

DIOCESE of TOOWOOMBA

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY for CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE
and
ADULTS at RISK**

14 April 2023

Dear Friends, Members of the Diocese of Toowoomba

These continue to be times of significant and welcome change in the ministry of safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk in our midst.

Our first Diocesan Safeguarding Policy was approved in December 2014. In December 2017 we welcomed the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. In 2018, Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL) was set up by the Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders in response to the Royal Commission to provide leadership and training in safeguarding practice.

The *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 1)* were then developed by CPSL and approved in May 2019 for use in all dioceses across Australia. In November 2020 our initial Diocesan Safeguarding Policy was reviewed and updated to accommodate these developments.

Later in November 2020, effective February 2021, the Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders approved a new *National Response Protocol* to inform and guide local responses to disclosures and allegations of abuse by Church personnel. This new Protocol provided a nationally consistent response to people who have experienced abuse by Church personnel, replacing the former Church processes of *Towards Healing* and the *Melbourne Response*.

By then CPSL was reviewing the first edition of the *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards*, which focused only on children and young people, to include Adults at Risk in their scope. In June 2021 we reviewed our Diocesan Safeguarding Policy.

During 2021 CPSL was enhanced by the Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders to become Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL). ACSL continued the work on the Second Edition of the *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards*, which were approved by the Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders in November 2022, to be in effect from December 2022. ACSL is also the body responsible for implementing the new *National Response Protocol* and for facilitating the three-yearly Safeguarding Audits of Dioceses and Religious Order Institutions.

During two weeks in February 2022 we welcomed and actively participated in the Safeguarding Audit of our own Diocese.

The current *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2)* address the rights, needs and well-being of children, young people and adults at risk. These Standards guide our local safeguarding practice and our determination to build a culture of safety throughout our Diocese for all people with whom we engage.

We commit ourselves to ensuring the safety and well-being of children, young people and adults at risk in our community. We take a zero tolerance approach to abuse of any form.

Thank you for your generous, thoughtful and ongoing commitment to the safeguarding ministry. May God bless you and those entrusted to your care.



Bishop Robert McGuckin, Bishop of Toowoomba

14 April 2023

OUR DIOCESAN POLICY

Policy Statement:

In the Diocese of Toowoomba we take a zero tolerance approach to all forms of abuse. We commit ourselves to ensure the safety and well-being of children, young people and adults at risk, in our community. The best interests of the child, young person or adult at risk come first.

We commit to positive and **immediate response** to those who have experienced abuse in our diocese and to **effective prevention** of abuse in our diocese, parish by parish, through improving our safeguarding practices and policies and providing safeguarding training and education to diocesan and parish personnel and communities. We commit to **continuous learning** on the safeguarding and well-being of children, young people and adults at risk, within and beyond our community. We welcome advice and support from independent experts in the wider community.

The **implementation** of this Safeguarding Policy through its related procedures and practices is essential to preventing and addressing abuse in the diocese.

Faith foundation:

This Safeguarding Policy and the commitments it gives rise to are grounded in Christian faith, as found in the person, values, words and actions of Jesus and in the living faith experience of the Christian community from its beginning. This Christian faith gives rise to an unqualified belief in the dignity and worth of every person, especially of those least able to exercise or assert their human value and rights in the community. Christian faith calls us to work generously for the *common good of all people by focussing first on those on the margins of the community, those in greatest human need*. Our safeguarding ministry is faith in action.

Scope:

This Safeguarding Policy applies to all leadership and ministry personnel in the diocese: Bishop, Priests, Deacons, Parish Leaders, Religious, Pastoral Associates, Agency Coordinators, Parish Secretaries, students on training placements in the diocese, all employees and all volunteers in parish or diocesan ministries. At the same time, this Safeguarding Policy applies to all members of parish communities and ministries. The whole community is responsible for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk in our midst.

PART ONE: OUR SAFEGUARDING POLICY in more DETAIL

Setting:

The Diocese of Toowoomba covers a huge area of southern and south-west Queensland, with a total population of 272,114 people (Census 2016). Of these 24% are Catholic: 65,212. Annual parish statistics indicate that over 5,000 people (9% of the Catholic community) are actively involved in the thirty-seven parishes across the diocese.

