



(insert name of Parish/Agency)

Volunteer Handbook

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Introduction

Parishes/Agencies within the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane seek to promote the Reign of God.

In these endeavours, we are committed to safeguard the welfare of all people with whom we come into contact.

This responsibility is a reality all within the Church must share.

The processes and procedures outlined in this handbook provide a means for us to safeguard the needs of the vulnerable including children and young people while also enabling the Church, its Parishes/Agencies, to meet its duty of care and legal obligations to those persons who at different times may be in their care.

(Signed)

Parish Priest

The Volunteer's Mission

The Reign of God

Many organisations including Catholic institutions spend considerable time and effort developing their own, particular mission statement. These are often displayed publicly in their workplaces.

As a volunteer, the truth is that you do not have to be unduly worried if you cannot find such a mission statement. The Church does NOT have a mission.

The truth is "**The Mission is the Church.**"

Jesus came into our world. HE had THE Mission. Described variously as "*Saving the world*", "*redeeming the world*", "*saving sinners*", etc. A most appropriate way to summarise Jesus' Mission is:

"Love one another the way I love you" (John 15:12).

Such an awareness of and commitment to, 'Mission' is a primary reason for belonging to, and engaging in the activities of the Church.

Whatever activities of the Church as a volunteer one engages in – no matter whether the Parish/Agency is high or low profile, whether the task is communal or individual, the Mission that Christ has given to **his** Church is to make **HIM**, the revelation of **GOD** known – i.e., to teach people, with the help of the Holy Spirit, how to love like God.

THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST **(1 Corinthians 12:27)**

The Church, with its many members, its many gifts and talents, is the face of Christ to a world.

Whatever you have been called to do as a member of the Church, you have been called to make Christ and the God of Love known to those you serve.

If one serves in some capacity in Church, you are not JUST volunteers: You have been called, to walk with Jesus and carry on HIS MISSION in this place.

***"I chose you, you didn't choose me."* John 15:16**

THE MOTIVATION

The REIGN OF GOD is of paramount concern to our mission. IN this context, every person is precious to God and deserving of a welcoming and safe environment that each and every member of Church has a responsibility to provide.

In so doing, we recall the words of Peter, "*We have given up everything and followed you*" and Jesus said, "*Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up "anything" **for my sake and the sake of the Gospel** who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present life ...and eternal life in the age to come.*" (Mark 10:29)

Our Catholic Values

In a voluntary capacity, we aim to behave at all times in a way that upholds the Values found in Catholic Social Teachings. These teachings emphasise:

- Respect for Human Dignity
- Respect for Human Life
- The Principle of Association
- The Principle of Participation
- Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- The Principle of Solidarity
- The Principle of Stewardship
- The Principle of Subsidiarity
- Human Equality
- The Principle of Common Good

In the case of those who are vulnerable including children and young people we accept that this means they must be cared for and ministered to in an environment that is free from danger or harm.

Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Volunteer

Unlike paid staff, volunteers are not covered by awards or workplace agreements. Volunteers however do have rights, some which are enshrined in legislation and others which stem from our Catholic values.

For example, as a volunteer you have the right to:

- Work in a healthy and safe environment;
- Be reimbursed as appropriate, for out of pocket expenses incurred in your voluntary work;
- Be covered by insurance;
- Understand the nature of your role, duties and responsibilities;
- Be valued and treated as a co-worker and not just a free help;
- Be provided with orientation; formation opportunities; guidance and direction; and
- Have your suggestions and contributions acknowledged.

A volunteer also has a responsibility to the Parish/Agency to:

- Understand the purpose and philosophy of the activity before committing to it;
- Examine your motives and be sure that they match the volunteer position;
- Understand the rules and guidelines that apply;
- Be willing to train for the job and take part in ongoing formation;
- Accept support and supervision;
- Participate in planning and feedback activities;
- Be loyal to the Parish/Agency;
- Work as a team member in a reliable manner;
- Keep information confidential.

Code of Conduct: Working with Children

Volunteers working with children must ensure that they:

- At all times be committed to the safety and well being of children and young people.
- Avoid any form of over-familiarity or inappropriate language, as it may be a source of confusion and anxiety for a child
- Whenever possible, another adult is present or close by when providing volunteer ministry to an individual minor
- Avoid, whenever reasonably possible, being alone with a child or group of children in sleeping, dressing or bathing areas, and exercise prudent judgement and behaviour when another adult cannot be present.
- Familiarise oneself with the causes and signs of child abuse or neglect, the steps to be taken for the protection of children, and the procedures to follow if abuse or neglect is suspected or observed.
- Do not stay overnight in the same room as a minor unless it is impossible to avoid. In that circumstance every provision needs to be made to provide a safe environment, e.g. permission from parent or guardian is sought, appropriate openness and visibility, the presence of another adult.
- Do not supply a child with any alcohol or illegal substance.
- Spell out the behaviour you expect of children or young people. Never administer corporal punishment to a child, if the need arises, make use of verbal and written warnings.
- Report concerns and/or incidents of malpractice to the relevant authority in the Parish/Agency.

