The Safeguarding Program

Protecting Children in the Catholic Church



Safety, love and hope for our young people

# Safeguarding Handbook

Catholic Archdiocese of Perth

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Document Revision 8.0

The Safeguarding Program
Protecting Children in the Catholic Church

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## Introduction

The Safeguarding Program is child-focused and informed by a fundamental belief that children have the right to physical and psychological safety at all times and we, the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth, must play our part in protecting all children and vulnerable individuals.

The Safeguarding Program will also provide services, if and when needed, to the broader Archdiocesan community.

## The Safeguarding Program Aim

The aim of the Safeguarding Program is to raise awareness of our collective responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable individuals within the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth. The program, whilst working towards providing all forms of safety for children, will be focused on the prevention of abuse and harm to children and vulnerable individuals within parishes, and a response using a framework considered to be best practice.

Recognising that there is no fool-proof system for the complete prevention of all forms of abuse, the program will be informed by the 12 National Standards which incorporate elements of public health interventions to prevent the abuse of children, minimise the risk of abuse by heightening the likelihood that abuse will be detected, and reduce the long-term impacts of abuse on children.

## The 12 Standards for Protecting Children include:

12 Standards for a Child-Safe Organisation
(Adapted from the 12 National Standards Child Wise 2014)



## Archdiocesan Commitment

The Perth Catholic Archdiocese is committed to providing safe and secure environments for all its members, leaders, and especially its children, young people and vulnerable individuals. To this end, the duties of the Office will be centred on putting the needs of children first. The right of children to be safe is paramount and, as such, will drive the operations of this program and will guide the development of robust policies, procedures and frameworks with continuous improvement that relate to child protection. This handbook contains the necessary guidelines, policies and documentation to assist clergy, safeguarding officers and Church workers in performing their duties and, as such, must be adhered to in all instances of safeguarding children within the Perth Catholic Archdiocese.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Parish Safeguarding Officers

**The role of Parish Safeguarding Officers is key to ensuring that parishes meet the Archdiocese of Perth's safeguarding responsibilities in all aspects of service that they undertake.**

**They will be required to:**

- be a source of support, advice and information on all matters of safeguarding children and vulnerable individuals in the parish
- be the first point of contact for children, vulnerable individuals and other members of the parish community regarding suspicions of abuse and other safeguarding concerns
- respond to all safeguarding concerns in line with the Archdiocese's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Manual, reporting these concerns to the Director Safeguarding Program and/or other authorities, as needed
- keep the Director Safeguarding Program informed of all concerns, responses and activities relating to safeguarding children and other vulnerable individuals of the parish community. When applicable, the parish will be informed
- raise the profile of safeguarding in the parish, ensuring that it remains a high priority, and report on any issues or concerns with the implementation of the safeguarding policy and procedures
- assist with proactive measures within parishes to safeguard children
- ensure all Church workers (paid and unpaid) who are in child-related work have been provided with safeguarding policies and procedures contained in the Safeguarding Handbook
- ensure that all statutory requirements are met within parishes in respect to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable individuals.

# Form 1

## Parish Safeguarding Officer nomination

Protecting Children in the Catholic Church

| | |
|---|---|
| Parish | |
| Parish priest | |
| Mass time(s) you regularly attend | |
| Name | |
| Phone number / s | |
| Email | |
| Address | |
| Working With Children card number (if applicable): | Expiry Date |

**Please answer all questions to the best of your ability.**

Why are you nominating for the position of Parish Safeguarding Officer?

What is important to you about this role?

What skills (if any) and/or attributes would you bring to this role?

Please detail any past experience you may have working with children (paid or unpaid).

By signing this nomination form, you agree, should you be selected to fulfill the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer, to make yourself available for two full days of training. This training, at no cost to you, will be provided on weekends and also during the week and you will be able to select your preference.

You also declare that there is no known reason why you should not be considered for the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer.

**I hereby declare the information I have provided is accurate.**

Signed

Dated

If you have any questions regarding the Perth Catholic Archdiocese Safeguarding Program or your nomination for Parish Safeguarding Officer, please contact the Director Safeguarding Program - details below.

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR PARISH PRIEST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

Parish priest name

Signature

Dated

Parish Priest, please forward the completed form to:

**Director Safeguarding Program**

T 08 9221 7763 F 08 9325 7459 E safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au A Catholic Archdiocese of Perth . 29 Victoria Square Perth . WA . 6000

# Form 2 Declaration

Confidential

The Safeguarding Program
Protecting Children in the Catholic Church

## Declaration form for all Church workers (paid and unpaid) who work with children

Legislation in Western Australia has at its core the principle that the welfare of children must be of paramount consideration. The Perth Archdiocese therefore asks that everyone working or volunteering for the Church who will come into contact with children or personal details of children complete and sign this declaration:

Do you have any prosecutions pending or have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence that relates to a child protection matter? (please tick)

Y ☐ N ☐ If yes, please state below the nature and year(s) of the offence(s)

Nature of offence _____ Year(s) _____

Is there any reason that would preclude you from working with children and / or have you ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour towards a child? (please tick)

Y ☐ N ☐ If yes, please give details, including date(s), below

_____

Full name (print) _____

Any surname previously known by _____

Address _____

Date of birth _____ Place of birth _____

## Declaration

I understand that, if it is found that I have withheld information, or included any false or misleading information above, I may be removed from my post, whether paid or voluntary, without notice. I understand that the information will be kept securely.

**I hereby declare the information I have provided is accurate.**

Signed _____ Dated _____

**Note: Where a conviction or prosecution is indicated on the Declaration Form, that information will be brought to the attention of the Director Safeguarding Program.**

Parish Safeguarding Officers, please return this form to:

Director Safeguarding Program
T 08 9221 7763 F 08 9325 7459 E safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au
A Catholic Archdiocese of Perth . 29 Victoria Square Perth . WA . 6000

Clergy please return this form to The Catholic Administration Centre:

Support Officer Clergy liaison
A PO Box 3311 . East Perth . 6892

ALL OTHER CHURCH / PARISH WORKERS (PAID OR UNPAID), PLEASE RETURN TO THE PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

# Form 3

## Child concern referral

If you require assistance completing this form, contact the Director Safeguarding Program on **08 9221 7763.**

If you have concerns for the immediate safety or wellbeing of this child/ren, please contact the Director Safeguarding Program, your local Child Protection Office or Crisis Care Unit on **08 9223 1111** / Freecall **1800 199 008** to discuss your concerns. **Please attach any additional information.**

**1. Date, time, method of disclosure / concern**

Date of Disclosure | Time of Disclosure

How was information received? (attach any written information)

**Telephone** ☐ **Letter** ☐ **Email** ☐ **In person** ☐

**2. Details of person making the disclosure / concern**

Name

Address

Phone number / s | Email

Relationship to child or alleged victim

**3. Details of child or alleged victim**

Name | DOB

Address | Phone number / s

Language | Interpreter required **Y** ☐ **N** ☐

Disability **Y** ☐ **N** ☐ | Special needs **Y** ☐ **N** ☐

Parish

**4. Parent/Carer details (where appropriate)**

Name | Phone number/s

Address

Is he / she aware of the allegation, suspicion or complaint? Y ☐ N ☐

**5. Details of alleged perpetrator**

Name | Phone number/s

Address

Relationship to child / victim

Position in Church (if applicable)

Address

Current contact with children, if known (eg member of Board of Management of school, youth activities etc)

Additional information

**6. Details of concern, allegation or complaint**
Include dates/times and location of incident(s) and witnesses, if known.

Does the child/victim know this referral is being made? **Y** ☐ **N** ☐

**7. Action taken - civil authorities (WA Police / Department for Child Protection)**

Has the matter been referred to the civil authorities? **Y** ☐ **N** ☐

If yes, date | Time

If no, explain why not

To whom was it referred?