This landmass is home to several First Nations peoples, identified by Traditional Owners through historical and cultural connections. The diocese is a multicultural community embracing some forty-two countries of origin as identified by birthplace and language use (ABS 1999), especially in the east in the region around Toowoomba. There are twenty-four faith-based institutions in the region (Census 2016).

We have always valued children in our midst, within our families, our parishes, our schools and our community. But there have also been times when we have failed our children. The Royal Commission into child sexual abuse, over the five years of its work, listened attentively to thousands of people who had been sexually abused as children. In December 2017 the Commission tabled its Final Report. While many institutions were addressed, significant matters were raised with the Catholic Church throughout Australia: in dioceses, parishes, schools, Church-run organisations and personnel.

The Royal Commission was a blessing for us, calling us to account for our failings, some criminal, and guiding us to better practice in the safeguarding and protection of children in our midst. The foundational principle of the Commission, repeated again and again in the seventeen volumes of their Final Report was direct and succinct: the best interests of children come first.

Safeguarding Commitment Statements:

The Diocese through the Bishop and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, commits to the safeguarding and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk, through a public written statement which proclaims a zero tolerance approach to all forms of abuse. Each Parish through the Parish Priest, Administrator or Parish Leader and local Parish Pastoral Council, makes a similar Safeguarding Commitment Statement. These Commitment Statements are to be publicly displayed in Church, Diocesan and Parish buildings and are to be available in their respective communities.

Safeguarding Code of Conduct:

All personnel in the diocese are required to read, understand and commit to the Diocesan Safeguarding Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct names and affirms the standards of respectful and responsible behaviour expected of all personnel in their relationships and involvement with children, young people and adults at risk. Breaches of the Code of Conduct through criminal or inappropriate actions that become the subject of a complaint will involve consequences for continuing appointment, employment or voluntary involvement in diocesan or parish ministries. The Safeguarding Code of Conduct is essential in preventing abuse, harm and inappropriate behaviour.

Framework for effective action:

Our efforts in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk are guided and measured by the ten *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2)* based on the ten *Child Safe Standards* developed by the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse (Final Report, December 2017). These Catholic Safeguarding Standards are aligned with the Australian Government's *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* based on the work of the Royal Commission.

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2: November 2022):

1. Committed leadership, governance and culture:
the safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the leadership, governance and culture of the diocese
2. Children are safe, informed and participate:
children and adults are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Partnering with families, carers and communities:
families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults
4. Equity is promoted and diversity is respected:
equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
5. Robust Human Resource management:
people working with children and adults are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice
6. Effective Complaints management:
processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities, and personnel
7. Ongoing education and training:
personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and adults safe through information, ongoing education and training
8. Safe physical and online environments:
physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed
9. Continuous improvement:
the diocese regularly reviews and improves implementation of its systems for keeping children and adults safe
10. Policies and procedures support child safety:
policies and procedures document how the diocese is safe for children and adults

Resources and support on each area of this section are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office.

PART TWO: OUR SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENTS

A) IMMEDIATE RESPONSE:

We commit to positive and immediate response to those who have experienced abuse in our diocese. This involves:

- a) understanding and recognising abuse and harm; and
- b) responding to abuse and harm;

a) Understanding and recognising abuse and harm:

All children, young people and adults at risk have the right to be safe from abuse and harm. Where this is not the case, adults have a responsibility to act. As a first step, it is important that parish members understand what is meant by the terms 'abuse' and 'harm'.

In general terms, types of abuse may be summarised as: sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, and neglect. These types of abuse may cause the following types of harm to a person: physical harm, emotional harm or psychological harm. In essence, abuse is the action against a

person, harm is the detrimental impact of that action on the person. Children, young people and adults at risk may experience multiple types of abuse, which in turn may cause multiple types of harm.