Code of Conduct: General Provisions

Integrity – Accountability – Diligence – Standards of Behaviour

A volunteer must ensure they:

- Commit to mission and values, demonstrating honesty, integrity and humanity in all that we do.
- Abide by State and Federal Laws governing the workplace.
- Develop and maintain competence by keeping skills and knowledge current, including identifying appropriate formation opportunities.
- Maintain dress standards that are in line with community standards, and consistent with the volunteer's role and function.
- A volunteer must not disclose confidential information at any time, unless that disclosure is required under law or with the express permission of the Parish Priest and/or responsible Supervisor.
- Demonstrate responsible stewardship of resources and avoid unnecessary waste or extravagance.
- Avoid conflict of interest. Where a personal interest exists, openly disclose this interest to the Parish Priest and/or responsible Supervisor.

Interactions with People

In relation to other people, a volunteer must ensure they:

- Treat each other fairly, with courtesy and respect, valuing each person as an equal, regardless of their position within the Parish/Agency or their life situation.
- Recognise, accept and value individual differences and the contributions of each individual
- Be sensitive to and respect the unique needs and beliefs of a culturally diverse workplace, client group and/or Parish community.

Relationship – Teamwork

When working in a team, a volunteer must:

- Work in cooperation with other team members and be open to and respectful of the ideas and contributions of others.
- Commit to resolving personal or work related concerns in a timely, constructive and compassionate manner.

Compassion – Responsive

In carrying out the role of a volunteer, the person needs to:

- Be sensitive, caring, accepting and responsive to those in need of our assistance.
- Guard against creating a situation where others are totally dependent on them. Where possible, seek to empower individuals to achieve maximum autonomy and self determination. Let people do what they are able to do for themselves.

Employee Fidelity

It is the responsibility of all Volunteers to be familiar with and comply with this Code of Conduct and appropriate Parish/Agency policies and procedures.

Working with Children Check – Positive Notice Blue Card

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 requires the development and implementation of a annual risk management strategy that takes into account screening requirements for volunteers and paid staff including those who:

- Have begun employment pending outcome of a Positive Notice, Blue Card
- Hold a Positive Notice, Blue Card
- Are not required to hold a Positive Notice Blue Card
- Are having a Positive Notice, Blue Card reassessed.

The working with children check, or better known as the Blue Card, is a national check of a person's criminal history. Disciplinary information held by certain professional organisations or information from police investigations into allegations of serious child related sexual offences will also be considered.

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 proscribes child related regulated employment categories in which the working with children check is mandatory. Where a person submits an application and it is approved, a positive notice (letter), a Blue Card will be issued. If an application is refused a negative notice is issued, prohibiting the person from working in regulated employment categories as defined by the Act.

The work and activities undertaken with children and young people either in a paid or voluntary capacity is governed by this legislative requirement. Therefore, staff and volunteers working with children and young people must apply for and obtain a Blue Card. It is the responsibility of the staff member and/or volunteers to ensure that their Blue Card is maintained and current. As part of the Parish/Agency risk management strategy, a Blue Card Register is kept and maintained by the Parish/Agency.

Exemptions

There are some exemptions under the Act. These include:

- Children under 18 years of age who are volunteers (except students required to work in regulated employment as part of their studies)
- Parents volunteering their services at the school that their child/children attends so long as the child is under 18 years of age.
- Parents volunteering their services or conducting activities through a church, club or association where their child/children is involved in the same or similar activity.

Volunteers

Consistent with legislative obligation a volunteer must hold a Blue Card before they can begin working with children and young people, regardless of how often they come into contact with them.

Workplace Health and Safety Considerations

Obligations of Volunteers

S36 of the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995, places obligations on volunteers at a workplace to undertake the following:

- To comply with the instructions given for workplace health and safety at the workplace by the employer,
- To use personal protective equipment if the equipment is provided for by the employer and the volunteer is properly instructed in its use,
- Not to wilfully or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided for workplace health and safety at the workplace,
- Not to wilfully place at risk the workplace health and safety of any person at the workplace, and
- Not to wilfully injure him or herself.

Health and Hygiene

Hand washing is the one of the most important aspects of infection control. Some duties are undertaken by volunteers where infection control must be practised, these include:

- Food preparation and handling
- Cleaning of food preparation areas
- Cleaning of food storage areas
- Manual handling of people
- Toilet hygiene
- General duties involving people

Correct hand washing is a duty of volunteers at every workplace. Soap bars and cotton hand towels are not considered adequate infection control when hand washing. Soap bars and cotton hand towels are unsatisfactory as they can hold bacteria that can be transmitted to others.

