



professional
standards **office**
Catholic Church | Queensland


Holy Spirit Seminary



Queensland

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Aim

The aim of the training is for participants to understand the standards of behaviour that apply to them as members of the clergy and enable them to identify, prevent and respond appropriately to incidents of abuse.

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Objectives:

At the end of the training participants will be able to:

- 1) Articulate the principles and standards of behaviours that apply to members of the clergy as set out in the Integrity in Ministry code of conduct;
- 2) Accurately explain the terms 'abuse' and 'Church Personnel' as defined in the Towards Healing protocol;
- 3) Identify behaviours that may be classified as 'abuse'; and
- 4) Apply a Safeguarding Policy to a given situation/s.

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What are Professional Standards?

'Professional standards' are the qualities essential for the ethical and safe practice of pastoral ministry.

(Towards Healing – Definitions)

Role of the PSO

The role of the Professional Standards Office is to assist the Catholic Church in Queensland to continuously develop and implement safe and ethical practices and respond appropriately to incidents of abuse and misconduct.

PSO Goals

To embed safe and ethical practices as professional and cultural norms within the activities of Church Authorities.


To enable Church Authorities to prevent incidents of abuse and misconduct.

To enable the public and Church Authorities to appropriately and efficiently resolve concerns and complaints about Church personnel and activities.

PSO Operating Model

- Service provider (community & Church Authorities)
- Professional case management service
- Neutral actor (impartial)
- Incident response service
- Informed decision-making (info/data analysis)
- Consultation/Devolution (complaints owned by CAs)
- Collaboration (via Professional Standards network)

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Integrity in Ministry

(Green Book)

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Integrity in Ministry

- Applies to clergy and religious
- Applies to lay people engaged to carry out formal ministries
- Code of conduct and guide
- Sets out expected behavioural standards
- Addresses misconduct

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Clause 1.1 - Harassment

Safeguard:

It is essential that clergy and religious avoid any behaviour that could reasonably be interpreted as harassment.

Harassment includes:

- physical, verbal, written or psychological abuse
- bullying
- racial and religious insults
- derogatory ethnic slurs
- unwelcome touching and inappropriate behaviour
- sexual jokes and comments
- requests for sexual favours
- display of pornographic materials.

Harassment can occur as a result of a **single incident** or a pattern of behaviour where the purpose or effect is to create a hostile, offensive humiliating or intimidating environment.

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Clause 1.3 – Respectful Behaviour

Behavioural Standards:

- behaving in ways that nurture the growth and vocation of all;
- behaving and speaking in ways that indicate a respect for the role and function of all;
- working in ways that respect different charisms, spiritualities, qualifications and ministries;
- **avoiding every impulse to 'lord it over' those they serve;**
- avoiding the fostering of dependency or subservience by encouraging collaboration and mutual respect.

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Clause 1.4 Respectful Physical & Emotional Boundaries

Behavioural Standards:

- exercising sensitivity with regard to the physical and emotional space others require in pastoral encounters;
- exercising a prudent judgment, that has the well-being of the other as its goal, in initiating and responding to physical contact, such as giving a comforting hug or an affirming touch;
- **providing pastoral ministry only in places that offer a sufficiently safe environment where there is openness and visibility;**
- exercising prudent judgment in the expression of affection and regard, and in the giving of gifts.

Safeguard:

- **do not provide pastoral ministry in the sleeping quarters/bedrooms of one's community house or of the presbytery/parish house.**

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Clause 1.5 Dignity & Safety of Children & Youth

Behavioural Standards:

- **avoiding** any form of **over-familiarity or inappropriate language;**
- **ensuring** whenever reasonably possible that **another adult is present or close by** when providing pastoral ministry to a minor;
- **avoiding**, whenever reasonably possible, **being alone with a minor** or group of minors in sleeping, dressing or bathing areas, making sure to exercise prudent judgment and behaviour when another adult cannot be present;
- familiarising 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;
- familiarising oneself with the procedures outlined in the document Towards Healing.

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Clause 1.5 (cont')

Dignity & Safety of Children & Youth

Safeguard:

- behave with due prudence, **not staying overnight in the same room as a minor or vulnerable person** unless it is impossible to avoid. In that circumstance every provision needs to be made to provide a safe environment, *eg the permission of a parent or guardian, and appropriate openness and visibility????;*
- **never administer corporal punishment;**
- use electronic and print media responsibly;
- *do not supply or serve alcohol or any controlled substance to a minor without the express permission of a parent or guardian??*

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Clause 2.1

Maintaining Appropriate Pastoral Relationships

Behavioural Standards:

- relating to all people in a spirit of humility, reverence and respect, with a commitment to the deepest well being of the other;
- **creating cooperative and harmonious relationships in the communities in which one lives and works;**
- respecting the call to collaborative effort between women and men in accord with the Gospel;
- encouraging and supporting all members of the community in the fulfilment of their vocations;
- consulting widely, seeking consensus and providing feedback where possible, before making important decisions;
- **exercising caution in the use of one's status or institutional power, never using these for one's own advantage;**
- taking up leadership and service in a community with respect for the life, customs, history and vision of the persons who already make up that community;
- **seeking opportunities to share decision-making responsibilities;**
- **discouraging the development of personality cults centred on oneself;**
- **creating environments where others feel confident to offer constructive criticism.**

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Clause 3.4 – Abuse of Office

Behavioural Standards:

- establishing relationships that are able to develop and mature within the context of gospel values;
- establishing and maintaining relationships that are characterised by openness, honesty and integrity;
- **not establishing a relationship through an abuse of power.**

Clause 4.4 – Conflict of Interest

Behavioural Standards:

- being careful to avoid potential **conflicts of interest** when called upon to advise family members, employees and close friends;
- refraining from entering into formal counselling relationships with family members, employees and close friends;
- avoiding as far as possible close business relationships with persons to whom one is providing intensive and/or one-to-one pastoral ministry;
- exercising prudent judgment before ministering in a situation where a **conflict of interest** may arise, e.g. when offering counselling, advice or spiritual direction to more than one person from the same family;
- exercising prudent judgment in the giving and receiving of gifts;
- keeping relevant, appropriate, dated notes and records when providing counselling, advice or emotional support.

Clause 4.5

Safeguarding Integrity of Relationships

Behavioural Standards:

- reviewing pastoral relationships with a colleague or supervisor to assess their effectiveness when that is in doubt;
- **developing and maintaining a referral network;**
- being clear about the limits of pastoral relationships when they commence.

Clause 4.6

Keeping Records

Behavioural Standards:

- keeping an accurate diary of appointments, written and/or electronic, ensuring that those kept electronically are backed up;
- retaining one's written/electronic diaries;
- **keeping a record of significant phone calls and other communications;**
- **making and retaining confidential notes of any events in the course of a pastoral relationship that provoke concern in the minister, with such notes to include a record of the date, time and matter of concern;**
- collating, maintaining and disposing of personal and sensitive information in accordance with the National Privacy Principles.
Some confidential records may need to be retained if these provide evidence of maintaining appropriate boundaries and relationships;
- **storing all records securely.**

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Clause 5.2 Supervising Others

Behavioural Standards:

- ensuring that all employment procedures are based on principles of justice and equity, appropriate to each particular situation;
- negotiating clear documented agreed descriptions of each person's roles, responsibilities and duties, including one's own;
- providing safe and healthy working conditions;
- providing adequately resourced access to training, professional development and professional supervision;
- **making accessible to employees and volunteers copies of Integrity in Ministry and Towards Healing;**
- providing just rates of remuneration for skill, responsibility and performance;
- **implementing appropriate grievance procedures against improper or unreasonable administrative acts;**
- ensuring that all State and Commonwealth legislation regarding terms and conditions of employment are observed.

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Clause 5.3 Receiving Abuse Complaints

Behavioural Standards:

- responding to information **promptly and seriously**, and with pastoral sensitivity;
- **promptly informing the relevant church authority;**
- **alerting the complainant to the existence of the Towards Healing process and providing relevant contact and referral details;**
- **working with the complainant to identify what needs to be done immediately to ensure that he or she feels safe from further abuse;**
- **explicitly assuring those who allege abuse that immediate assistance can be made available to provide independent support;**
- in collaboration with the church authority, supporting the healing of others who, as well as the victims, have been seriously affected by incidents of abuse – family, friends and community of both the alleged victim and offender.

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Clause 5.3 (cont')

Receiving Abuse Complaints

Legal Compliance

It is essential that clergy and religious abide by the requirements of **mandatory reporting** and other relevant civil legislation. They also take care to ensure that the proper processes of law are not interfered with, nor hindered. Notwithstanding the civil law requirements, clergy and religious are required to alert Church authorities in accordance with section 5.3.

(e.g. Reporting Child Abuse – Non-State Schools)

Clause 6.2

Administration of Property & Finances

Behavioural Standards:

- exercising responsible **stewardship** and **accountability**;
- drawing up a budget of income and expenditure each year;
- keeping accurate records of income and expenditure;
- having all accounts audited or monitored each year;
- providing financial statements and reports on property administration and maintenance at least annually to stakeholders;
- **complying with all reporting and accountability laws as required by church, state and national legislation.**

Clause 6.3

Obtaining Financial or Personal Advantage

Behavioural Standards:

- recording, by the issuing of receipts, the acceptance of all financial gifts or benefits for and on behalf of the ministry in which one is engaged;
- **refusing gifts, rewards or benefits which might compromise the integrity of one's ministry;**
- **not soliciting gifts, rewards or benefits for oneself;**
- exercising prudent judgment in the giving of gifts or benefits;
- **not borrowing or misappropriating money from accounts.**

Clause 8.1

Harmful Misconduct/Serious Violations

- The responsible Church authority ensure that it is listened to fully and compassionately.
- The responsible Church authority act promptly, on advice from the Consultative Panel, to determine how the complaint should be investigated.