Children, young people and adults at risk may be abused, or experience harm, from a number of sources:

- a) a person associated with the parish (staff member, volunteer, another child in the parish);
- b) a family person or relative of the child, young person or adult at risk (parent/care provider, sibling, grandparent, other relative);
- c) another person in the community (family friend, neighbour, coach, tutor, stranger, another young person); or
- d) through self-harming by the child, young person or adult at risk against his, her or their self.

What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse happens when a person uses power, force or authority to involve a child, young person or adult at risk, in any form of unwanted or illegal sexual activity. This may involve touching or no contact at all. Sexual abuse may take the form of forcing children, young people or adults at risk to watch or take part in sexual acts. It may involve forcing or coercing children, young people or adults at risk to have sex or to engage in sexual acts with other children, young people or adults. It may involve taking sexually explicit photographs or videos of children, young people or adults at risk.

What is grooming?

Grooming refers to a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging with a child, young person or adult at risk as a precursor to sexual abuse. It includes establishing a 'special' friendship or relationship with the child, young person or adult at risk. Grooming may include the conditioning of parents and other adults to think that the relationship with the child, young person or adult at risk is 'normal' and positive. This process of grooming may take as little as a few days or as long as months or even years.

What is physical abuse?

Physical abuse refers to any non-accidental physically aggressive act against a child, young person or adult at risk. Physical abuse may be intentional or may be the inadvertent result of physical punishment. Physically abusive behaviours may include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning or kicking.

What is emotional or psychological abuse?

Emotional or psychological abuse refers to inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts against a child, young person or adult at risk. This may include a failure to provide adequate non-physical nurture or emotional availability. Children, young people and adults at risk who manifest diverse sexuality may be at particular risk of emotional and psychological abuse. Psychologically abusive behaviours may include rejecting, ignoring, isolating, terrorising, corrupting, verbal abuse or belittlement. It may include exposure to domestic or family violence. Emotional or psychological abuse may involve the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child, young person or adult at risk which in turn may cause severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional and psychological development.

What is neglect?

Neglect happens when a caregiver fails to provide the basic requirements for meeting the physical and emotional developmental needs of a child, young person or adult at risk. Physically neglectful behaviours may include a failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene or the timely provision of medical treatment and dental care. Adequate supervision and protection are needed for optimal growth and development. Neglect may result in a significant impact on physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing.

What is significant harm?

Harm may be caused by sexual, physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect. Harm refers to the detrimental effect or impact of abuse or neglect on a child, young person or adult at risk.

For intervention to occur through a report to Child Safety Services, there must be information to suggest:

- a) that the child has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and
- b) that there is a reasonable suspicion that there may not be a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm.

A child, young person or adult at risk is considered to be at unacceptable risk of suffering harm if there are grounds to suspect that, unless someone intervenes to prevent it, the actions of another person will result in, or is likely to result in, a detrimental effect of a significant nature on physical, emotional and/or psychological wellbeing.

Summary: relationship between abuse and harm

In essence, abuse is the action against a person, harm is the impact of that action on the person. As noted earlier, children, young people and adults at risk may experience multiple types of abuse, which in turn may cause multiple types of harm.

b) Responding to abuse and harm:

An adult member of the parish or diocesan community who has direct knowledge or reasonable suspicion that a child, young person or adult at risk is being abused or is at risk of being abused, must report that information to the Police (if abuse) or Child Safety Services (if significant harm).

A 'Receiving and Recording a Disclosure Form', and a 'Reporting a Disclosure or Allegation to Authorities Form', are provided in the Safeguarding Resources supporting the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy (14 April 2023), are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office (4638 1379 or email profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au), or may be downloaded from the Diocesan Website.

This information may be received in different ways:

- a) direct knowledge through witnessing the abuse of the child, young person or adult at risk or recognising signs of harm;
- b) disclosure by a child, young person or adult at risk about themselves or about another person;
- c) disclosure by an adult about a child, young person or adult at risk or about themselves.

Where information involves a child, young person or adult at risk, the first response must be: *in this immediate moment, is this person or another person being abused or at risk of abuse?*

If yes, notify the Police immediately: ring 000.

