



CHILD PROTECTION: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Prevention Procedures

OVERVIEW OF PREVENTATIVE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

Introduction

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga's commitment to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children in its care.

Standards for a Child Safe Organisation

The Diocese's prevention and response procedures, based on nationally accepted standards.

Working with Children and National Police Checks

The legal requirement that any personnel whose role involves direct contact with children must have a Working with Children Check clearance number. A National Police Check may also be required prior to role commencement.

Child Protection Policy and Guidelines for Professional Conduct

Personnel that work directly with children are required to sign off their acknowledgement and understanding of the Diocese's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct.

Role Descriptions

All personnel are required to be provided with role descriptions related to their role.

Training and Development

All personnel are required to participate in child protection training and development related to their role.

Curriculum

The NSW PD/H/PE syllabus statements for Stages 1-4 provide guidance to support the empowerment of children and young people.

Employment Procedure Strategies

Recruitment and selection procedures for all positions include a focus on child protection.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment is required to be conducted prior to commencing a new service or initiative involving direct contact with children.

Professional Guidance

Professional guidance is available to personnel working directly with children through diocesan leaders and Safeguarding personnel

Communication

Various avenues are available to provide child protection information to families and the community

Child Protection Review and Planning Team

Reviewing systems and processes for preventing abuse, for responding to allegations, and planning future action

Introduction

This procedures document is to be read in conjunction with the following documents; DWW - Standards for a Child Safe Organisation, DWW – Child Protection Policy, DWW - Responding to Allegations of Reportable Conduct Procedures and DWW – Record Keeping and Confidentiality.

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga demonstrates its commitment to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children by implementing a range of preventative systems and processes to ensure it is a child safe organisation.

The Diocese's prevention and response procedures are based on standards developed by Child Wise (CW) Australia, Creating Child Safe Organisations and Communities, (Jacobs, 2013) described in detail in its submission to the Royal Commission (RC) into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse. These standards have been further developed from the insights of the Royal Commission, with particular reference to its consultation paper Out of Home Care. (2016, p. 82)

Key Standards for a Child Safe Organisation

Standard 1.0 - Organisational Leadership and Governance (RC)

Standard 2.0 - An Open and Aware Culture (CW)

Standard 3.0 - Understanding Child Abuse (CW)

Standard 3.1 - Training and Education (CW)

Standard 4.0 - Managing Risk to Minimise Abuse (CW)

Standard 4.1 - Clear Boundaries (CW)

Standard 4.2 - Physical and Online Environment (RC)

Standard 5.0 - Child Protection Policies and Procedures (CW)

Standard 6.0 - Recruitment and Selection (CW)

Standard 6.1 - Screening (CW)

Standard 6.2- Support and Supervision (CW)

Standard 7.0 - Empowering Children and Young People (CW)

Standard 7.1 - Family and Community Involvement (RC)

Standard 8.0 - Complaints and Disclosures (CW)

Standard 9.0 – Legal Responsibilities (CW)

Standard 10.0 – Review and Continuous Improvement (RC)

Working with Children Checks

It is a legal requirement under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW) that any personnel whose role involves direct contact (i.e. physical contact or face-to-face contact) with children as part of their role must have a Working with Children Check (WWCC) clearance number prior to commencing their role.

A WWCC involves a national criminal history check and review of findings of workplace misconduct. The result of a WWCC is either a clearance to work with children for five years, or a bar against working with children. Cleared applicants are subject to employer verification and ongoing monitoring. Relevant new records may lead to the clearance being revoked. The Check is fully portable which means it can be used for any paid or unpaid child-related work in NSW for as long as the member of personnel remains cleared.

Most parent volunteers do NOT need a Working with Children Check. The legislation in NSW allows parents and other close relatives (such as sibling, grandparent, step-parent, uncle) to volunteer in activities that involve their own children without needing a Working with Children Check.

