

# Parish, Agency and Entity Safeguarding Responsibilities

The leadership of each parish, agency and entity is responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and relevant procedures and practices to promote the safety of children and young people consistent with the:

- Child Safe Standards (Victoria)
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

See **INFORMATION SHEET: Organisational frameworks for safeguarding children and young people**

## THE ROLE OF THE SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

Each parish, agency and entity is required to establish its own Safeguarding Committee<sup>1</sup>.

Safeguarding Committees work with the leadership of each parish, agency or entity to ensure policies, processes and practices are in place to protect children and young people. The committee is required to meet four or more times per year and report progress to the relevant governance body within the parish, agency or entity (e.g. Parish Pastoral Council, Board, Committee of Management) on a quarterly basis.

The committees will ensure that the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is embedded across the parish, agency or entity and compliance requirements are met by:

- Promoting child safety within their community and fostering an understanding of the importance of child safety.
- Working collaboratively with the leadership of each parish, agency or entity to promote the safety of children and young people.
- Implementing, maintaining and/or reviewing child safety processes and procedures to support the wellbeing and safety of children and young people with input from relevant stakeholders e.g. priest, parish administration, parents, children young people, program leaders, pastoral associates.
- Engaging in and/or reviewing risk management processes to promote the safe participation of children and young people in programs, activities and events.
- Involving children and young people (and their families) in decision-making and planning to promote child safety.
- Ensuring that reporting processes for concerns and/or allegations are well communicated across the parish, agency or entity and act as a first point of contact in relation to child safety concerns, reports or allegations and comply with reporting protocols for child abuse reports and allegations
- Participating in and/or delivering child safety information and training.
- Monitor ongoing compliance with the CAM Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework which encompasses the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Documentation (e.g. meeting minutes, correspondence, risk assessments, communication) in relation to the Safeguarding Committee is to be kept by each parish, agency or entity and stored securely. These records will form part of the evidence base for the parish, agency or entity's efforts to safeguard children and young people.

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<sup>1</sup> Where it is not possible to establish a stand-alone Safeguarding Committee due to low volunteer numbers, the Parish Pastoral Council may establish a Working Group or may accept safeguarding responsibilities as part of its existing remit.

# Parish, Agency and Entity Safeguarding Responsibilities

The PSU will require the leadership of each parish, agency or entity with its Safeguarding Committee to summarise its compliance with the requirements of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework on an annual basis (self-assessment/audit process).

## SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the committee must include parish, agency or entity leadership representatives (e.g. parish priest, pastoral associates, parish secretary, director, manager) and other relevant stakeholders including:

- program coordinators, who may be employees or volunteers involved in child and youth related work and ministry
- volunteers with child safety expertise (e.g. lawyer, human resources professional, teacher or school principal, early childhood education worker, police officer, social worker, youth worker) and/or commitment to safeguard children and young people
- parent representatives.

Members of the committee are in effect 'Safeguarding Officers' for the parish, agency or entity. Safeguarding Officers are an important asset within a parish, agency or entity and can act as points of contact for advice, support and direction in relation to child safety matters. See **TEMPLATE: Safeguarding Committee Position Description**.

## CAM PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT

Across CAM, the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) is responsible for:

- Assisting parishes, agencies and entities to implement the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.
- Providing support, advice and training to Archdiocesan parishes, agencies and entities to strengthen their efforts in relation to child safety.
- Assisting Archdiocesan parishes, agencies and entities to comply with the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and relevant standards.
- Managing concerns, allegations and reports of child abuse and breaches of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy in accordance with moral, legal and ethical obligations to safeguard children and young people and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- Guiding improvements in relation to our approach to child safety across the Archdiocese (e.g. Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, Code of Conduct, compliance, risk management, training) to meet legislative requirements at the state and federal level, and best practice expectations proposed by Catholic Professional Standards Limited.
- Undertaking annual child safety audits

**The Professional Standards Unit will receive and coordinate the response to allegations and reports of child abuse in relation to clergy, employees and volunteers across the Archdiocese, consistent with our moral, legal and ethical responsibility to safeguard children and young people and our reporting obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. See INFORMATION SHEET: Reporting child safety-related misconduct and/or child abuse.**

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## USEFUL RESOURCES

The 'Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Persons' section of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne website will serve as a repository of information, resources and templates to assist parishes, agencies and entities in their child safety efforts.

website: [www.cam.org.au/Professional-Standards](http://www.cam.org.au/Professional-Standards)

Parishes, agencies and entities are encouraged to contact the CAM Professional Standards Unit in relation to any questions or concerns in relation to child safety:

phone: 9926 5621

email: [professional.standards@cam.org.au](mailto:professional.standards@cam.org.au)

Leadership – Catholic Professional Standards Limited interview with Robert Fitzgerald AM (video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Etz30VKizLU&feature=youtu.be>

Prayer resources to promote awareness of children's rights and child abuse prevention (Catholic Professional Standards Limited)

[https://www.cpsltd.org.au/media/1400/351-prayer-resources-ed1\\_2019.pdf](https://www.cpsltd.org.au/media/1400/351-prayer-resources-ed1_2019.pdf)



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*The Archdiocese of Melbourne is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity  
of all children, young people and vulnerable adults.*