Once immediate risk has been addressed, if the matter involves the sexual abuse or likely suspected abuse of a child, young person or adult at risk, the matter is to be reported to the Police, in an open report, by the person receiving the information.

Where a **child, young person or adult at risk** discloses that they have been sexually abused, in our response to them, we must:

- a) listen with great care and attention;
- b) assure them that we believe what they are telling us; and
- c) assure them they are not responsible for what happened to them, they are not to blame.

Then we have to explain to the child, young person or adult at risk that we will take necessary action to ensure that they are safe. On our part, as the person receiving the information, this will require reporting the matter to the Police.

Appropriate Reporting Forms are available to assist in preparing both a record of the meeting and the notification to the Police. *Refer to the Safeguarding Resources supporting the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy (14 April 2023) or contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office (4638 1379 or email profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au).*

Where an **adult** discloses that they have been sexually abused as a child, the person receiving this personal information is to listen to them with respect, believe their lived experience of abuse and harm, assure the person that it was not their fault, and provide the person with advice on action that they may choose to take.

This advice includes:

- a) reporting this criminal allegation to the Police for investigation: all disclosures of child sexual abuse, historical or current, are to be reported to Police. After assessment, Police will decide on appropriate action.

in addition to this the adult may consider:

- b) engaging a lawyer to take civil action, on the ground of personal injury, against the alleged offender if still alive, or against the institution responsible for employing or appointing the alleged offender;
- c) making an application to the National Redress Scheme, accessible through an internet search (www.nationalredress.gov.au) or through information provided by the Redress Scheme itself. Free legal advice may be accessed through Knowmore Legal Services, or may be available through other lawyers;
- d) engaging the Catholic Church process of responding to allegations of abuse by Church personnel known as the *National Response Protocol*, either directly (by phone: 3324 3070 or 1800 337 928, by email: psqld@catholic.net.au) or personal interview) or indirectly through the Diocesan Safeguarding Office in Toowoomba: phone 4638 1379 or email profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au;
- e) requesting a personal interview with a trusted Church leader, parish or diocesan, to confidentially disclose or discuss the lived experience of sexual abuse which may have happened in the past but which remains just as searing and immediate in the present.

In all of the options noted earlier, personal and appropriate support is to be provided by the person first receiving the disclosure, whether this be a Parish member or leader, a person from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry, or a Diocesan person with competence and experience in safeguarding.

All instances of child sexual abuse, current or historical, are to be reported to the Police, by the person receiving the information.

Resources and support on each area of this section are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office.

B) EFFECTIVE PREVENTION:

We commit to effective prevention of abuse in our diocese, parish by parish, through improving safeguarding practices and policies and providing safeguarding training to parish personnel. This involves building a culture of safety through effective education by:

- a) building an awareness of safeguarding in the Parish community;
- b) providing education in safeguarding for the Parish community;

- c) providing training in safeguarding for all parish personnel involved in leadership in the Parish community;
- d) monitoring and guiding safety of children, young people and adults at risk in the Parish community; and
- e) managing safety risks for children, young people and adults at risk in the Parish community.

a) *Building an awareness of safety and safeguarding in the Parish Community ...*

Posters and brochures containing clear and summary information on safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk are to be displayed in Church and Parish buildings. This information is to include the name and contact information of the Parish Safeguarding Contact, the Parish Safeguarding Commitment Statement, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2), and this Diocesan Safeguarding Policy (14 April 2023). From time to time, particular information (eg the annual celebration of Child Protection Sunday in early September) is to be displayed. The whole community is responsible for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk in its midst.

b) *Providing education in safeguarding for the Parish Community ...*

Parish Councils in each Parish are asked to provide leadership and encouragement in helping their parish communities grow in their understanding and practice of safeguarding. This involves a commitment by each Parish Council to read and discuss the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy (14 April 2023) each year and to consider ways of implementing the Safeguarding Policy in the life and ministries of the Parish. This step marks a move from awareness of safeguarding to a better understanding of the issues and responsibilities involved in building a culture of safety in the parish community. Copies of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy (14 April 2023) are to be readily available in each Parish.