Organisation name

Contact person

Designated position

Address

Phone number / s | Email

**8. Action taken - Church**

Has the matter been referred to a member of the Church? **Y** ☐ **N** ☐

If yes, date | Time

If no, explain why not

To whom was it referred?

Contact person

Designated position

Address

Phone number / s | Email

**9. Next steps**

What action was agreed to, and by whom, when the matter was referred on to the Director Safeguarding Program or civil authority?

Are there any immediate child protection concerns? If so, please record what they are and state what action has been taken and by whom to address them.

**Details of person completing this form, if different from the person making the disclosure**

Name

Address

Phone number / s

Email

Relationship to child or victim

**Form completed**

Date

Time

Print name

Signed

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO:**


## Director Safeguarding Program

T 08 9221 7763 F 08 9325 7459 E safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au
A Catholic Archdiocese of Perth . 29 Victoria Square Perth . WA . 6000

## Form 4

# Our Parish Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

## 1. Valuing our young parishioners and vulnerable individuals

Children have a very important place in our parish. We celebrate their faith at Baptism reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation; they are the life and focus of our parish schools; their energies and initiatives play a vital role in many of our parish activities. We are always eager to encourage their active participation in parish life. Towards this end, we are committed to doing everything we can to create a safe and welcoming environment for our young parishioners, where their welfare is paramount. It is our parish policy to ensure that our children will be listened to, included, protected and supported in all activities.

We realise that valuing young people means valuing volunteers as well: insisting on safe practices, eliminating the necessity for people to take risks, designing out crime by improved Church environments and providing support for a healthier and safer gathering. This parish policy, addressed to parish clergy, lay employees and Church workers (paid and unpaid), covers all Church-related activities and circumstances involving people under the age of eighteen and vulnerable individuals.

Activities involving our parish schools are governed by each school's Child Protection Policy, ratified by the Board of Management and the Catholic Education Office.

It is important that, from the outset, we make and emphasise the following confidentiality statement in accordance with the guidelines of the civil authorities:

**Where safeguarding children concerns arise, information must be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the best interests of the child. Sharing information in this regard is not a breach of confidentiality. It is best practice that parents and children are informed when personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child at further risk.**

## 2. Our Parish Safeguarding Officers

Some adults in our parish have undertaken child protection training and have been appointed to the role of Parish Safeguarding Officers. They can be contacted through the parish office or via the posters in the church entry. The Parish Safeguarding Officers have been selected because they have good listening skills and sufficient knowledge about safeguarding children issues. They are familiar with parish activities and are available to our volunteers and parishioners to help us create an ever more child-friendly and child-safe environment in our parishes.

The Parish Safeguarding Officers will be required to:

- be a source of support, advice and information on all matters of safeguarding children and vulnerable individuals in the parish
- be the first point of contact for children, vulnerable individuals and other members of the parish community regarding suspicions of abuse and other safeguarding concerns
- respond to all safeguarding concerns in line with the Archdiocese's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure manuals, reporting these concerns to the Director Safeguarding Program and/or other authorities, as needed

- keep the Director Safeguarding Program informed of all concerns, responses and activities relating to safeguarding children and other members of the parish community. Only when applicable will the parish priest be informed
- raise the profile of safeguarding in the parish, ensuring that it remains a high priority, and report any issues or concerns with the implementation of the safeguarding policy and procedures
- assist with proactive measures within parishes to safeguard children
- ensure all Church workers (paid and unpaid) who are in child-related work have been provided with safeguarding policies and procedures, as contained in the Safeguarding Handbook
- ensure that all statutory requirements are met within parishes in respect to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable individuals.

**The contact details of the Parish Safeguarding Officers can be found on the Safeguarding Children notice in the church entry or on the parish website.**

## 3. Good practice for working with children

Our parish is fully committed to the guidelines outlined in **Form 7 Developing safe practices** and all relevant Church policies on child protection. The **Form 6 Code of Behaviour for all Church workers (paid and unpaid) working with children** must be adhered to by all Church workers.

## 4. Recruiting and supporting our parish volunteers

When recruiting or selecting parish volunteers, we will ensure that the **Form 2 Declaration** is completed by all staff and volunteers (paid and unpaid) who work with children in Church-related activities.

Training will be provided, not only for new recruits but for all volunteers, in order to maintain standards and good practice. Our Parish Safeguarding Officers will assist in facilitating this support.

If a grievance issue arises, refer to the Archdiocese of Perth Dispute Resolution Policy and also follow the procedures listed in the **Form 9 Guidance on dealing with non-compliance with the Safeguarding Policy.**

## 5. Developing safe practices for involvement in parish activities

A guidance document is available for Church workers (paid and unpaid) on what to do to keep children safe before, during and after their involvement in Church-related activities. The document is included as **Form 7 Developing safe practices**.

The form used to obtain consent from parents or carers prior to children participating in an activity or event is included as **Form 10 Parental Consent.** When asking parents / carers to complete this form, please provide a copy of **Form 12 Code of behaviour for children taking part in Church activities** to discuss with their children.

## 6. Responding to safeguarding children concerns

When concerns are raised about the welfare of any child taking part in parish-related activities, whether suspected or disclosed, these will be brought to the attention of a Parish Safeguarding Officer or directly to the Director Safeguarding Program who will report to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support, if necessary. These concerns can be in five different categories: neglect, emotional, family violence, physical and sexual abuse. All parish clergy, staff and volunteers (paid and unpaid) will be given copies of this guidance document - **Form 5 Procedures for responding to concerns, suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse.**

If members of a parish disclose concerns to parish staff or volunteers, it is our aim that they will feel comfortable about voicing the matter in a safe, supportive, understanding and sensitive environment.

**We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality to a person who wishes to speak about a situation of abuse or suspected abuse; however, every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality.**

We will ensure that the procedure on **Form 5 Procedures for responding to concerns, suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse** is followed in responding and will complete the **Form 3 Child concern referral**.

All Church workers are expected to deal with concerns, suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse by bringing the information to a Parish Safeguarding Officer, who will refer the matter to the Director Safeguarding Program. (This does not apply to situations involving the Sacramental Seal, which is inviolable.)

## 7. Responding to complaints against a parish worker

Any concerns or grievances about how a parish provides for child safety, supervision and protection will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately. Please note:

- it is paramount that precedence is given to the care of children above all other factors
- advice will be sought to ensure fair procedures
- all efforts will be made to deal with these matters with justice for all and within an appropriate timescale.

Complaints / concerns raised about a Church worker should be forwarded to the Director Safeguarding Program who will report the matter to the appropriate authority. In the event you cannot contact the Director Safeguarding Program and the matter is urgent, individuals should contact the Department for Child Protection and Family Support, Western Australian Police or the Professional Standards Office, after which a report **Form 7 Incident report form** and or **Form 3 Child Concern Referral** is to be provided to the Director Safeguarding Program as soon as possible. The Director Safeguarding Program will also report the matter to the appropriate diocesan Church authority and / or the Vicar General, if necessary.

Where a **Form 3 Child Concern Referral** implicates a Church worker, a **Form 15a Cessation of child-related work** will be issued. The Church worker must refrain from contact with any children until after an assessment is completed by the Director Safeguarding Program and / or the Professional Standards Office. The Church worker will be advised of the outcome.

## 8. Parish record keeping

Application forms, declaration forms, Working With Children cards and all other documentation associated with recruitment and selection are to be stored securely. Access is to be restricted to the parish priest, and/or the Parish Representatives, and/or the Parish Safeguarding Officers.

Records of each activity involving children must be stored securely. This will include: parental consent, program / activity details, attendance, incident records, necessary medical details etc.

