

# CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON

## (Mission Statement)

### CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

#### Introduction:

In recent decades the issue of abuse and neglect of children and young people by those in positions of trust and responsibility has been revealed as a wide-spread evil throughout society. It is regrettably true that children and young people are vulnerable in schools as well as in social circles and their own families. The Catholic Church in Australia published the first edition of *'Towards Healing: Principles and Procedures for responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church of Australia'* in 1996. This was revised in December 2000. The Church continues to work to improve the quality of its response to allegations of abuse by Church personnel and its procedures for preventing harm to children and young people. The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton has a commitment to this effort.

#### Rationale:

As a Catholic Diocese operating in the State of Queensland, we are working cooperatively with the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian to ensure that we respond to the issue of Child Protection in ways which honor the ethical and legal requirements which apply. This response is in the first instance inspired by our sincere belief that every child and young person is made in the image of God and should be treated with respect. There are also legislative factors applying to many Church activities and ministries which are being addressed in conjunction with the individual parishes which make up our Diocese.

#### Principles:

- All adults have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to promote their welfare and to protect them from any kind of harm.
- Children and young people have a right to safety in relationships and therefore should be protected against harm caused by our employees, volunteers or others who access our services and ministries.
- All persons involved in situations where harm to a child or young person is suspected or disclosed, must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

### Values:

- Every human being is created in the image of God and has inherent dignity.
- Personal integrity is both a right and a responsibility
- Respect in relationships is essential to Christian community.

### Policy:

**The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton is committed to fostering in its Parishes, Agencies and Ministries, a safe and caring environment within which children and young people experience a proper sense of their own dignity and the dignity of others; safety in relationships; as well as security and support in addressing any situation in which they are at risk of or suffer harm.**

### Implementation:

1. The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton will work with individual parishes, agencies and those in specific ministries to assist them in meeting all of their responsibilities with respect to issues relating to the protection of children and young people. This includes their preparation and maintenance of the following documentation:
  - Blue Card Registers
  - Incident Reports
  - Risk Analysis Registers
  - Agreement to comply with Diocesan Policy and Code of Conduct Forms.
2. Where there exists reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child or young person has suffered harm or is at risk of harm, the Diocese will ensure that correct reporting procedures are followed.
3. Appropriate pastoral care will be offered to all persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed.

4. Employees and volunteers working with children and young people in the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton will have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in this area and of the procedures to be followed if they become aware of or suspect harm to children or young people.
5. Employees and volunteers working with children and young people in the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton will be aware of the principles and standards of behaviour expected of them. They will receive regular inservice in this regard.
6. Children and young people and their parents or guardians will be aware of the policies and procedures that operate within the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton with respect to Child Protection matters.
7. The rights of employees or volunteers against whom allegations are made will be respected even where prudence demands that precautionary measures have to be taken in the interest of all children and young people.
8. State Authorities will be given appropriate support and cooperation by the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton when they are carrying out their responsibilities to protect children and young people from real or possible harm.

### **Scope:**

This Policy applies to all who work in the name of the Church in the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton. The Policy applies from 1 January 2007 and will be reviewed annually.

### **References:**

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes *'Towards Healing' December 2000.*

Rockhampton Diocesan 'Towards Healing' Committee: *'Go Out To All The World' – Principles and Values for all who work in the name of the Church in the Diocese of Rockhampton.*

*The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act of 2000.*

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian *'Safe Environments for young people'*