



# Archdiocese of Brisbane

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable adults  
Prevention and Protection Policy

## Implementation & Accountability Strategies



**It takes a whole  
community.**

**FOREWORD**

As Archbishop I am committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults from preventable harm and I wholeheartedly support the many clergy, religious, employees and volunteers of the Archdiocese of Brisbane who daily demonstrate this same commitment.

I am delighted to approve this Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy. Superseding our previous child safety policy, it prescribes best practice in prevention of harm to, and protection of children and vulnerable adults. I commend it to you as a valuable tool for your work.

The *Code of Ethical Behaviour for employees and volunteers who work in service of the Church* within this policy underlines your responsibility to report incidents should you receive a disclosure of abuse. Training for the implementation of the policy, monitoring and regular auditing for compliance are important practices. You are required to do everything possible to ensure our success in these aspects of the Church's work.

I am grateful for the ways in which you dedicate yourself to the service of the church in Brisbane and assure you of my continued prayers for your work.

May the God of peace bless you and those entrusted to your care.

As always in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Coleridge', written in a cursive style.

**Most Rev Mark Coleridge**  
**Archbishop of Brisbane**

April 2014

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Materials developed by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, Ireland: *Safeguarding Children* and the Diocese of Austin: *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* have been used with permission in this document. The Archdiocese of Brisbane is deeply grateful for the generosity of these colleagues.

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (QLD) requires that businesses, in our case parishes, have a Child and Youth Risk Management strategy.

Nothing in the policy affects the expectations of *Integrity in Ministry – a document of principles and standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia. (June 2004)*

## SCOPE

For consistency in the approach to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults throughout the Archdiocese, the policy statement applies as follows to Clergy and Archdiocesan workersof:

- Parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Brisbane
- Episcopal and Corporate Affairs
- ADS
- ADF
- Centacare
- Brisbane Catholic Education
- Evangelisation Brisbane and

Centacare and Brisbane Catholic Education will also apply their own operational strategies in line with legislative and accreditation requirements that apply to their specific operations.

## CORE PRINCIPLES

In the implementation of the Policy the Archdiocese of Brisbane is committed to the following principles:

- **Children and vulnerable adults have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured and protected from any harm**
- **Recruitment, selection and induction requirements and procedures for all Archdiocesan workers will be designed to ensure unsuitable persons are excluded from appointment.**
- **All Archdiocesan workers will be required to commit to the Code of Ethical Behaviour which sets out clear expectations regarding behaviour.**
- **Appropriate education and training will be provided to all Archdiocesan workers to ensure child protection knowledge and skills are current.**
- **The Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer will conduct internal monitoring and reporting on an annual cycle with each parish, to ensure policy objectives and strategies are being achieved.**
- **Independent external auditing of the policy objectives and strategies will be undertaken annually and the findings made public, through a report published on the archdiocesan website and media release. The external audit cycle will see every parish externally audited within a five-year period.**

**STRATEGIES**

The Policy will be implemented in parishes using the strategies outlined below. Parish accountability will be assessed using the 12 implementation strategies.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 1:      A STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

<p>All Clergy, Religious, Archdiocesan workers are bound by the ‘Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy’ statement:</p> <p><i>The Archdiocese of Brisbane holds that children and vulnerable adults are a gift from God with an intrinsic right to dignity of life, respect and security from physical and emotional harm. They are to be treasured, nurtured and protected from any harm.</i></p>	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Display of policy statement in the church, parish office, meeting rooms, hall office</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Publish policy statement in the parish newsletter at least twice in one year</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provided a copy of the policy statement to all new clergy, religious, employees and volunteers (<i>Learnconnect Tracked Document</i>)</li> </ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 2:      A CODE OF CONDUCT**

<p>All clergy, religious are bound by and comply with <i>Integrity in Ministry</i>, the code of conduct established by the National Committee for Professional Standards.</p> <p>At induction, all employees and volunteers are made aware of and are bound by the Archdiocesan <i>Code of Ethical Behaviour</i>.</p>	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clergy and Religious indicate by signature that they have read and understand the requirements of <i>Integrity in Ministry</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employees and volunteers have received the Archdiocesan Code of Ethical Behaviour Employees have signed that they understand the document</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Records relating to ‘Safeguarding’ training are kept in the parish volunteer register. Training includes practical examples of appropriate behaviour compared to inappropriate behaviour which is taught through scenarios</li> </ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 3: POLICIES FOR RECRUITING, SELECTING, TRAINING AND MANAGING CHURCH WORKERS**