Recommended methods for hand washing include:

- Use of liquid soap from a container fitted with the appropriate dispenser;
- Wet hands and apply an adequate amount of the liquid soap, clean the hands with the liquid soap for 10 seconds before rinsing the hands clean with running water for 20 seconds;

- Use paper hand towel, to dry hands;
- Dispose of the used paper towel in a paper waste bucket.

Universal Precautions

Any volunteer coming in contact with blood and bodily wastes should assume are a potential source of infection.

Management of Blood or Bodily Substances

- Spill kits should be provided that include disposable gloves, cleaning agents, paper towels and a leak proof bag;
- Disposable latex or vinyl gloves must be worn at all times when treating an injured or ill person or when handling blood or body wastes or spillages;
- Use paper towels to clean up bulk of spill;
- Dispose of all contaminated materials in a leak proof, sealed waste bag;
- Wash and disinfect the contaminated area;
- Wash mops, buckets etc with warm water and detergent, put these out in an open ventilated area to dry and store when completely dry;
- Wash hands after all procedures and cleaning up is completed.

Waste Management

Contaminated waste should be placed in a leak proof bag or container and seal it. Be careful not to over fill the bag. Small amounts of first aid waste may be placed in the usual garbage receptacle making sure that it is well out of reach of children or animals that may disturb the contents.

Large amounts of waste should be placed in yellow coloured bags displaying the international biohazard sign (available from medical suppliers) and collected by a commercial contractor who deals with medical waste.

Sharps

Sharps containers must be provided for the safe disposal of sharps/needles and scalpel blades. Needle stick injuries are a major cause of Hepatitis B, C and HIV. Needles should not be bent, broken or resheathed. Precautions must be taken in every instance where sharps are involved.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Personal Protective Equipment (e.g. gloves, face masks, sun screen) is to be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions,
- Personal protective equipment needs to be checked before being used
- The personal protective equipment needs to fit correctly
- Volunteers need to be trained in the piece of personal protective equipments use.

Fire Safety

Volunteers working regularly in/near the Parish complex need to be familiar with associated fire safety procedures.

A plan of action to be taken in the event of a fire must be maintained by a Parish/Agency. The plan must include the location of the assembly area, fire extinguishers and blankets.

When a fire alarm sounds or a fire is detected in a building:

- All persons are to immediately evacuate the building by the nearest approved FIRE EXIT and go to the nominated Assembly Area. Refer to the local Evacuation Floor Plan.
- Telephone or tell another person to immediately telephone the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service on 000.

Fire Extinguishers

- Remove the fire extinguisher from the wall cradle
- Place the fire extinguisher on the floor and remove/pull the safety pin
- Hold the hose facing the fire
- Give a short test burst of the fire extinguisher to ensure that it is working correctly
- Approach the fire and operate the fire extinguisher using the sweeping action at the flames.
- Stay between the doorway and the fire to allow quick egress in the instance that the fire suddenly erupts or cannot be extinguished with the fire extinguisher
- Do not get too close to the fire
- Continue using the extinguisher until the fire is extinguished.
- The fire service will attend in response to the initial call and inspect the fire scene before the all clear can be given that the fire is completely extinguished.

After a fire extinguisher has been used it is not to be put back in wall cradle. It is to be labelled as “used/empty” and it is to be refilled by a certified fire fighting service/company as soon as possible.

Workplace Incident, Illness and Injury Reporting

Under Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1997, a workplace injury, serious bodily injury, work caused illness and dangerous event must be recorded and reported.

In the event a person sustains a serious bodily injury, injury, work caused illness or a dangerous event occurs, the incident must be reported to the Parish/Agency.

Hazard Reporting

Hazards are those things or circumstances that will cause or will be likely to cause, serious bodily injury or injury to a person or to create a dangerous situation.

A worker or volunteer at the workplace can determine what is a hazard and that worker/volunteer must then initiate action to eliminate or control that hazard by reporting the matter to a person in authority at the workplace. Depending on what the hazard is, it may not be able to be eliminated and in such a case action must be taken to implement control measures and if necessary, restrict access to the area where the hazard is located.

If a hazard is detected, report the matter to the Parish/Agency. You must advise them of the seriousness of the hazard and the need for immediate attention.

Complete a Hazard Report Form and submit this form to the person who will be responsible for initiating or taking action to eliminate or control that hazard.

Ensure hazards are reported once identified. Failure to report and ensure action is taken creates neglect and could lead to a serious bodily injury or illness.

Please refer to Archdiocesan Workplace Health and Safety Manual for further information and forms.