c) *Providing training in safeguarding for all parish leadership personnel in the Parish Community ...*

This training embraces Parish Priests and Associate Priests, Administrators, Parish Leaders, Parish Councils, Parish employees full-time or part-time (eg Secretaries, Groundkeepers, Bookkeepers), and Volunteers in Parish Ministry. This training is to be appropriate to the different levels and areas of Parish responsibility. Training is to include the following areas:

- a) Diocesan Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Adults at Risk (14 April 2023);
- b) National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2: November 2022);
- c) Parish Safeguarding Commitment Statement;
- d) Diocesan Safeguarding Code of Conduct;
- e) procedures for receiving and recording disclosures or allegations of abuse;
- f) procedures for reporting direct knowledge or reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse;
- g) Parish Safeguarding Risk Management Plan; and
- h) e-Safety education.

Training in safeguarding is to take place as part of the induction process of a person new to a position of responsibility in the Parish Community. Refresher training is to take place at a set time each year to ensure consistency in training. Participation in an annual performance review, appropriate to the level of responsibility, in ministry with children, young people and adults at risk, is required.

Care is to be taken in the process of recruitment and selection of parish personnel. Safeguarding knowledge and experience is required. If the parish position involves the provision of services to or activities with children and young people, a Blue Card (Queensland Working with Children Check) is required before employment or voluntary involvement begins: 'No Card No Start'.

If the parish position involves working with Adults at Risk, a Police Check (Criminal History Check) is required before employment or voluntary involvement begins.

As a reminder of the need for ongoing training and education in safeguarding, child safety is to be a standing item in the agenda of each Parish Pastoral Council meeting. Each year the Parish Council is responsible for:

- a) endorsing the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy for local implementation;
- b) endorsing the Parish Safeguarding Risk Management Plan;
- c) completing the annual Parish Checklist on implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Ed 2); and
- d) affirming the work of the Parish Safeguarding Contact.

d) *Monitoring and guiding safeguarding in the Parish Community ...*

In each Parish Community the Parish Safeguarding Contact is the local person who continually asks: is our parish a safe community for children, young people and adults at risk? Are children, young people and adults at risk safe in our community? While Parish personnel (notably Priest, Parish Leader, Parish Council) exercise responsible leadership in different areas of safeguarding, the Parish Safeguarding Contact is the thoughtful, intuitive, responsive presence in the Parish Community.

Awareness and thoughtful care is to be exercised in attending to the diverse needs of young people and adults at risk who experience gender variance: a discord, often confusing and distressful, between biological sex and belief about gender. In the Safeguarding Standards we are reminded of the needs and vulnerability of young people and adults who live with a sense of diverse sexuality.

The Safeguarding Contact is to be open to receiving disclosures, complaints, allegations or concerns around abuse, especially from children, young people and adults at risk. The Safeguarding Contact is to provide advice and guidance to Parish personnel exercising responsible leadership in safeguarding. The Safeguarding Contact is to be supportive of parish members in their commitment to the safety of children, young people and adults at risk.

e) *Managing safeguarding risks in the Parish Community ...*

Each year, in each parish, the Parish Priest, Parish Leader, Parish Council and Parish Safeguarding Contact are to progressively identify areas of risk, in relation to the safety of children, young people and adults at risk, in the life and activities of the Parish Community. This review is to include all sacramental and ministry activities, all services provided through the parish, all special events celebrated by the parish, in particular all services or activities directly involving children, young people and adults at risk.

Guidance on how to identify and assess risk is provided in the Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy document, held in the Parish Office.

This *Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy* and its implementation is also to be reviewed and endorsed each year. As well as its necessity for the safe functioning of parish life, this *Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy* meets compliance requirements under Queensland Legislation on Working with Children Checks (Blue Card).

In summary, these five areas of preventive action: Building Awareness, Providing Education, Providing Training, Monitoring and Guiding, and Managing Safeguarding Risks: remind us that the whole community is responsible for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk in our midst.