<p>Employees are recruited through the Human Resources department of the Archdiocese.</p> <p>Within 6 months of new employees commencing they must undertake <i>Safeguarding Training</i></p> <p>Safe recruitment and selection practices are to be implemented to assist in the recruitment and selection of volunteers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Min two (2) Reference Checks</li> <li>- Interview</li> </ul>	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Including the safeguarding recruitment statement in any advertising of positions – paid or volunteer.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clergy adhere to roles as described in church documents: <i>Priest and the Parish School, Priest and the Parish Finance Council, Integrity in Ministry</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> use of the specific interview questions designed to screen unsafe candidates</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Min of 2 Reference Checks held on Archdiocesan workersfiles.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> role descriptions for each position - employee or volunteer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Positive notice blue cards are held by each employee or volunteer working with children.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Police Checks are carried out for Archdiocesan workersvisiting nursing homes, hospitals or private homes e.g. Extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist or Care and Concern ministry</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Training</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> End of Qualifying Period (6mth) ongoing employment depends on completion of Safeguarding training.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> training in the mandatory reporting steps is provided to all clergy, religious, and Archdiocesan workerswho have contact with children and vulnerable adults, as part of Safeguarding training.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Training should be undertaken every two years as it will be continuously evolving, developing and improving</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> training parish staff and the Local Safeguarding Representative in how to receive a disclosure of abuse</li> </ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 4:      PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING DISCLOSURES AND SUSPICIONS OF HARM**

<p>Clergy, Religious and Archdiocesan workers are required, by the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy (see Support Document), to mandatorily report incidents or suspicions of harm. The Policy’s Support Document provides the steps in handling suspicion of harm and/or disclosure of harm.</p> <p>The Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer is available to assist with this process, as required.</p>	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ready access to the Safeguarding Reporting form to record suspicion or disclosure of harm (hard or soft copy in parish office also available on the archdiocesan website)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> preparing a secure, confidential file within parish administrative procedures to retain copies of any Safeguarding Reporting forms</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> appointing a Local Safeguarding Representative who has been trained, and is made known to the parish</li></ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 5: A PLAN FOR MANAGING BREACHES OF SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

<p>Any breach of this Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy by a church worker, is to be addressed in a fair and supportive manner. Concern for justice and healing requires full co-operation with applicable civil authorities and processes [Integrity in Service of the Church, p 5].</p> <p>A <b>breach</b> is any action or inaction by any member of the church, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of The Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.</p> <p>This includes a breach in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults and their protection from harm</li> <li>○ the Archdiocesan Code of Ethical Behaviour for interacting with children and vulnerable adults</li> <li>○ procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing church workers</li> <li>○ policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines</li> <li>○ risk assessment and management plans for high risk activities and special events,</li> <li>○ Safeguarding Agreement plans where a formerly convicted perpetrator seeks to rejoin a parish, and</li> <li>○ strategies for communication and support</li> </ul>	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> applying natural justice to all persons involved in an alleged breach;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> allowing those involved to provide their understanding of events</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Making detailed notes in regards to the details of the breach and those involved. This may require completing the details on the Safeguarding Recording Form</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep all notes/records in incident file and/or Archdiocesan workersfile.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> maintaining confidentiality in matters related to the alleged breach</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> an outcome will be provided within 7 days</li> </ul> <p>Outcomes for breaches will depend upon the nature of the breach, and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> reminder re component of the Safeguarding Policy e.g. Code of Ethical Behaviour</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> closer supervision</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> further education/training</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> mediation between those involved</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> review of current policies and procedures and development of new policies and procedures</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> disciplinary procedures, and report to Professional Standards Office</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> notification of misconduct to police, Professional Standards Office and dismissal in the case of proof of harm having been caused</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> review of risk assessments</li> </ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 6: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR COMPLIANCE WITH SCREENING REQUIREMENTS**

<p>A Blue Card register of Archdiocesan workers is kept by parishes.</p> <p>Expiry dates noted, re- applications made and an internal process in place for tracking renewals.</p> <p>A Police Check register of Archdiocesan workers is kept by parishes.</p> <p>Expiry dates noted, re- applications made and an internal process in place for tracking renewals</p>	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employee particulars, including Blue Card details entered into the Aurion HR system. This system is set to report upcoming expiry of licenses such as Blue Cards, Police Checks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> where a parish uses the PACs database all volunteers’ particulars are to be entered including Blue Card details. This system can be set to report upcoming expiry of licenses such as blue cards and Police Checks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> where a parish does not use the PACs system a register of volunteers’ particulars including Blue Card and Police Check details are to be kept, maintained and reviewed at least annually</li> </ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 7: A RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN AND**