Written confidential records of all complaints are to be forward to the Safeguarding Program Office where they will be stored securely. These documents will be available upon request, if and when required.

## 9. Audits

All parishes will be required to undergo an annual self-audit which will ensure that relevant Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures are followed. The self-audit will be carried out in accordance with **Form 11 Parish Self-Audit.**

## 10. Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement, demonstrating accountability, best practice and transparency is reflected in the ongoing adherence, audit and evaluation of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures contained in the Safeguarding Handbook.

# Form 5

## Procedure for responding to concerns, suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse




### 1. Introduction

The Church has a responsibility to pass on safeguarding concerns about a child to the civil authorities even when they do not concern Church workers directly. The guiding principle is that the safety of the child is always the most important consideration.

It is our aim, if children disclose concerns, that they will feel comfortable about voicing the matter in a safe, supportive, understanding and sensitive environment. The following point is very important: **absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to a person who wishes to speak about a situation of abuse or suspected abuse.** (This does not apply to situations involving the Sacramental Seal, which is inviolable.)

When a concern is raised about the welfare of any child - whether suspected or disclosed - it should be brought to the attention of the Parish Safeguarding Officer who, in turn, will advise the Director Safeguarding Program.

**This procedure should also be followed if any concern, allegation, suspicion or disclosure is made, whether current or historical, that indicates a Church worker (current or former) has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.**

This procedure must also be followed for any other instances where Church workers suspect or receive disclosures that a child is, may have been, or is likely to be, experiencing abuse, even when this abuse is not occurring in a Church setting.

**This procedure applies to all Church workers (paid and unpaid).**

### 2. Procedure to be followed when responding to concerns, suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse

### 2.1 Listen, reassure and explain

Stay calm and listen - give the person the time to say what s/he wants.

Don't ask leading questions or make suggestions.

Don't stop the person recalling significant events but don't make him or her repeat the story unnecessarily.

Reassure the person that s/he has done the right thing but don't promise to keep a secret.

Explain what needs to be done next, in age-appropriate terms.

Indicate who will be made aware of the information given.

For further guidance on dialogue with people communicating a concern, allegation, suspicion or disclosure of abuse, refer to Safeguarding Children: Policy and Procedures for the Perth Archdiocese and Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Pages/ChildDisclosingAbuse.aspx

## 2.2 Record the discussion

Make a written record as soon as possible afterwards and, in any case, before the end of the day.

Record the discussion as carefully as possible: use **Form 3 Child Concern Referral Form.** Attach additional notes, if required.

Do not be selective. Include details which, to you, may seem irrelevant. It may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation.

## 3. Responsibility to report child abuse or neglect

Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child.

The Department for Child Protection and Family Support has a statutory obligation to identify children who are not receiving adequate care and protection, to provide family support services and, where necessary, to take children into the care of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support. People who report concerns need to be assured that their information will be carefully considered with any other information available, and a child protection assessment will only proceed where sufficient risk is identified. Where criminal charges are to be preferred, the Department for Child Protection and Family Support will advise the Western Australian Police.

Child protection concerns, where possible, should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect; however, **lack of supporting evidence should NOT prevent reporting a concern**.

Parents / carers should be informed if a report is to be submitted to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support or the Director Safeguarding Program unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or jeopardise any enquiries that may follow.

The Department for Child Protection and Family Support will respect the wishes of non-professionals reporting concerns in good faith who ask to remain anonymous inasmuch as possible, but cannot give a guarantee that the information would not be sought and given within judicial proceedings.

## 4. Standard Reporting Procedure

Any person reporting a child abuse or neglect concern should do so without delay.

There are two options: Report via the Parish Safeguarding Officer or contact the Director Safeguarding Program and pass all records, including rough notes, immediately to the Safeguarding Officer. **Form 3 Child Concern Referral Form** will form the first entry in a file of information about the case.

Before deciding whether or not to make a formal report, you may wish to discuss your concerns directly with the Department for Child Protection and Family Support or with the Director Safeguarding Program.

Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm pending intervention. In the event of an emergency, where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with the Safeguarding Officer or Director Safeguarding Program, then contact the Department for Child Protection and Family Support or the Western Australian Police.

The Standard Report Form or **Form 3 Child Concern Referral Form** for reporting child welfare and protection concerns to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support will be used by the Director Safeguarding Program when reporting child protection and welfare concerns. If a report is made by telephone, this form should be completed and subsequently forwarded to the Director Safeguarding Program.

The Department for Child Protection and Family Support will follow up on all referrals, even if the Standard Report Form has not been used.

https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Organisation/ContactUs/Pages/ContactUs.aspx

## 5. Deciding to share child protection concerns

The belief that parents / carers or other persons in charge of children would actually harm or neglect them is not easy to sustain. There may be a tendency, therefore, to deny, minimise or explain away any signs that a child is being harmed, even when evidence exists. At times, it is hard to distinguish between abusive situations and those where other problems are present, such as unemployment, poverty, poor housing, addiction, mental illness or isolation. Sympathy for families in difficult circumstances can sometimes dilute personal or professional concerns about the safety and welfare of children. However, the protection and welfare of the child must always be the paramount concern.

Reluctance to act on suspicions about child abuse or neglect can often stem from uncertainty and fear. Members of the public or professionals may be afraid of repercussions, of being thought insensitive, of breaking a confidence or of being disloyal. Knowledge and information about child abuse will help to overcome reluctance to take action. So, too, will confidence in the child protection and welfare services.

It is the responsibility of all Church workers (paid and unpaid) working with children to recognise child protection concerns and share these with the agencies responsible for assessing or investigating them.

https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Organisation/Documents/Information%20sharing%20booklet_online.pdf

**Remember: It is not the role of the person who receives the concern, allegation, suspicion or disclosure to investigate or to determine whether the child protection concerns are evidenced or not. It is on the basis of a concern that action is required.**

## 6. Cases not reported to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support or the Director Safeguarding Program

In cases where the Parish Safeguarding Officer decides not to report concerns to the Director Safeguarding Program, the person who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement of the reason/s why the Safeguarding Officer is not taking such action. The person should be advised that if s/he remains concerned about the situation, s/he is free to consult with, or report to, the Department for Child Protection and Family Support or the Director Safeguarding Program. The Director Safeguarding Program can assist with the written response, if needed.

## 7. Confidentiality

The effective protection of a child often depends on the willingness of personnel involved with children to share and exchange relevant information. It is, therefore, critical that there is a clear understanding of professional and legal responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information.

All information regarding concern about child abuse or neglect will be shared on 'a need to know' basis, in the interests of the child, with the relevant statutory authorities.

No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved, although they can be assured that all information will be handled confidentially, taking full account of legal requirements.

Ethical and statutory codes concerned with confidentiality and data protection provide general guidance. The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.

It must be clearly understood that information gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.

The issue of confidentiality will be part of the training for staff and volunteers who work with children.

## 8. Legal protection

*The Children and Community Services Act 2004* makes provision for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the Department for Child Protection and Family Support or Safeguarding Office. This protection applies to organisations as well as to individuals. This protection applies, even if a communicated suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded.

A person who makes a report in good faith and in the child's best interests may also be protected under common law.

## 9. Freedom of information

Notwithstanding the requirement of all professionals involved in child protection and welfare cases to share relevant information, records are nevertheless confidential. They do not belong to individuals (except for independent practitioners) and are the property of the organisations that keep them. Members of the public also have a right to be given reasons for decisions made concerning them.

## 10. Additional procedures when allegations relate to Church workers (paid and unpaid)

Where allegations of abuse are made against Church workers, the Perth Archdiocese provides support for both those who have experienced abuse and those who have perpetrated it, in line with the best practice model outlined by the Truth, Justice and Healing Process.

Church workers will also be subject to the disciplinary and legal procedures.

