

3. Safe People, Safe Practices & Safe Places

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ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>Parish Priest or Administrator, Agency Director or Safeguarding Representative</p> <p>Parish Priest or Administrator or Agency Director to identify and appoint who has the responsibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply the Safeguarding Recruitment Checklist for all selection practices in the Parish, Ministry and Agency to assist in appointing suitable lay workers, paid staff and volunteers and fully inducting them in safeguarding policy and procedures; Liaise with Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator to ensure all existing lay workers, paid staff and volunteers are trained in safeguarding policy and procedures and evidence of this training is documented; Ensure all newly appointed lay workers, paid staff and volunteers are inducted in the first two weeks of commencing. This includes receiving safeguarding material, accessing, reading and signing the receipt notice of understanding and agreeing to all safeguarding procedures; Liaise with Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator to ensure all newly appointed lay workers, paid staff and volunteers undertake safeguarding training within three (3) months of commencing; Maintain records relating to safeguarding induction and training including the signed receipt notice and these are documented for reference and auditing purposes; Provide consistent messages both formally and informally, through meetings, public announcements, newsletters, that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; Visiting clergy must have an Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR) number or complete the 45.5 and 45.6 forms pursuant to Towards Healing (for clergy and religious).
Church personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure understanding of the priority to protect children and vulnerable adults, irrespective of what role it is in the Parish, Ministry or Agency. Every lay worker, paid staff member and volunteer has a responsibility in safeguarding and complying with this procedure. Commit to fully participate in safeguarding training and information sessions and audits as they occur to ensure continual learning and improved safeguarding practice; Engage in constructive conversation as people make comment or raise questions or concerns about safeguarding and encourage them to understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support parishes, ministries and agencies to prepare for the recruitment of new paid staff and volunteers; Provide resources as required including the safeguarding policy and procedures and information resources and tools to promote to all personnel that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Safeguarding Representatives to disseminate resources and materials; • Assist with supervision as required and requested, relating to safeguarding if lay workers, paid staff and volunteers are working directly with children and young people; • Work with the Safeguarding Representatives and other stakeholders externally as identified to provide initial and ongoing training to all lay workers, paid staff and volunteers.
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1. Safe People, Safe Practices & Safe Places - procedure outline:

1.1. Pre-employment Recruitment

- 1.1.1. Parish, Ministry or Agency management must be familiar with the safeguarding policy and procedures before any new paid or volunteer is recruited and appointed;
- 1.1.2. The [Safeguarding Recruitment Checklist](#) must be completed, signed off and securely filed for all new personnel working with children and vulnerable adults;
- 1.1.3. Applicants must be informed that they will be subject to Blue Card screening if their work is directly working with children or making decisions for children (as part of their role). Applicants must be warned that it is an offence for a 'disqualified person' to sign a Blue Card application form or a renewal form. It is an offence for an employer not to provide this warning to a potential paid staff or volunteer. For more information on Blue Card requirements, see Compliance with the requirements of the Blue Card system Procedure.
- 1.1.4. Applicants for all paid positions must be informed that, as part of their employment agreement, they may be required to be in receipt of a positive National Police Check prior to commencement of employment. Consideration must also be given to undertaking this check for volunteers, especially if they are working with vulnerable adults and there are no other risk controls in place. The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator will facilitate checks being undertaken through Catholic Commission for Employment Relations (CCER) and a fee is charged for each check submitted. Clergy and Religious (with the Diocese of Townsville as the Church Authority) and Safeguarding Representatives must have a National Criminal History Check in addition to the Blue Card screening as their work comes with a high degree of responsibility. Costs for National Police Checks will be costed back to the respective parish, ministry or agency. A consent form for the National Police Check is available at: [National Police Check consent form](#)
- 1.1.5. All Church lay workers, paid staff and volunteers, prior to their appointment working with vulnerable people, must complete a [Safeguarding Declaration Form](#) which serves as a safeguarding measure for suitability to the role.

1.2. Pre-employment Selection

- 1.2.1. An interview process, in line with the [Safeguarding Recruitment Checklist](#) requirements, when selecting new paid staff and volunteers must be considered for staff when the role is working directly with children, as it is an important safeguarding measure to appointing a suitable person;
 - Questions should include scenario and open-ended questions; and probing questions where required (if an applicant should elaborate on their answer);
 - For examples of safeguarding questions in interviews see: [Blue Card Services useful tips and sample interview questions](#)
- 1.2.2. Referee checks are a vital part of the selection process and checks should be carried out with the applicant's most recent employer. If a written reference is provided, then contact should

be made with the referee to verify the information and authenticity. Referee checks for applicants working with children must be carried out and documented;

- 1.2.3. A probationary period of employment to allow assessment on performance and suitability of a new paid staff member or volunteer should be made clear in writing to the applicant prior to their appointment. A probationary period of six (6) months is recommended. A meeting to end the probationary period should occur and documented with a plan for ongoing supervision to maintain safeguarding standards in employment.

