



## Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

### Policy Statement

The Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide values the dignity of all God's children and takes seriously our role in safeguarding their wellbeing and protection both within the Church environment and communities in which they are raised. The Archdiocese strives to maintain a child safe culture which recognises the welfare of children and young people as paramount and welcomes children from all diverse backgrounds.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide will always act in the best interest of the child or young person as demonstrated by our Commitment Statement for Safeguarding Our Children and Young People which integrates the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child as the foundation for child protection.

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an overarching policy framework which guides and gives structure for Catholic Church agencies, schools, parishes and communities to develop and implement procedures and policies which establish and maintain child safe environments.

### Principles

The Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide seeks to:

1. Ensure the care, wellbeing and protection of all children and young people through:
  - legislative requirements
  - professional duty of care
  - pastoral care
2. Promote safeguarding children and young people as everyone's responsibility
3. Build an aware culture which prioritises and maintains safe environments for all through policy compliance and review
4. Provide children and young people with opportunities to be heard and participate in the life of the Church
5. Acknowledge and respond to the particular needs of children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including children with disability and children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage
6. Communicate our commitment of being a Child Safe Organisation with zero tolerance to child abuse
7. Plan for safe, open and supportive environments and identify any areas of risk
8. Deliver relevant safeguarding training, education programs and provide guidance to those with roles which engage children and young people
9. Develop, implement, monitor and review protective systems and safe transparent practices which are both preventative and responsive
10. Raise, report and respond appropriately to all disclosures of abuse, signs, indicators and/or concerns of inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people

### Scope

This policy applies to all Archdiocesan clergy, religious, employees and volunteers.

## Responsibilities

All Catholic Church agencies, schools, parishes and communities are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of procedures and practices which demonstrate a safe environment for all and work collaboratively to ensure effective achievement of a Child Safe Organisation.

All Archdiocesan clergy, religious, employees and volunteers are responsible for:

- Helping to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and prompting respectful relationships to support the dignity of each child
- Holding a current Department of Human Services child related clearance or Working With Children Check approved by the Screening and Verification Authority
- Participating in mandatory notification training and relevant education which assists to safeguard children and young people
- Adhering to codes of conducts which establish standards of behaviour and practices, including the principles of this policy

## General Definitions<sup>1</sup>

*In South Australia, child abuse and neglect is categorised in the following ways:*

**Physical Abuse** The child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering serious physical trauma or inflicted injury due to the actions of their caregiver.

**Psychological/Emotional Harm** The child's social emotional, or cognitive development is impaired or seriously at risk as a direct result of persistent caregiver behaviour or attitude towards the child, whereby the child's self-esteem and social competence are undermined or eroded over time.

**Neglect** Serious, ongoing failure to provide for a child's basic needs, to the extent that the child is not receiving the care and supervision necessary to protect them from harm, has suffered serious physical injury or illness, or there is risk of serious harm to the child's well-being and development.

**Sexual Abuse** Any sexual activity or behaviour that a child is subjected to. Sexual abuse occurs when someone is in a position of power uses that power to involve the child or young person in sexual activity. **Grooming** occurs when a person tries to form a bond or a friendship with a child, to gain the trust and create opportunities to start, maintain and hide their sexual abuse of the victim.

*Anyone under the age of 18 is classified as a 'child or young person'.*

## Review

This policy will be reviewed initially in the first 12 months then every three years and monitored through the Archdiocese of Adelaide Child Protection Council.

## Legislation

Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017

Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016

<sup>1</sup>Safe Environments for Children and Young People – Through their eyes, Government of South Australia, Department for Education 2018  
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## Supporting Documents:

- Commitment Statement – Safeguarding Our Children and Young People
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- Safe Environments for All Framework
- Working with Children Checks Screening Policy
- Procedure for Mandatory Notification Responsibilities
- Best Practice Guidelines for Interacting with Children and Young People
- Archdiocesan Code of Conduct
- Centacare Child Protection Policy
- Catholic Education South Australia child protection procedures
- National Committee for Professional Standards, Integrity in the Service of the Church
- National Committee for Professional Standards, Integrity in Ministry
- National Response Protocols

+ Pat O'Regan

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Archbishop of Adelaide