The full procedure to be followed where allegations or disclosures refer to members of the clergy is outlined in the National Committee for Professional Standards Towards Healing - Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance document.

Where an allegation is made against a member of the clergy or other Church worker, immediately notify the Director Safeguarding Program.

## 11. Mandatory Reporting

**Where and when Church workers (paid and unpaid) are deemed to be mandatory reporters under the *Children & Community Services Act 2004,* and in circumstances where their mandatory reporting status remains in place, they must abide by the statutory legislation over any Perth Catholic Archdiocese Safeguarding policies and procedures.**

# Form 6

## Code of behaviour for all Church workers (paid and unpaid) working with children

### Code of behaviour

All Church workers working with children (paid & unpaid) are required to abide by the following:

- Church workers are expected to create an environment where children are valued, encouraged and affirmed, have their rights respected and are treated as individuals, eliminating any threatening, violent or degrading behaviour
- each parish group must provide an adequate and appropriate number of workers to supervise activities, depending on the ages and activities involved **(Form 7 Developing safe practices refers)**
- all must be treated with equal respect; favouritism is not acceptable and boundaries must be protected.
- emphasis is placed on listening to children
- participants should not be left unattended
- dangerous behaviour or horseplay will not be tolerated
- verbal abuse, bullying or physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstances
- facilities for parish activities must be suitable, safe and secure
- records of attendance must be kept and parental consent forms for attendance at activities must be completed and kept in a safe and confidential manner **(Form 10 Parental consent refers)**
- an Incident Report must be completed in the event of an accident or incident taking place **(Form 17 Incident report form refers)**
- Church workers must not undertake any journey alone with a child. If there is a need for transport in a vehicle, there is a requirement for a minimum of two children to be seated in the rear and parent / carer permission sought, where practicable
- meetings with young parishioners must take place in locations which allow for transparency and accountability (designated office or room with clear glass window); visits to private homes in the absence of parents are not acceptable
- only age-appropriate language, contact and materials are permissible
- under no circumstances should Church workers use, provide, or permit alcohol (excluding sacramental wine administered during mass), tobacco or drugs when working with children
- photographs of young parishioners taking part in activities may only be taken / published with parental permission **(Form 13 Images of children involved in Church-related activities refers)**
- whist pilgrimages and retreats are an occasional part of pastoral programs, these events must adhere to recommended guidelines in terms of parental consent, supervision ratios, insurance, contact details, health requirements and first aid, as well as the general code of behaviour and transport policies
- all correspondence (written / email / phone or via social media) is to go through a parent or carer, not directly to the child.

Note: Young parishioners with special needs or disabilities may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, so appropriately trained or experienced Church workers may be required. This also applies to children who are vulnerable. The involvement of these children may mean that the adult:child ratios are adjusted. Sensitivity and clear communication are essential for children and with their parents or carers. **(Form 8 Including Disabled Children refers)**

## Additional best practice requirements for specific parish activities

### Altar servers

The sacristan should remain in the sacristy with the door left open at all times when the servers are present, looking out for their safety with equipment and helping them to vest only by demonstration.

It is recommended that, where possible, no one child be in the sacristy with one adult. It is best practice to ensure that there are more than two children or two adults at any given time.

Practices should be arranged in cooperation with parents and schools, having the appropriate number of supervisors present.

The stores and counting office should be considered out of bounds.

If a female altar server is in the sacristy, it is recommended a female adult (preferably mother) be present.

### Parish facilities

All non-parish groups using parish facilities are required to have suitable insurance and their own safeguarding children policies.

# Form 7

## Developing safe practices - guidelines for Church workers (paid and unpaid)




### 1. Initial considerations

For each activity or event, consider:

- whether or not the event / activity / contact is a 'one off'
- will it involve parents and carers
- what is the age range and level of ability of the children involved.

The next stage in the process is to undertake a risk assessment to plan how best to run the activity or event.

### 2. Working with children legislation

Ensure that all Church workers (paid and unpaid) who work with children hold a current Working With Children card. Where an exemption applies, ensure that National Police Clearance is provided (over 18 years), together with a **Form 2 Declaration** to minimise any opportunity for individuals to harm children.

Ensure that an up-to-date Working With Children check Database is kept at the parish. **(Form 15 Working with Children Compliance Guidelines refers)**

### 3. Recruiting for events / activities

Ensure that Church workers (paid and unpaid) who are in a position of trust with children are recruited, in line with diocesan **Form 4 Our Parish Safeguarding Children** Policy and Procedures. Sometimes, Church organisations may run one-off events where people such as parents / volunteers will help out or individuals will supply a service. In such situations, the adults involved should be asked to complete the **Form 2 Declaration**. Church workers should also have some form of agreement with individuals / organisations who are going to supply a service, or be involved in activities or events with children, stating that they will abide by the expected standards of behaviour and comply with the diocesan Safeguarding Children Policy. They may be given a copy of the **Form 6 Code of behaviour for all Church workers (paid and unpaid) working with children.**

### 4. Supervision

We recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0 - 2 years | : | 1 adult to 3 children |
| 2 - 3 years | : | 1 adult to 4 children |
| 4 - 8 years | : | 1 adult to 6 children |
| 9 - 12 years | : | 1 adult to 8 children |
| 13 - 18 years | : | 1 adult to 10 children |

These ratios are recommendations. They are not statutory requirements.

## 5. Know the children

Have defined criteria for membership of the organisation/group. **(Form 12 Code of behaviour for children)**

Have a registration system for each child.

Keep a record on each child, including medical details, any special needs, emergency contact numbers, attendance and consent forms. **(Form 10 Parental consent)**

## 6. Know the worker

Display a work schedule so that everyone knows who is on duty.

Respond to any allegation or complaints made about workers. **(Form 3 Child concern referral)**

Provide supervision for workers, including opportunities for discussing concerns and training needs, an annual review to assess general performance and any changes required.

## 7. Other ways to make sure individuals do not get the opportunity to harm children

Try to use open plan venues / spaces, where individuals cannot take children away on their own and adults are in sight of other adults.

Maintain a culture of awareness amongst the adults and children present by ensuring everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities, and people are encouraged to challenge and report any inappropriate conduct with children.

Inform children how to report concerns.

Make sure there is good supervision of staff and volunteers.

Make sure you take feedback and debrief after the event.

Where possible, teach the Protective Behaviours Program.

## 8. Health and safety

Good health and safety practices should be complied with. Consider following questions when planning an activity or event:

- is there appropriate supervision in place? (Activities should not take place if this is not possible.)
- does the venue meet health and safety standards?
- are fire precautions in place and checked regularly?
- do you have first aid supplies to deal with minor accidents? (It is also advisable that first aid training is provided.)
- do you have adequate and appropriate changing and toilet facilities with separate provision for boys and girls?
- is there adequate insurance to cover activities?
- are all trips away carefully planned, including adequate provision of safe transport?
- do you have appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements for all overnight trips?

## 9. Parental consent

Form 10 Parental consent must be signed by parents or carers prior to children participating in an activity or event and the record of such permission is kept.

Provide a copy of the Form 12 Code of behaviour for children taking part in Church activities to parents and children.

## 10. Use of IT equipment

Ensure that children will not have unsupervised access to internet facilities while engaged in Church-related activities.

Ensure that photos will only be taken and / or published with parental consent and this consent will be recorded Form 13 Images of children involved in Church-related activities.

## 11. Trips away

Trips away which involve young people can be an extremely rewarding and fulfilling experience for adults and children / young people involved. However, doing this safely and in a way which safeguards all concerned requires careful planning and consideration. Listed below are a number of areas which should be considered in planning a trip away.

