

# Working with Children and Vulnerable People<sup>1</sup> Registration – Chancery & Parishes (ACT & NSW)

## 1.0 POLICY

1.1 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.

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

1.3 The Archdiocese will ensure that archdiocesan personnel (including clergy and volunteers) meet the legislative requirements of the NSW and ACT jurisdictions for engagement in child, vulnerable person related employment.

## 2.0 IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 All active clergy, regular supply clergy, employees and volunteers who are engaged in child and/or vulnerable person related employment are required to have a Working with Children Clearance if in NSW or a Working with Vulnerable People registration if in the ACT.

2.2 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.

## 2.3 Application for Registration (ACT)

- The ACT Act requires those people participating in activities or services for vulnerable people 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 IPSS.
- 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.

### 2.3.1 Regulated Activities

An employee or volunteer needs to register in the following circumstances:

- The activity or service is for children or vulnerable people (due to disadvantage).
- 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).
- They provide childcare services.
- They are engaged at a pre-school, primary school or secondary school.

<sup>1</sup>The applicable 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.

<sup>2</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.



## **2.4 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.
- Archdiocesan Employment Services or IPSS 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.

2.4.1 An employee or volunteer needs a Working with Children Clearance if they work in a specific, child-related role or have face-to-face contact with children in a child related area.

## **2.5 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.

## **2.6 Exemptions**

2.6.1 For details of exemptions refer to NSW Working with Children exemptions:

<http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check/about-the-check/exemptions>

2.6.2 ACT Working with Vulnerable People Registration exemptions:

[https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/1804/kw/WWWVp%20exemptions#!tabs-2](https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1804/kw/WWWVp%20exemptions#!tabs-2)

## **2.9 Employer Responsibilities**

2.9.1 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.

2.9.2 Records of every clearance for every employee or volunteer will be retained by IPSS showing name, number, expiry date and date of verification.

2.9.3 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.

2.9.4 Archdiocesan Employment Services will check the identity of each employee and IPSS each 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.

## **2.10 Compliance**

Failure to comply with the relevant legislation may amount to a breach of an employee's employment contract and may also lead to disciplinary consequences including termination of the engagement.