<p>The Parish Priest/Administrator is responsible to ensure that risk assessments are conducted on all activities involving children and vulnerable adults. Those involved in the running of these activities are to understand the risk assessment requirements to mitigate identified hazards.</p>	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> consistent implementation of the Two Adult Rule</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> following best practice regarding photography of events involving children and vulnerable people as outlined in the policy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> following best practice as outlined by the ACBC Social Networking policy <a href="https://www.catholic.org.au/world-communications-day-2015/social-networking-policy">https://www.catholic.org.au/world-communications-day-2015/social-networking-policy</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> risk assessments completed using the Risk Calculator provided in the Resource Documents</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> risk assessments are to be kept within the Work Health and Safety files and reviewed for currency on an annual basis</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> special events such as children’s holiday activity programs should be risk assessed covering all aspects of the program, including human - factors such as volunteers helping with activities – see checklist in <i>Resource Documents</i></li> </ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 8: OFFENDER RISK MANAGEMENT**

<p>In keeping with the Safeguarding Policy and our Pastoral Mission, the Church will actively manage those who pose a risk to the safety of children and vulnerable adults in church communities.</p> <p>Where a person is known to pose a risk, the Vicar General and the Safeguarding Officer will work with the parish to develop an appropriate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Parish Priest/Administrator and the offender. This is an agreement that is required in circumstances where an individual intends worshipping within or being an active member of any Church community or setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ where there are significant concerns/allegations/convictions which indicate a possible risk of harm to others;</li> <li>○ when a convicted sex offender or violent prisoner is released and intends to attend Church;</li> <li>○ where members of the Clergy or Religious have been temporarily withdrawn from ministry pending conclusion of enquiries of a safeguarding matter;</li> <li>○ where, post enquiry, concerns remain about a member of Clergy or Religious but not such that they should be dismissed</li> <li>○ where an individual is subject to any current investigation or assessment of risk for a safeguarding matter</li> </ul>	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which keeps all parties safe</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Archdiocesan leadership advising the Parish Priest/Administrator that a person posing a risk may be attending and supporting the parish priest in the development of a MOU which keeps all parties safe</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Archdiocesan leadership with the Safeguarding Officer supporting the Parish Priest /Administrator to enact the MOU</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Archdiocesan leadership working closely with the Police/Probation Officer to implement the MOU</li> </ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 9: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

All Archdiocesan workers working with children and vulnerable adults are required to participate in regular education and training	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Training Records are maintained</li> </ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 10: COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

The Policy, Implementation and Accountability Strategies are communicated publicly.	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Display the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Policy in churches, parish offices, meeting rooms and parish halls</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Up-to-date copies of the Policy, Implementation and Accountability Strategies are maintained on Archdiocesan Website and Intranet.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Each parish has a Local Safeguarding Representative who is made known to, and offers support to the community independently of the Priest</li> </ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 11: MONITORING & REPORTING**

The implementation of the Policy, strategies and actions are monitored by the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer, and annual reports provided outlining the status of that implementation.	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> the Archdiocesan website maintains data associated with the implementation of the Policy, Implementation strategies and actions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A program of annual internal audits is undertaken and records kept</li> </ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 12: INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL AUDIT**

<p>The implementation of the Policy, Implementation and Accountability strategies and actions will be subject to independent external audit by an audit firm contracted for this work.</p> <p>The audit cycle will see every parish externally audited within a five year period.</p>	<p>Evidence of compliance of this requirement is demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> An independent external audit of the implementation of the Policy, strategies and actions is conducted</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> That the results of the audit be published on the Archdiocesan website and by media release</li> </ul>
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## **ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

National Committee for Professional Standards, [Towards Healing](#). Principles and procedures in responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia. January 2010.

National Committee for Professional Standards, [Integrity in Ministry](#). A document of principles and standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia. June 2004.

National Committee for Professional Standards, [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.

## **LEGISLATION**

[Child Protection Act \(QLD\) 1999](#)

[Child Protection Reform Amendment Bill 2014](#)

[Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#)

[Privacy Law](#)

[Public Health Act \(Qld\) 2005](#)

[Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Regulation 2011](#)

## **REFERENCES**

Archdiocese of Brisbane [Privacy Policy](#)

Archdiocese of Brisbane Catholic Education Council. [Student Protection Policy September 2011](#)

Carmody Report [www.justice.qld.gov.au](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au)

Child Wise <https://www.childwise.net>

[Safeguarding Children](#). Standards and guidance document for the Catholic Church in Ireland. September 2008

South Australian Catholic Church [Child Protection Council Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People](#).

Truth Justice and Healing Council. Child Safe Institutions. [Issues Paper 3](#)

**REVIEW**      **To be reviewed annually.**  
                     **Next review January, 2019.**



Version 2.0 Effective September 2016

This document is subject to amendment at certain times.

The current version can be found at: <http://brisbanecatholic.org.au/support/safeguard/> and the Archdiocesan Intranet.