## 12. Considerations for planning trips away

**Have you:**

- identified the aim and outcomes of the program?
- followed the child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures?
- carried out a risk assessment?
- recruited and selected staff / volunteers (paid and unpaid) using safe practices procedures? Form 4, Form 5 & Form 14
- selected a key staff member who has overall responsibility for the trip?
- selected staff for the trip who are appropriately trained, qualified and vetted (if appropriate)?
- nominated a staff member who is responsible for first aid?
- ensured that you have adequate and gender-based supervision in line with the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures?
- appointed a contact person who has access to all information and contact details?
- checked your own insurance and ensured that you have coverage for all activities?
- checked that the transport has appropriate insurance, qualified drivers, and seatbelts?
- carried out an equipment safety check?
- checked the first aid kit?
- ensured there is a contingency plan?
- made provision for returning home early?
- allocated a budget and a contingency fund?

**Have you checked out the locations and accommodation of the trip away to ensure they have:**

- required Working With Children cards and are current
- appropriate safeguarding policy, practices and procedures in place
- recruitment procedures
- insurance cover
- appropriately trained and qualified staff
- changing areas for boys and girls (if required)
- disability access (if required)?

**Have the young people / participants:**

- been involved as much as possible in the planning of the trip
- agreed a behaviour contract, with consequences
- agreed boundaries around unstructured time
- been given information on appropriate clothing, and contact details for leaders
- consented to the trip away?

**Have parents / carers:**

- met with leaders and been informed of the program
- been given a copy of the parish Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- consented in writing **(Form 10 Parental consent)**
- given contact details, medical details, including allergies, illnesses, medications; and dietary requirements **(Form 10 Parental consent)**
- been given contact details of leaders and centre
- been given details for pick up and drop off of young people / participants
- been given a copy of **Form 12 Code of behavior for children taking part in church activities?**

**Have staff:**

- been trained on the Safeguarding Code of Behaviour and Child Protection Policy, on how to deal with a disclosure and in dealing with challenging behaviour
- been assigned responsibilities and scheduled for breaks
- been made aware of how to handle an emergency and made aware of who to contact in an emergency
- evaluated the program with young people
- nominated and notified the participants of the designated Safeguarding Officer?

**If staying overnight, have you checked:**

- if there is access to centre staff 24/7
- if there are appropriate sleeping arrangements for young people, ie separate provision for boys and girls and separate provision for leaders (within earshot of young people)
- centre's supervision and security
- all workers and volunteers have a current Working With Children card. No exemptions apply to overnight events.

# Form 8

## Including children with a disability/medical condition

Children with disabilities have needs that place additional responsibility on those who care for and work with them. It is often the situational and environmental factors which disable the child rather than the physical or intellectual difficulty the child experiences. Where possible, the environmental factors should be adapted to the child's needs. Disabling attitudes need to be addressed through education and information.

Children who have a disability have the same rights as any other child, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Further information regarding the needs of children with a disability may be obtained from the Director-Safeguarding Program.

### Points to consider when including a child with a disability in your group

- work in partnership with the child and the child's parents/carers/support workers and any professionals involved to establish how the child can be included,
- make sure inclusion is possible before bringing the child into the group. If the child cannot be included discuss the matter with the child and the child's parents/carers/support workers,
- make reasonable adjustments,
- be interested in the child and build rapport and trust,
- if the child has a communication impairment, acquiring key skills in the child's communication method may be useful,
- specific training may be useful or necessary eg. conditions such as autism or epilepsy,
  Note: parents/carers often provide valuable information
- risk assessment may be necessary to ensure the safety of some children,
- higher staff ratios may be required if the child has additional needs or behaviour problems - this may be catered for by a parent/carer.
- intimate care issues:- when introducing a child with a disability into an activity, it is important to establish whether she/he has intimate care needs. These needs are usually provided by a known carer/support worker. It is important to remember that not every child with a disability has intimate care needs. Intimate care is, to some extent, individually defined and varies according to personal experience, cultural expectations and gender. It may be described as help with anything of a personal or private nature that the individual is unable to do.

### Intimate Care

Generally, Church workers involved in parish activities are not expected to be involved in provision of intimate care, which should be undertaken by a suitably qualified person (generally a care/support worker).
Decisions on who provides intimate care for a child should be discussed and agreed by everyone concerned:

- the child's views should be ascertained,
- parents should be consulted and their consent given,
- a rota of carers (of the same sex as the child) agreed upon,
- the age, stage of development and ethnicity of the child will need to be considered.

Most importantly, who will carry out intimate care and how it should be done should be agreed in advance. Guidelines to be considered when providing intimate care include:

- the sensitive nature of such tasks,
- the need to treat every child with dignity and respect,
- ensure an appropriate degree of privacy,
- involve the child to the extent possible in his/her own care,
- try to ensure consistency in who provides care.

Only on rare occasion, a need may arise for a Church worker to assist. Should health and safety issues arise eg. changing a child, dealing with waste or blood an apron and gloves should be worn. Physical contact should take place within a culture of limited touch and in response to the needs of the child, be of limited duration and be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child. This should be open to scrutiny and every effort made to ensure that contact is not intrusive. If a child appears distressed or unhappy, this should be discussed with parents and the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Any concerns or allegations should be reported following the process outlined in **Form 4 Our Parish Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures.**

# Form 9

## Guidance on dealing with non-compliance with the Safeguarding Policy

### Process

In some rare instances, there is resistance to complying with, or refusal to comply with, safeguarding policy / procedures. These may be identified through the parish audit or through the visits to parishes made by the Director Safeguarding Program. A staged process will be adopted in addressing identified issues, as outlined below.

**Stage 1** The Safeguarding Program Director has the primary role in identifying where difficulties arise and in offering support in addressing them. Where an issue is identified, the Safeguarding Program Director will determine whether training / support is needed to address the issue, ensure that this is provided and agree on a time frame for action. Experience has shown that difficulties are usually successfully dealt with at this stage.

**Stage 2** If the issue is not resolved, the Archbishop's delegated authority becomes actively involved. A follow-up visit is arranged by the Director Safeguarding Program and the Archbishop's delegated authority. The aim is both to support the Director Safeguarding Program and to emphasise the serious nature of the issue. Ways of addressing the issue are discussed, a plan of action agreed and implemented.

**Stage 3** If this intervention is not successful, then the matter will be referred to the Vicar General for consideration. The Vicar General will then advise the Bishop on how to proceed.

At all stages, the intention is to gain acceptance of, and compliance with, policy and procedures.

Church workers (paid and unpaid) who do not sign **Form 2 Declaration** and **Form 18 Handbook Declaration** render themselves ineligible to engage in child-related work within the Perth Catholic Archdiocese.

# Form 10 Parental consent

Parish name

This form is designed to be completed by a parent or carer of a child wishing to attend parish events. This form is valid for the duration of the child's time at the parish and, in signing the form, a parent or carer is providing the parish with written consent for the child to attend the listed activities. We recognise that circumstances can change. Please inform the parish if there are any changes as soon as possible.

| Name of activity: | Day and time activity |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

## CHILD/YOUNG PERSON'S DETAILS

Full name

Address

Phone No. Email

Date of birth Age School

Does your child suffer from any allergies or phobias or have any medical conditions or disabilities?

Details of any medication (please ensure an adequate supply is brought to events, and given to one of the organisers).

Details of any dietary requirements

## PARENT OR CARER'S DETAILS DURING EVENT (at least two numbers)

Name

Phone No. Mobile No.

## IF PARENT OR CARER ISN'T AVAILABLE, PLEASE CONTACT (at least two numbers)

Name

Phone No. Mobile No.

## FAMILY DOCTOR

Name

Phone No.

Address

Can your child take paracetamol (Panadol)?

Any other information you think the organisers should know?

## CONSENT

I give consent for my child _____ to take part in the listed activities.