Options for dealing with the matter include:

- reporting to the police
- referral to be dealt with under Towards Healing
- appropriate industrial procedures, where applicable
- investigation in accordance with canon law (e.g. canon 1717)
- referral to conflict resolution processes.

Clause 8.6


Harmful Misconduct/Serious Violations

Since this document applies to all clergy and religious, bishops and religious leaders ensure that they themselves are subject to its provisions. **They submit themselves to all the principles, standards and procedures of Integrity in Ministry.**

Integrity in Service of the Church (Blue Book)

- Resource for formulating behavioural guidelines
- Provides behavioural standards
- Parallels Integrity in Ministry
- Applies to lay people (paid/volunteer) working for the Church

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Towards Healing

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Towards Healing

- Key Principles
- Application
- Definition of 'Church Personnel'
- Definition of a 'Church Body'
- Definition of 'Abuse'
- Definition of 'Pastoral Relationship'
- Receiving an Referring Abuse Complaints
- Responding to a Complaint

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Towards Healing – Key Principles

Sexual Abuse

- **Any attempt to sexualise a pastoral relationship** is a breach of trust, an abuse of authority and **professional misconduct**. (clause 1)
- **Any form of sexual behaviour with a child or young person, is always sexual abuse**. It is both immoral and **criminal**. (clause 3)

Healing for Victims

- A **sensitive and compassionate response** to the complainant must be the **first priority in all cases** of abuse. 17. (clause 17)
- This attitude must be present even at a time when it is not yet certain that the allegations are accurate. (clause 18)

Towards Healing - Application

- Applies to all 'Church Personnel' (incl. lay people and volunteers)
- Applies to all 'Church Bodies' (incl. autonomous lay organisations)
- Applies to 'Abuse' incidents committed against those in a 'Pastoral Care' relationship.

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'Church Personnel' include:

- Cleric
- Religious
- Employee of a Church body employee
- Volunteer for a Church body

- **Who work with children or young people (under 18yrs)**
- OR**
- **Engage in other forms of pastoral care**

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A 'Church Body' includes:

- a diocese
- religious institute
- juridical person
- body corporate
- organisation
- association
- autonomous lay organisation

- **that exercises pastoral ministry**
(within/on behalf of the Catholic Church)

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Definition of 'Abuse':

- **Sexual assault** of another person (child or adult)
- **Sexual harassment** of another person (child or adult)
- **Any conduct of a sexual nature** with another person (child or adult) which is inconsistent with the integrity of the pastoral relationship
- **Intentional act** on a child or young person (under 18yrs) **causing significant physical injury**
- **Other behaviour** towards a child or young person (under 18yrs) **causing serious physical pain or mental anguish** (without legitimate disciplinary purpose)

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Definition of 'Pastoral Relationship':

When a person has:

- **responsibility for the wellbeing of another; or**
- **for a faith community**

Includes:

- spiritual advice and support;
- education;
- counselling;
- medical care;
- assistance in times of need;
- **supervision or education of children or young people.**

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Receiving & Referring Abuse Complaints (clause 36.4)

- If a **Church Authority** receives a **complaint** directly, the complaint should be **referred to the Director of Professional Standards** to manage the process of responding to the complaint.
- In the event that a **complaint is received by one Church Authority that ought to be dealt with by another**, the complaint should be **referred to the Director of Professional Standards** to make the appropriate linkages.

**** IF IN DOUBT – REFER TO PSO****

Responding to a Complaint

- The **Director of Professional Standards** shall **determine** if complaint concerns **ABUSE** (clause 38.2)
- **Director** refers complaint to relevant Church Authority and recommends **immediate safeguard action** (e.g. standing down) (clause 38.4)

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Scenario Discussions

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Review

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Objectives:

At the end of the training participants will be able to:

- 1) Explain the terms 'abuse' and 'Church Personnel' as defined in the Towards Healing protocol;
- 2) Identify behaviours that may be classified as 'abuse';
- 3) Apply the a Safeguarding Policy to a given situation/s; and
- 4) Articulate the principles and standards of behaviours that apply to members of the clergy as set out in the Integrity in Ministry code of conduct;

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