More can be found out about exemptions at;

<http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children/working-with-children-check/about-the-check/exemptions>

It is the responsibility of relevant individual personnel, to apply for (and renew every five years) their own WWCC clearance number and to provide the number (prior to commencing work) to their relevant supervisor (e.g. employer, parish priest, catechist coordinator, principal, agency leader) for collection and verification purposes as well as for the storage of this information. A person cannot be employed without a clearance

Personnel can apply for a WWCC number online at;

*<http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children/working-with-children-check>
www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/check*

After a WWCC has been applied for, the applicant will receive an application number that is to be taken, with proof of identity, to a NSW Motor Registry or RMS Agency.

Paid personnel are required to provide the application fee (currently \$80). For volunteers, the Check is free.

National Police Checking Service (NPCS)

The NPCS (CrimTrac) is a check that is redone every three years and provides information concerning areas that are outside of the guidelines for the WWCC.

In the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, an NPC is required for seminarians attending Vianney College, priests, principals, school operational services personnel, all boarding school staff and volunteers or employees working with aged or vulnerable adults.

Child Protection Policy and Guidelines for Professional Conduct

Personnel in child related work are required to sign off their acknowledgement and understanding of the Diocese's Child Protection Policy, Guidelines for Professional Conduct in the Protection of Children and Young People, and/or any relevant child protection codes of conduct specific to diocesan roles (e.g. teachers, Centacare practitioners, SRE volunteers, youth workers, supervisors, clergy) at the commencement of their employment.

Role Descriptions

All personnel are provided with role descriptions, and training and development related to their role. Personnel in child related work are provided with a copy of the DWW – Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Procedures

Training and Development

Opportunities for training and development can occur in regular face to face and online environments. These opportunities include;

- Annual SALT online compliance modules for school personnel
- Induction for new employees
- Training and development workshops for clergy, youth workers, SRE volunteers, diocesan and education personnel in child related work
- Child Protection scheduled as a regular agenda item at Council of Priests, Deanery Priests, Parish Council, School Council, Leadership and staff/management meetings for each sector

Curriculum

Opportunities for empowering children and young people exist within the NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabi Stages 1-3 Interpersonal Relationships, and Stage 4 Self and Relationships.

Employment Procedure Strategies

Explicit employment selection practices are in place for all positions. They include formal structures, clear documentation and a rigorous interview process. Role Descriptions include a child safe message and come with access to the DWW Child Protection Policy and DWW Guidelines for Professional Conduct

Selection and appointment practices include;

- Formal interviews
- Working with Children Background Check consent
- National Police Checks
- Reference checking and background checking
- Induction

Risk Assessments

Prior to commencing new services (and as part of the ongoing monitoring of current services) in the Diocese that involve direct contact with children (e.g. a new parish youth group or initiative involving children), a risk assessment is required to be conducted. The risk assessment entails a consideration of the age group of the target audience of the ministry, the age-appropriate requirements, and the risk management strategies that need to be employed to ensure the safety of the children as well as the safety of personnel engaged in service. It involves analysing potential risks, the potential consequences and likelihood of harm and the steps that can be taken to mitigate risk, so as to decide appropriate courses of action.

Assistance and guidance in conducting risk assessments are provided by members of the Child Protection Safeguarding Team, CSO Audit and Compliance Officer and Sector Leaders.

Professional Guidance

Personnel in child related work are supported with access to professional child protection guidance from their relevant diocesan Sector Leader, the Child Protection Delegate, a member of the Diocesan Child Protection Safeguarding Team and the CSO Audit and Compliance Officer who can be contacted through McAlroy House reception, 02 6937 0000. Further guidance is available through the Diocese of Wagga Wagga and Catholic Schools Office websites.

Communication

A variety of communication channels are available to raise and consolidate an open and aware safeguarding culture. Information and involvement opportunities for families and the community regarding Diocesan child protection strategies are communicated via website information, newsletter/bulletin announcements, brochures, posters, handbooks, and social media.

Child Protection Review and Planning

Child Protection review and planning is conducted with a “whole of Diocese” approach to promoting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children. Responsibility for review and planning is a component of the Child Protection Safeguarding Panel.

The panel reviews systems and processes for responding to allegations and systems for preventing abuse and to plan future action. On an annual basis the panel undertakes a total review of operations for the year. An external consultant expert in the area of child protection compliance in the workplace is engaged in the third year of a three year cycle to assist in reviewing some or all child protection operations within the Diocese.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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