I **do / do not** agree to any emergency treatment to be given, including emergency transport, as considered necessary.

NB: The medical profession takes the view that a parent's consent to medical treatment cannot be delegated to another. Medical consent forms have no legal status and a doctor has the right to insist on parental consent before treating a child. We have found, however, that medical staff find this type of general consent helpful.

I **do / do not** agree to photographs and short videos of activities including my child to be taken for use within the Church community and for possible publication, including newspaper or internet.

We recognise that circumstances / information changes. It is my responsibility as a parent/carer to make the organisers aware so that changes can be made to the existing form or a new form can be completed.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name | | Relationship to child | |
| Phone No. | | Mobile No. | |
| Signature | | Dated | |

# Form 11 Parish self-audit

The data entered will be used only for the purpose indicated in the form. It may be accessed only by those with responsibility for managing files.

The Safeguarding Program
Protecting Children in the Catholic Church

**To be completed annually by the parish priest and the Parish Safeguarding Officer/s.**

Name of parish _____ Year _____

Persons completing audit _____

Please list Church-related activities which involve children in this parish

1 _____ 4 _____

2 _____ 5 _____

3 _____ 6 _____

## 1. Developing a culture of safety

Are there Parish Safeguarding Officers in place? ☐ Y ☐ N Number _____

Is the diocesan Safeguarding poster with contact details for the Safeguarding Director and Safeguarding Officers prominently displayed?
- ☐ Church entry
- ☐ Parish centre
- ☐ Sacristy
- ☐ Parish website

Are copies of the Parish Safeguarding Policy available on request? ☐ Y ☐ N

Are the contact details of the Parish Safeguarding Officers available in the parish office? ☐ Y ☐ N

Is there a sign in / out book for?
NB: This is best practice only, not a requirement.
- ☐ Sacristy
- ☐ Choir
- ☐ Other activities with children

_____
(please state activity)

Have all persons working with children provided a current Working With Children card and is an up-to-date database kept and maintained? ☐ Y ☐ N
If not, state reasons why.

_____

Have all persons working with children signed a **Form 2 Declaration**? ☐ Y ☐ N

Does each parish group involving children have an appropriate number of volunteers to supervise activities?

- ☐ Altar servers
- ☐ Choir
- ☐ Other activities with children

_____ (please state activity)

Are all forms in place (ie) Recruitment, Consent and Incident, and kept up to date? ☐ Y ☐ N

Is there provision for storage of documentation relating to all aspects of the safeguarding procedures? ☐ Y ☐ N

Are all records securely stored in the parish office? ☐ Y ☐ N

Who has access to the records? _____

Are all facilities compliant with health and safety standards? ☐ Y ☐ N

## 2. Responding to concerns

Have all the staff and volunteers been made aware of **Form 5 Procedure for responding to concerns, suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse?** ☐ Y ☐ N

Have all staff and volunteers signed the **Form 18 Handbook declaration?** NB: This is a requirement. ☐ Y ☐ N

Have any reports / concerns / complaints been reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer/s within the last 12 months? ☐ Y ☐ N

## 3. Implementing diocesan Safeguarding Policy

Have all children involved in parish activities received **Form 12 Code of Behaviour for children taking part in Church Activities?**

- ☐ Altar servers
- ☐ Choir
- ☐ Other activities with children

_____ (please state activity)

Do the Parish Safeguarding Officers provide support to the volunteers and check that all safeguarding procedures are complied with? ☐ Y ☐ N

Is there structured, regular contact between Parish Safeguarding Officers and the priests (and with the Parish Pastoral Council, if applicable)? ☐ Y ☐ N

How often in the year? _____

Have Parish Safeguarding Officers and clergy completed approved safeguarding children training? (Complete details below) ☐ Y ☐ N ☐ Partial

| Name | Year of Training | Update Session | | Year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | ☐ Y | ☐ N | |
| | | ☐ Y | ☐ N | |
| | | ☐ Y | ☐ N | |
| | | ☐ Y | ☐ N | |
| | | ☐ Y | ☐ N | |
| | | ☐ Y | ☐ N | |
| | | ☐ Y | ☐ N | |
| | | ☐ Y | ☐ N | |

Have information sessions on safeguarding policy and procedures been attended by relevant staff and volunteers? Year Completed

Signed Parish Priest Date

Signed Safeguarding Officer

Signed Safeguarding Officer

Following completion of the audit process, is there any follow-up action to be taken?
If you require assistance from the Director Safeguarding Program, or have any suggestions or comments on improving our safeguarding procedures, please state below.

**For Office Use**

Received by Dated

Signed

# Form 12

## Code of Behaviour for children taking part in Church activities

The right of children to be safe is paramount and the Perth Catholic Archdiocese is committed to empowering and listening to children, young people and vulnerable individuals and their families. Children of Archdiocesan parishes must also understand the code of behaviour that guides their well-being, as outlined below.

### 1. Code of behaviour

Our parish expects that children will act respectfully to themselves, their supervisors and fellow participants.

Children must accept the ground rules of activities which supervisors will clearly explain to them.

Children will not have unsupervised access to the Internet when participating in our parish programs.

Breaches of discipline and disruptive behaviour, including bullying, will be dealt with in a manner that is fair and transparent, by more than one Church worker. Children and their parents will be advised of the consequences for breaching the Code of Behaviour. A three-stage process will be followed: the first stage will be a verbal warning; the second stage will involve informing the child's parents; the third stage - if the behaviour continues - the child will be asked to leave the group. The child, parents and group leaders will be involved in the consultation.

Children, or their parents, who are dissatisfied with any aspect of activities or services can follow a complaints procedure; namely, to inform the leader of the program or, when appropriate, to contact one of our Parish Safeguarding Officers.

**Please note:**

- the parish only accepts liability or responsibility for an incident or accident caused by the negligence or breach of statutory duty of the parish, its staff and volunteers
- it is the responsibility of the parents to be on time when dropping off or collecting children
- all participants must keep to the Code of Behaviour for all activities; otherwise they may be asked to discontinue their participation
- leaders are not allowed to give participants a lift to or from activities. Refer to **Form 6 Code of Behaviour for all Church workers (paid and unpaid) working with children**
- any concerns regarding the welfare and safety of children participating in parish activities should be brought immediately to the attention of the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the statutory authorities.

# Form 13

## Images of children involved in Church-related activities

The consent of parents / carers (and children of appropriate age) should be sought before any media images (photographs / videotape / film) are taken, in accordance with the **Form 10 Parent Consent** and the Catholic Youth Ministry. In the case of First Communion or Confirmation, where children are prepared in school, parental permission for any media images should be obtained by the school.

Photographs should only be taken by an authorised person who has a suitable reason related to the child, school or parish. In the case of First Communion and Confirmation ceremonies, parents should be informed, in advance, that photography is not permitted in the church until the ceremony is over.

The press should be informed of this policy beforehand. It is not illegal to take photographs at a public event, even if asked not to do so. If an event is private, then one can insist that the policy is followed.

Mobile phone cameras are easily used without the subject being aware. Their use should be discouraged; however, the spread of this technology does make this difficult.

A photograph should not allow an unauthorised person to identify a child or his / her whereabouts. If the full name of a child is used, there should be no photograph; if a photograph is being used, the full name should not be given.

## Form 14

# Recruitment procedures for all Church workers involved in child-related work in the parish (paid and unpaid)

**This policy refers to all Church workers (paid and unpaid) who are in child-related work.**

**Reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all Church workers, to the best of our ability, are assessed as 'safe'. This includes conducting the following procedures for all individuals:**

- vetting through the Working With Children Screening Unit or vetting through the National Police Clearance Process where an exemption for a Working With Children card applies **(Refer Form 15 Working with children compliance guidelines)**
- adherence to all Perth Catholic Archdiocese Safeguarding Program policies, procedures and guidelines and, in doing so, agree to sign the **Form 18 Handbook Declaration**
- sign the **Form 2 Declaration** form stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children
- a Church worker (paid and unpaid) under the age of 18 years engaged in child-related work must complete **Form 2 Declaration** and **Form 18 Handbook Declaration**.

