

Safeguarding Policy – Chancery & Parishes (ACT & NSW)

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn resides in both the state of NSW and the territory of ACT. As a consequence it is required to observe the requirements of legislation and regulations enacted by the two independent legislative authorities.

1.2 Archdiocesan agencies have child protection policies and/or codes of conduct specific to the requirements of their mandates and responsibilities. Workers within these agencies must refer to the relevant policies and codes of conduct for these agencies as part of their role.

2.0 POLICY

2.1 The Archdiocesan chancery and parishes will fully comply with the relevant child protection and vulnerable people legislation as enacted in the jurisdictions of NSW and ACT.

2.2 The Archdiocese through its policy and related procedures, and those of its agencies and institutions, is totally committed to the care and protection of children, young and vulnerable people (vulnerable people).

3.0 COMMITMENT

3.1 The Archdiocese is committed to creating a safe environment and instituting procedures to prevent abuse whilst responding to allegations and disclosures of abuse.

3.2 All vulnerable people have a right to safety and freedom from abuse of any kind.

3.3 All adults working with vulnerable people have a responsibility to care for them, to promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any form of abuse.

3.4 When any action is taken to prevent or respond to any type of abuse, the welfare and wellbeing of the vulnerable person is the primary concern.

3.5 The integrity of the family unit is respected but not to the detriment of the vulnerable person and the right of the vulnerable person to be heard.

3.6 The dignity of persons involved in situations where abuse is suspected or disclosed should be respected; they should be treated with fairness, sensitivity, dignity and respect. In the interests of justice, appropriate confidentiality should be maintained, with information that relates to suspected or disclosed abuse being provided only to those who have a right or a need to be informed.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

4.1 Children

For the purpose of this policy, children are defined as those being under the age of 18 years or a student attending an Archdiocesan primary or secondary school.



4.2 Workers

This policy applies to:

- Archdiocesan Clergy and members of religious congregations
- Employees in catholic parishes, organisations, groups, boards, councils and committees, individuals or groups authorised to act in the archdiocese
- Volunteers working in catholic parishes, organisations, groups, boards, councils and committees
- Students (eg, work experience, professional placements)
- Contractors and sub-contractors working for the Diocese

4.3 Vulnerable Persons

The ACT legislation defines vulnerable persons as any child or young person under the age of 18, or any adult experiencing disadvantage who accesses a regulated activity or service related to the disadvantage.

4.4 Volunteers

A volunteer is considered to be any person engaging in activities on Archdiocesan premises where they are likely to come into contact with vulnerable persons. This includes visiting family members of children, volunteering in religious organisations or groups as well as speakers, performers, adjudicators, and assessors.

5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Under the Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW) the key role of responsibility for child protection systems that prevent and respond rests with the Head of Agency The Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn is the head of agency in his Archdiocese..

5.2 For the purpose of the protection of vulnerable people in the ACT the NSW procedures will be adopted as representing best practice. As a consequence the Archbishop will be kept informed of all relevant child protection and vulnerable adult (safeguarding) issues.

5.2 The Institute for Professional Standards and Safeguarding (IPSS) will be the point of contact for communication and reporting safeguarding issues.

5.3 Child protection is a shared responsibility. All sectors of the Archdiocese are active in building an aware culture, understanding the nature of child abuse and reportable conduct, and putting child protection systems into practice. These responsibilities require:

5.3.1 Child protection policies and procedures that ensure all reasonable steps are taken to protect children.

5.3.2 Practices and interventions that continually build a culture of safety, characterised by respect, fairness and the development of mutual trust and reconciliation.

5.3.3 Current training in child protection and ongoing professional development.

5.3.4 Promotion of open communication, tolerance and positive relationships.

5.3.5 Processes for monitoring the culture.

5.3.6 Mechanisms for active participation in the development of policies and processes.

5.3.7 Integration of policies into strategic frameworks so that practices is seen as integral to how all sectors of the Archdiocese operate.



6.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION & CHURCH DOCUMENTS

6.1 The Archdiocese through its Child Protection Procedures, this policy, and those of its various agencies and institutions, is unreservedly committed to the care and protection of children.

6.2 The Archdiocese and its agencies are bound by the Commonwealth, NSW and ACT legislation pertaining to child protection and various Church related documents. Some of the most important being:

- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
- Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (ACT)
- Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)
- Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000 (NSW)
- Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)
- Children and Young People (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Online Safety for Children Act 2015 (Cth)
- Integrity in the Service of the Church (September 2011)
- Towards Healing (revised January 2010)
- Integrity in Ministry (reprinted April 2010)
- Keeping Children and Young People Safe, A Shared Community Responsibility (November 2014)

6.3 The Archdiocese also continues to be attentive to reports and findings emanating from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and to the findings of other relevant inquiries.