from work or duty.• Where a staff member is working in a NSW/ACT government school, then the appropriate Education Authority will be consulted. <p>Where the complaint involves a clergy member or religious, the clergy member will be removed from Ministry, however only a canonical processes can remove or dismiss a cleric from priestly life.</p>
17. Communication	All parties to the investigation will receive communication on a regular basis.
18. Implementing outcomes	<p>After the investigation is complete, the IPSS Manager will advise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Archbishop of the findings of the investigation;• the parties to the complaint of the outcome;• relevant civil agencies as required;• those in the community affected by the outcome, as appropriate. <p>The Archbishop is the final decision maker.</p>
19. Right of review	Where there is dissatisfaction with the outcome of an investigation, either party can request an independent review.
20. Record-keeping practices	<p>All complaints of inappropriate conduct towards children will be documented, regardless of whether they meet the threshold for reportable conduct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Records relating to any complaint or investigation will be kept for a period of 50 years after receipt of the complaint.• Hard copies and/or digital copies of complaints will be stored at 55 Franklin Street, Forrest, ACT in accordance with Archival procedures.



COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

21. Review of complaints procedure	This document will be subject to an annual review by the IPSS Manager and updated as necessary.
22. Definitions	<p>“Staff member” includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paid employees whether employed on a permanent, temporary or casual basis• Religious, clergy, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors, consultants and students on tertiary practicum placements <p>“Child” or “children” refers to any person under the age of 18 years.</p> <p>“Adult” refers to any person over the age of 18 years.</p>

All professional standards and safeguarding policies and procedures are available at <https://cgcatholic.org.au/professional-standards/institute-for-professional-standards-and-safeguarding/>



Please complete this form if you have a concern or complaint about an SRE volunteer and/or the service are providing.

THE GIFT OF OUR CHILDREN