**Advice and support in obtaining a Working With Children card and / or National Police Clearance certificate can be found at:**

https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/

https://cvcheck.com/police-clearance-wa?gclid=CLbiwdncldACFYqTvQodgdQD-w

# Form 15

## Working with Children Compliance Guidelines

The aim of the Perth Catholic Archdiocese Safeguarding Working With Children Compliance Guidelines is to raise the awareness of our collective responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the Archdiocese in line with the *Working With Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* (WWC Act 2004).

These parish WWC guidelines are designed to:

- assist in the compliance of the WWC Act 2004 when applying for a WWC Check and / or renewing a WWC card for parish workers engaged in child-related work
- deter parish workers who propose to be, or are engaged in child-related work, from applying to work with children where they have a relevant charge or conviction on their criminal record that indicates they may harm a child
- detect new relevant charges and convictions of parish workers who hold a current WWC card and prevent them from continuing to engage in child-related work within parishes where their criminal record and behaviour indicates they may harm a child.

## 1. Card Holders

**Who needs a Working With Children's card?**
A parish employee, volunteer (paid and unpaid) or student on placement over the age of 18 years (hereafter church worker) who undertakes child-related work, as defined in Section 6(1) of the WWC Act 2004, is required to apply for a Working With Children card (WWCC).

Category 11 (Religious Organisations) of the WWC Act 2004, relates to all Church workers who are engaged in or propose to be in 'child-related work'.

**What is Child Related Work?**
Child-related work is when the usual duties involve, or are likely to involve, contact with a child. Contact with a child includes any form of physical contact, oral communication (e.g. telephone) and electronic communication (e.g. email or Internet) unless an exemption applies.

Refer to Annexure 1 – Church roles likely to require a WWCC
https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/factsheet-2-child-related-work-and-exemptions-2015.pdf

**The Application Process**
When a Church worker applies for a WWC Check he / she gives ongoing consent to the collection, use and disclosure of information about Church workers (including criminal records) that is relevant and determines if he / she will be issued with a WWC card. This consent is for the initial checking based on their application and, if issued with a WWC card, checking on an ongoing basis until the card expires.

**How does this process work?**

Church workers complete a WWC check application form available from an authorised Australia Post outlet or the Perth Catholic Archdiocese Safeguarding Program Office.

The parish priest as the authorising representative, checks the application. (The parish priest is required to be the authorised representative for parish employees, volunteers or students on placement within the Perth Archdiocese.) In the case of the appointment of parish Safeguarding Officers, the authorised representative is the Director Safeguarding Program, Andrea Musulin, or a delegated authority of the Safeguarding Program.

The parish employee / volunteer / student on placement then lodges the form at Australia Post and pays the applicable fee. Once received he / she is issued with a receipt.

The WWC Screening Unit undertakes an assessment and will either issue an assessment notice (WWC Card) or a negative notice. The WWC screening will advise the applicant and authorised representative of this outcome.

**Responsibilities of WWC applicants and card holders include the need to:**

- retain a copy of the application or renewal receipt until the card is received and provide a copy to the authorised representative
- only engage in Child-related work if you hold a current WWC card or have re-applied for a WWC check and have a receipt
- apply to renew your WWC card before it expires if you are continuing to engage in Child-related work
- if there is a relevant change in the criminal record, notify the WWC Screening Unit, parish priest and the Safeguarding Program Office immediately
- do not engage in child-related work if convicted of a Class 1 offence committed when an adult
- do not engage in child-related work if issued with an Interim Negative Notice or Negative Notice
- return the WWC card to the WWC Screening Unit immediately, if required to do so, and notify the authorised representative immediately.

**Parish employees, volunteers or students who have a current WWC card:**

- can engage in paid and unpaid child-related work in Western Australia and/or the Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- have a card which is valid for three years, unless cancelled sooner
- can use the same WWC card across all categories and for all child-related work. For example, if a teacher has a WWC card for paid employment at a school and then facilitates children's liturgy, the WWC card can be used for both roles. The Church worker must ensure the parish-authorised representative has advised the Working With Children Screening Unit of this
- can check the WWC card's validity on the WWC website to ensure it is current
- are subject to ongoing checking until their WWC card expires or is cancelled
- must be informed their eligibility to continue to hold a WWC card may be re-assessed if new information about the safety of children is received, such as, a new charge or conviction for a relevant offence. If re-assessment results in a Negative Notice, the authorised representative will be notified
- are subject to penalties for not complying with the WWC Act 2004.

**Assessment Notice**
When the WWC Screening Unit has completed the assessment of an applicant, the applicant will either receive an assessment notice in the form of a WWC card or, alternatively, a negative notice will be issued prohibiting them from child-related work. Notification of the outcome will also be sent to the authorised representative (parish priest or Safeguarding Program Director).

**Renewal**
The WWC Screening Unit will notify Church workers that their card is due to expire three months prior to the expiry date via email or written correspondence. Renewal of a WWC card must be completed before the expiry date if a person continues in child-related work. Application for renewal must commence at least one month before the WWC card expires but no earlier than three months. Church workers must not engage in child-related work if their WWC card has expired even by one day. Penalties can apply for non-compliance. Application for renewal may be completed online or by lodging a renewal application form at Australia Post.

**Withdrawals**
A person may withdraw his / her application for a WWC check at any time before the final decision is made except where an Interim Negative Notice has been issued for that application. Once the application has been withdrawn, he / she cannot engage in child-related work. The WWC Screening Unit will give written notice of the withdrawal of his / her application to the authorised representative at the parish or Safeguarding Program Office.

**Cancellations**
A person can request the cancellation of his / her current WWC card if:

- he / she are no longer in child-related work; or
- he / she wishes to withdraw his / her consent to ongoing checking and no longer engage in any child-related work.

If a person's eligibility to hold a current WWC card is being re-assessed, he / she cannot apply to cancel his / her current WWC card nor continue in child-related work until the re-assessment is complete. The WWC Screening Unit will also give written notice of the cancellation of the card or re-assessment outcome to the authorised representative at the parish or Safeguarding Program Office.

**Exemptions**
When an exemption applies from holding a Working With Children's card for Church workers engaged in child related work, a National Police clearance must be obtained and the **Form 2 Declaration** signed.

## 2. Parish Responsibilities

**Managing WWC checks**

All parishes within the Perth Archdiocese must ensure that:

- all church workers who engage in child-related work must hold a current WWC card or have applied for a WWC check. A copy of the WWC card or application receipt must be produced prior to commencing work with children
- Church workers who apply for a WWC check must sign **Form 2 Declaration** of the Safeguarding Program Handbook prior to commencing child-related work
- validity of WWC cards of current Church workers is checked on the WWC website every six months
- all current WWC card holders renew their WWC card before it expires if they are continuing to engage in child-related work and a copy of the renewal receipt is kept on file
- all Church workers who use their WWC card originating from other child-related work are also registered under category 11 (Religious Organisations) with the Working With Children Screening Unit
- they keep current records to ensure compliance with the WWC Act 2004
- they do not engage a person in child-related work if they know that they have been convicted of a Class 1 or 2 offence
- they do not engage a person in child-related work if they have been issued with an Interim Negative Notice, Negative Notice or if they have withdrawn their application for a WWC check; the parish must notify the Director Safeguarding Program by completing **Form 3 Child Concern Referral**
- they notify the WWC Screening Unit and the Director Safeguarding Program if they reasonably suspect a Church worker has been charged with or convicted of an offence which makes it inappropriate for them to engage in child-related work by completing **Form 3 Child Concern referral**.

https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/factsheet-3-class-1-and-class-2-offences-2015.pdf

**Record Keeping**
The Perth Catholic Archdiocese Parish WWCC Register, as supplied to all parishes, is to be used as the record-keeping database. This database must be maintained and updated regularly, ensuring all fields are completed.