1.3. Post-employment Induction and Training

- 1.3.1. Safeguarding material including policy and procedures will be made available to all new paid staff and volunteers on their appointment and can be accessed through the [safeguarding webpage](#);
- 1.3.2. Training (on-line training or face-to-face training) in safeguarding policy and procedures must occur for all new staff and volunteers within the first three (3) months of employment and then every two years for existing staff as an ongoing arrangement;
 - Targeted training on safeguarding policy and procedure may occur after a critical incident or if a significant risk or breach is identified, or on the directive of the Bishop;
- 1.3.3. A Volunteer Handbook has been introduced in the Diocese and all volunteers are to be provided this for their induction and then to sign the Volunteer Agreement. Volunteer Agreements are to be managed and maintained on file by the respective Parish, Ministry or Agency. This is to comply with all relevant policies including safeguarding and work, health and safety requirements;
- 1.3.4. All induction and training which occurs will be documented by the Parish, Ministry or Agency and filed for reference and auditing purposes. A diocesan training register will be maintained by the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator in partnership with parishes, ministries and agencies;
- 1.3.5. Parishes, ministries and agencies are responsible for collecting and filing an acknowledgement of receipt notice from all paid staff and volunteers when staff have been inducted in the relevant safeguarding procedures and this includes this procedure. **Note:** There will be one receipt notice covering the relevant safeguarding procedures.

1.4. Post-employment management in safeguarding

- 1.4.1. Parishes, ministries or agencies when supporting children and vulnerable adults must promote their voice and participation in making the environment safe and to identify how the Church can better support and protect them. This can be done formally or informally through engagement opportunities with them, their family or significant others and noting feedback;
- 1.4.2. The views and feedback of children and vulnerable adults should be valued and documented so safeguarding policy and procedures take their feedback into account when being reviewed. It is important to ensure the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator receives this feedback as soon as it is provided and when reviewing procedures;
- 1.4.3. Supervision and goal setting for paid staff and volunteers is an important part of creating a healthy and safe environment as it promotes inclusion and good performance; supports development and positive working relationships; addresses concerns as they arise; and can help protect children and vulnerable adults if concerning behaviours or patterns emerge. Supervision should always document the points of discussion including any issues raised and agreed actions. The value of general discussions and check-ins (i.e. informal supervision) should also be acknowledged and supported.

Safeguarding Practices applying the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

1.4.4. *Two Adult Rule*: General safe practice in all activities, recommends the application of the *Two Adult Rule* which serves to keep children and vulnerable adults, as well as Church personnel supporting them safe. Wherever practical no fewer than two adults should be present at all times during any Church sponsored program involving children or vulnerable adults. It would best that these two adults are not directly related. This approach is an important safeguarding measure because it:

- Significantly reduces the risk of an incident of abuse occurring;
- Protects Church personnel against malicious allegations;
- Reduces the possibility of a claim of negligence;
- May encourage other people to volunteer if they know there will be assistance on a regular basis;
- Provides help to Church personnel if there is an accident or emergency;
- Sends a clear statement from the Church that children and vulnerable adults are valued and we are committed to protecting them.

In some smaller parishes there may be a capacity issue where this rule is not possible, or it may be that the timing of support provided does not allow for two adults to be present. In such circumstances, communication with the Parish, Ministry or Agency leader is important or talk with the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator or Safeguarding Representative (if one is appointed). Implementing a risk management plan with protective strategies will help safeguard. These include:

- Invite a parent or other suitable adult to join the activity to be the second supervising adult, following the recruitment procedures;
- Engage the child or vulnerable adult in open spaces or leave building doors open;
- Communicate with Parish Priest/Administrator to detail the activity prior to it starting, call-in throughout the activity and call again after activity to ensure your time and location is accounted for;
- Take notes after the activity to document the events such as time, call-ins, witnesses etc. This will help provide confidence and reassurance that good practice in safeguarding is in place and risks are mitigated.

Note: These are just some examples of protective strategies to consider if the *Two Adult Rule* is not possible. You should discuss with your supervisor, Parish Priest/Administrator, Safeguarding Representative or Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator if you are unsure or worried and they can undertake a risk assessment and management plan.

