

DIOCESE OF TOWNSVILLE

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

1. OBJECTIVE

- 1.1 The Catholic Church is called by Jesus to give priority of place to the welfare and well-being of children 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)

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

- 1.2 The Catholic Diocese of Townsville (the Diocese) believes that children 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. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy recognises that some agencies and ministries of the Diocese may be required, by statute or best practice, to develop their own policies for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Their policies will be consistent with this overarching *Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy*.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Children and young people

Refers to those under the age of 18.

- 3.2 Vulnerable Adult (Person)

Refers to any individual aged over 18 years who has or is suffering bereavement, marriage breakdown or other such adversity making them in particular need of pastoral support, or a person with an intellectual disability, physical illness, mental illness or other impairment that makes it difficult for that person to protect themselves from abuse or exploitation.



3.3 Church personnel

Refers to 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.

3.4 Harm

Refers to any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation. It may be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omission or circumstances.

3.5 Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy

Refers to the eight key procedures which this policy authorises and is pursuant to the legislative requirements under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*.

3.6 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

Refers to the ten *Standards* developed by Catholic Professional Standards Limited (CPSL) which provides the framework for Catholic Church entities to build a culture of safety and to advance the safety of all vulnerable persons across the Catholic Church in Australia.

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards take into account the guidance of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations adopted by the Council of Australian Governments (Feb 2019).

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 The Catholic Diocese of Townsville will do everything within its power to provide a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults to minimise the possibility of any harm. The Diocese commits to a zero tolerance approach to any forms of abuse and reflects this commitment in its procedures.

5. APPLICABILITY

5.1 This policy applies to all Church personnel working or residing within the Diocese. Safeguarding inductions and training will include all relevant personnel in leadership positions and paid staff and volunteers working directly with children and vulnerable adults. Access to this policy and its procedures will be provided to all personnel to emphasise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.



6. QUALITY CONTROL

6.1 This policy underpins the *Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy* and includes the following procedures:

- 6.1.1 [Statement of Commitment;](#)
- 6.1.2 [Safe Conduct Standards;](#)
- 6.1.3 [Safe People, Safe Practices & Safe Places;](#)
- 6.1.4 [Handling disclosures or suspicions of harm;](#)
- 6.1.5 [Managing breaches of the risk management strategy;](#)
- 6.1.6 [Risk management for settings, activities and physical environments;](#)
- 6.1.7 [Compliance with the requirements of the Blue Card system;](#)
- 6.1.8 [Communication and Support](#)

7. COMMUNICATION & IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 The *Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator* is responsible for developing appropriate communication and support processes to effectively implement this policy.

8. COMPLIANCE, MONITORING & REVIEW

8.1 This policy underpins the *Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy*, through authorised procedures pursuant to legislative requirements and the *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards*. It will direct work undertaken to protect children and vulnerable adults.

8.2 This policy will be reviewed at least annually or more frequently pursuant to reforms or significant events. This includes the reform agenda of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2013-2017*; audit findings undertaken by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd or other legislated or authorised reviews.

9. REPORTING

9.1 The *Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator* is responsible for reporting to the *Bishop* on issues of safeguarding implementation, compliance, monitoring and review.

10. DATE OF NEXT REVIEW

December 2020

11. RELATED POLICIES AND/OR PROCEDURES

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



- 11.1.1 [The Child Protection Act 1999](#);
- 11.1.2 [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000](#);
- 11.1.3 [Public Guardian Act 2014](#);
- 11.1.4 [Disability Services Act 2006](#);
- 11.1.5 [Queensland Family and Child Commission Act 2014](#); and
- 11.1.6 [United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991](#).

11.2 This policy and its procedures uphold the principles and standards set out in:

- 11.2.1 [Integrity in Ministry](#);
- 11.2.2 [Integrity in the Service of the Church](#); and
- 11.2.3 [Towards Healing](#).

12. VERSION HISTORY

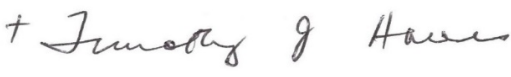
Version Date	Enacted Date	Comments
December 2019	February 2020	This version replacing previous version

Policy Owner: Office of Professional Standards

Consultation with Key Stakeholders: Council of Priests, Safeguarding Committee, Agency Executives, safeguarding representatives and Diocesan and Parish ministry groups and personnel.

Policy Validated: Office of Financial Administrator

Authorised By:

Signed: 

Date: 5 February 2020

Most Rev Timothy Harris DD
Bishop of Townsville