The following are to kept on file within the parish:

- receipts and copies of WWC cards for all Church workers who engage in child-related work
- all correspondence and notifications received from the WWC Screening Unit
- any Interim Negative Notice(s) or Negative Notice(s) issued and the action taken by the Parish and or Safeguarding Program office.

This information should be stored securely, remain confidential and to be updated regularly.

**WWCC Concern**
If a Church worker or Safeguarding Officer receives information about the safeguarding or welfare of children or a vulnerable individual, notification must be given to the Director Safeguarding Program by completing **Form 3 Child Concern Referral** who will then notify the WWC Screening Unit in written format of the alleged concern and, if necessary, the Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

If the alleged person referred to in the child concern referral is engaged in child-related work within the parish, **Form 15a Cessation of Child-Related Work** is to be issued to the alleged person by the authorised representative, pending further assessment by the Director Safeguarding Program and / or Professional Standards Office.

The eligibility to hold a WWC card may be re-assessed also by the WWC Screening Unit. The parish-authorised representative (parish priest or Director Safeguarding Program) will be notified of the outcome of any re-assessment.

**Expiry**
Three months prior to the expiry of a WWC card, the parish is responsible for sending a reminder notification to the Church worker via email or phone to commence the renewal of his / her WWC card. This notification is to be recorded on the parish database.

**Expired card holders**
When a Church worker has not renewed his / her WWC card, written notification from the authorised representative by completion of **Form 15a Cessation of Child Related Work** must be issued immediately. This person cannot engage in child-related work until he / she has have reapplied and a receipt produced.

**Interim and Negative Notices**
When a Church worker has been issued an Interim Negative Notice or Negative Notice, written notification from the authorised representative by completion of **Form 15a Cessation of Child-Related Work** must be given to the person and he / she cannot engage in child-related work until the assessment is completed by WWC Screening Unit and a re-assessment outcome advised.

**By complying with the WWC Act and Perth Catholic Archdiocese Working with Children Guidelines, you are not only abiding by the civil law of Western Australia but also helping to create a safer environment for children within the Perth Catholic Archdiocese by minimising the risk of harm occurring to children.**

# Form 15

Annexure 1

## Parish Safeguarding WWCC Guide

### Who in my parish needs a Working With Children check?

Any employee, volunteer or student doing paid or unpaid parish-based, child-related work that involves or likely to involve physical, verbal or electronic contact with children such as:

- [ ] Acolytes
- [ ] Altar Servers over 18 years
- [ ] After-school care leader
- [ ] Catechists
- [ ] Children's Liturgy team leaders
- [ ] Choir leaders
- [ ] Parish Priest
- [ ] Special Eucharistic Ministers
- [ ] Visitors (including priests) visiting for more than 2 cumulative weeks
- [ ] Youth group leaders
- [ ] Permanent Deacon

**For more information, contact**
compliance.safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au
or www.workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au

# Form 15a

## Cessation of Child-Related Work

Parish Name

This form is to be completed by either the parish priest, Safeguarding Officer or Director Safeguarding Program and a copy forwarded immediately to the Safeguarding Program Office.

First Name | Surname

Address

WWCC Number | Parish role

☐ Our records indicate that your Working With Children card expired on _____ . Effective immediately, you can no longer continue in child-related work at the parish until notification of your new application by production of a receipt is forwarded to the Parish or Safeguarding Program Office.

☐ A **Form 3 Child Concern Referral** has been received with direct implications to you. Effective immediately, and until this matter had been assessed and finalised by the Director Safeguarding Program and or Professional Standards Office, you can no longer continue in child-related work at the parish.

☐ Notification of an Interim Negative Notice / Negative Notice (please circle) from the Working with Children's Screening Unit has been received. Effective immediately, you can no longer continue in child-related work at the parish. Upon receipt of the assessment notice from the Screening Unit, you will receive written notification from the Safeguarding Program Director as to your status to re-engage in child-related work.

This notification prevents you from making further contact with children but does not preclude you from attending Mass and participating in worship.

Signature | Date

Name | Position / Title

# Form 16

## Church Attendance Agreement

The Catholic Archdiocese of Perth and the Safeguarding Program is committed to providing all people with a safe environment for worship. This includes all children and vulnerable individuals, and those who have committed sexual offences.

The aim is to create a safe environment for the children and vulnerable of the parish as well as the person who has offended, providing all with protection from allegations and minimising the risk of re-offending. It provides for support and enables all to receive the appropriate ministry within the explicit bounds of the agreement, covering constant, direct and personal supervision.

In parishes where a person attending church is known to have committed child sex offences, a **Form 16 Church attendance agreement** is initiated. This is coordinated by the Director Safeguarding Program in consultation with the parish priest, Safeguarding Officers and Director Professional Standards.

**Form 16 Church attendance agreement** covers compliance with all parole and reporting conditions to the Western Australian Police Sex Offenders' Management Squad and is specific to the individual. All records are kept confidentially at the Safeguarding Program Office.

Entering into this agreement is not a legally binding process; however, will be strongly encouraged. Any person known to have committed child sex offences, who refuses to cooperate with the Church attendance agreement process, will be referred to the Archbishop or the Archbishop's delegated authority where alternative arrangements may be considered.

The Church attendance agreement does not accept liability or responsibility for any re-offending by a known child sex offender within the Church community.

# Form 17

## Safeguarding Incident Report Form

The Safeguarding Program
Protecting Children in the Catholic Church

### General Information

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of parish | |
| Safeguarding Officer | |
| Nature of incident | |
| Date of incident | Time of incident |
| Name(s) of person(s) involved in incident | |
| Age(s) of person(s) involved in incident (if known) | |
| Address(es) of person(s) involved (if known) | |
| Phone No. | |
| Name(s) of parents / guardians | |
| Address | |
| Phone No.(s) | |

### Description of incident

1. Describe the incident

2. Name(s) of leaders supervising at the time of the incident

3. Name(s) of any other witnesses of the incident

4. How did the person respond after the incident?

5. What action was taken?

6. Follow-up actions

This form has been completed by _____

on _____ and has been forwarded to the Perth Catholic Archdiocese

Safeguarding Program Office on _____ .

Signature:

**PLEASE ATTACH ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND FORWARD THIS FORM TO THE DIRECTOR SAFEGUARDING PROGRAM AS SOON AS IS PRACTICABLE.**


## Director Safeguarding Program

T 08 9221 7763 F 08 9325 7459 E safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au
A Catholic Archdiocese of Perth . 29 Victoria Square Perth . WA . 6000

# Form 18

## Handbook Declaration

**This declaration is be read and signed by all Church workers (paid and unpaid) who are in child-related work.**

### Declaration

As a Church worker at _____ Parish, I declare that I am involved in work that relates to children and I confirm that I:

- have been provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Handbook which contains all policies, procedures and guidelines that relate to the safeguarding of children in the parish
- have been given an opportunity to have any questions addressed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Director Safeguarding Program
- have read and understood the policies, procedures and guidelines contained in the Safeguarding Handbook.
- will abide by the requirements of the Safeguarding Handbook
- am aware of the information sessions available to me that relate to safeguarding children in the parish, the details of which can be found on the Perth Catholic Archdiocese Safeguarding Website.

  http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/Organisations_and_Services-Safeguarding.htm

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name | | | |
| Signed | | Dated | |