1.4.5. *Physical Contact* – Physical contact with children may be required in some circumstances. These may include; management of an injury or to assist with toileting for example. Parent/guardian consent must always be provided in writing and this consent should always be provided prior to any child commencing an activity. If physical contact is required, then the *Two Adult Rule* must apply and an explanation provided to the child as to what physical contact will be and why. If there are any worries expressed by the child then the parent/guardian should be immediately contacted or further advice sought;

1.4.6. *Transport of children* – Church personnel must not transport children in their vehicles without written consent from the child's parent or guardian and they must have approval from their supervisor. In the event that a child needs to be transported, for safety reasons the *Two Adult Rule* must apply with approved Church personnel, including the required working with children checks and having completed the required safeguarding training. For any work involving the

transportation of children, a log book must be maintained of the details, including the names of the children, ages, and pick-up and drop-off time. This log book must be signed by the supervisor at the completion of each activity. All people travelling in a vehicle must wear seat belts, the driver should be appropriately licensed and the vehicles registered, insured and safe to drive;

- 1.4.7. Parent or guardian consent for Parish, Ministry or Agency activity or events – Children under 18 participating in any activity or event which occurs as a one-off event or occurs away from Church facilities in public areas or private property, must have written consent from the child’s parent or guardian. This should include information to the parent or guardian on where the event is held, duration, pick-up and drop-off details, medical conditions identified and what the management plan is for these conditions, and emergency contact numbers. Transport of children consent also applies if required. A *Safeguarding Activity Parent Guardian Consent* form is available using the [Safeguarding Supporting Documents/ Forms](#).

Important things to note

Ensure a risk assessment has been undertaken for the activity or event and this is documented. If the risk is assessed as high, a risk management plan must be completed. The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator is able to assist with this assessment and plan. To better support safer places, the Diocese has established a specific [risk management procedure](#)

- 1.4.8. Visiting clergy must have an Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR) number; or complete the 45.5 and 45.6 forms pursuant to Towards Healing (for clergy and religious). Visiting clergy and religious must also comply with these procedures and be inducted and attain a Positive Notice Blue Card if required, as per the [Compliance with the requirements of the Blue Card system Procedure](#). This especially applies to clergy and religious who are providing ministry in the Diocese to children, and clergy who are supplying for a Priest on leave in a Parish;
- 1.4.9. Change Rooms/Toilets – Children should be afforded privacy when using toilets and change rooms. Responsible practice requires that adequate and appropriate supervision be given to children in these circumstances. Where an adult needs to assist a child, the direction is as per 1.4.6. of this procedure regarding Physical Contact. Supervising adults must work to maintain the privacy and respect of all individuals, such as announcing entry to the room;
- 1.4.10. Photography/Video – During any ministry or activity it is not uncommon for parents, guardians or other children to take photos (of their children or friends) at celebrations. Church personnel should be aware that there is a risk that some people may attend to take inappropriate photos or video footage of children. At each event or activity it should be announced by the designated leader that sensitivity when taking photos applies and parental or guardian written consent to take photos of their respective children must always be sought. Church personnel must not publish any photographs or videos of children without authorisation from their supervisor and without written parent or guardian consent, detailing what the publication is being used for.
- 1.4.11. Use of private space in accommodation – Priests, Religious, lay workers, paid staff or volunteers from time-to-time may need to share facilities with each other and therefore the *Code of Ethical Behaviour* and *Integrity in Ministry* principles always applies. Any shared accommodation or facilities between Church personnel and children and/or vulnerable adults must always undertake a risk assessment and risk management plan for the protection of all involved, including Church personnel – see [risk management procedure](#). Risk management plans must also be completed and reviewed for any physical environments under the Diocese’s control or management, including buildings, structures, open spaces, grounds, homes of religious and

clergy, and arrangements for live-in carers/caretakers. Any concerns or worries prior to the event or accommodation arrangement should be shared in writing with the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator;

- 1.4.12. 'Social media' is the term commonly given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interest online. Social media builds online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement. When using social media, Church personnel are bound by the *Safe Conduct Standards* and *Integrity in Ministry* (for Clergy and Religious) and other relevant policies;
- 1.4.13. Parishes, ministries and agencies should consider making available resources and educational material for children and for vulnerable adults which will provide information to help keep them safe. The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator will facilitate these resources being made available as requested. For example a useful link is from the [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#) which promotes safer online experiences. The [safeguarding webpage](#) has useful links to resources and portals to assist. Such resources should be regularly made available to children and families through Parish Newsletters or the Parish website.