

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

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Author	Craig Brereton	Approved by Bishop	22 December 2017
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1. Introduction

The Catholic Church is called by Jesus to give priority of place to the welfare and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Jesus said, "In truth I tell you, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. Anyone who welcomes one little child like this in my name welcomes me. But anyone who is the downfall of one of these little ones who have faith in me would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great millstone round his neck."
(Matthew 18:3-6, NJB)

"The theology of children and vulnerable persons demands that we not only keep them safe, but that we also give them the first place in our hearts and in our society. We are challenged to learn to see reality through their eyes."
(John Honner, "Child protection, compliance and conversion," 2017)

Jesus said, "I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full."
(John 10:10, NJB)

The Catholic Diocese of Townsville believes that children, young people and vulnerable adults are a gift from God with an intrinsic right to dignity of life, respect and security from physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological harm.

2. Purpose

This policy establishes an effective, accountable and transparent framework for the protection, safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults who access any parish, ministry or agency in the Catholic Diocese of Townsville.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Church personnel within the Catholic Diocese of Townsville including any cleric, member of a religious institute, lay person, other persons who are employed by the Church, or appointed by the Church to voluntary positions, or engage in any form of pastoral ministry.

This policy recognises that some agencies and ministries of the Catholic Diocese of Townsville may be required, by statute or best practice, to develop their own policies for the safeguarding of children, young

people and vulnerable adults. Their policies will be consistent with this overarching *Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy*.

4. Policy Statement

The Catholic Diocese of Townsville will do everything within its power to provide a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults to minimise the possibility of any harm.

5. Principles

Priority of children, young people, and vulnerable adults

This policy and its procedures will demonstrate that safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is a high priority for the Catholic Diocese of Townsville.

Mandatory

This policy and its procedures will inform all parishes, ministries and agencies in the Diocese related to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy and its procedures will be the subject of training and development for all Church personnel with inductions and continued professional development.

Accessible

This policy and its procedures will be readily accessible to all Church personnel, children, young people, vulnerable adults and families within the Church and broader community.

Compliant

This policy directs the implementation of a *Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy*, through authorised procedures pursuant to legislative requirements. It will direct work undertaken to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Best Practice

This policy and its procedures will be informed by the findings and recommendations of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2013-2017*.

This policy and its procedures will ensure that professional standards, facilitated through *Catholic Professional Standards Limited*, are embedded in the Diocese including all parishes, ministries and agencies.

Equity and Diversity

All Church personnel will ensure that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the same protection regardless of religion, age, disability, sex, racial heritage, sexual orientation or identity.

6. Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of Church personnel in relation to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Catholic Diocese of Townsville will be outlined in the safeguarding procedures.

These roles and responsibilities will include, but are not limited to compliance, monitoring, reporting, records management and the promotion of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

7. Related Documents

This policy and its procedures are governed by current legislation including:

1. *The Child Protection Act 1999*;
2. *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*;
3. *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011*;
4. *Public Guardian Act 2014* – where applicable for a vulnerable adult with an appointed Adult Guardian;
5. *Disability Services Act 2006* – where applicable for a child or adult with a diagnosed disability; and
6. *Queensland Family and Child Commission Act 2014*
7. *United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991*

This Safeguarding Policy and its Procedures uphold the principles and standards set out in:

1. *Integrity in Ministry* – A document of principles and standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia, June 2010;
2. *Integrity in the Service of the Church* – A resource document of principles and standards for lay workers in the Catholic Church in Australia, September 2011; and
3. *Towards Healing* – Principles and procedures in responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia, January 2010.

These principles, standards and procedures may be affected by any changes made to the above documents.

The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy will include the following eight procedures:


1. *Statement of Commitment*;
2. *Safeguarding Code of Ethical Behaviour*;
3. *Safeguarding recruitment, selection, training and management*;
4. *Handling disclosures or suspicions of harm and reporting*;
5. *Managing breaches of Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy*;
6. *Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events*;
7. *Compliance with the requirements of the Blue Card system*; and
8. *Communication and support*.

8. Review


This policy will be reviewed at least annually or more frequently pursuant to reforms or significant events. This includes findings and recommendations of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2013-2017*.

9. Authorisation

I hereby promulgate this policy as particular law for the Catholic Diocese of Townsville. Given at The Catholic Centre Townsville on December 22, 2017, this policy replaces the previous policy.



MOST REV TIMOTHY J HARRIS
Bishop of Townsville



LEONARD JAMES HORNER
Notary