This proactive responsibility for preventing abuse and harm to children, young people and adults at risk at a parish level is to be addressed in a similar way in Diocesan Ministries and at a Diocesan level. The

Diocese, through the Safeguarding and Standards Ministry, commits to resourcing, supporting and complementing action taken in Parish and Diocesan Ministry communities.

Resources and support on each area of this section are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office.

C) CONTINUOUS LEARNING:

We commit to continuous learning on the safeguarding and well-being of children, young people and adults at risk, within and beyond our community. We welcome advice and support from independent experts in the wider community. This involves:

- a) Diocesan Audit of Compliance with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Ed 2: Nov 2022);
- b) Royal Commission Findings, Research and Recommendations (December 2017);
- c) Legislation on Child Safety: Queensland and Commonwealth;
- d) Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office, Professional Development resources;
- e) Catholic Church wisdom and guidance: notably Vatican II through to Pope Francis.

a) Diocesan Audit of Compliance with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2) ...

The Toowoomba Diocese, in company with all Dioceses and Religious Orders in Australia, has committed to a process of External Audit, currently facilitated by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL). This Diocesan Audit is to take place every three years and is to involve one quarter of the parishes, agencies and diocesan bodies in each Audit. This will ensure that the whole diocese will be audited across a twelve year period. The Audit is an open process of review with the final report to be made publicly available.

The purpose of the Audit is twofold: to affirm and strengthen positive efforts in safeguarding already in place in parishes and in the diocese, and to identify areas or practices that need attention and improvement. The overall aim is to increase the capacity of the diocese and of each parish and agency to better safeguard children, young people and adults at risk in their midst.

b) Royal Commission findings, research and recommendations ...

The Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse, after five years of constructive work involving personal interviews, research, case studies and public hearings, provided its detailed Final Report and Recommendations in December 2017. All of this material, including the Case Study Reports (including Case Study 6 on Toowoomba) and Research Papers, is available online: simply search under 'Royal Commission Child Sexual Abuse' or open the Commission website www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au. A full copy of the seventeen volumes of the Final Report is available in the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office.

Of particular interest are the sections on the ten Child Safe Standards developed by the Commission (Vol 1, Executive Summary pp109-112) and the section on recommendations to the Catholic Church in Australia (Volume 16, Book 2, Part D, sections 13: 1-11, pp3-849). The Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders publicly responded to these recommendations in August 2018. The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, approved in May 2019 and expanded to include Adults at Risk in November 2022, are based on the Child Safe Standards of the Commission.

c) Legislation on child safety: Queensland and Commonwealth ...

Both Commonwealth and Queensland Governments have passed legislation that focus on child safety and the legal responsibilities of institutions, organisations and persons involved in the safeguarding of children and young people. Penalties have been set for breaches of legislation across a range of criminal offences against children (a person under the age of 18 years).

Of particular note are the Child Protection Act (Qld) 1999, the Working with Children Act (Qld) 2000, the Criminal Code Act (Qld) 1899 (current as at 15 September 2020), the Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and Other Legislation Act (Qld) 2020 (effective from 05 July 2021); and the National Redress Scheme Act (Cth) 2018.

d) Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office: TCSO ... professional development ... resources ...

In February 2014, the Public Hearing related to Case Study 6 of the Royal Commission took place in Brisbane. Case Study 6 dealt with the response of a primary school and the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office to the conduct of an offending teacher. In January 2015, the Commission provided its Report, available at www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au

Much earlier, in 2009, following the notification of the sexual abuse perpetrated by the offending teacher, the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office (now known as the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office: TCSO), commenced a thorough review and updating of Student Protection Guidelines and Procedures. The Public Hearing (2014) and Case Study Report of the Royal Commission (2015) reinforced this comprehensive review.

This in turn led to improved training in safeguarding for Principals and School Leadership Teams, School Safeguarding Contacts and all school Staff including teachers and ancillary staff. Under the proactive leadership of the TCSO Student Protection Team, every person involved in Catholic education has been better trained in safeguarding the children in their care.

For Parish leadership personnel, this has provided substantial local support and guidance in responding to disclosures or allegations of abuse. Priests and Parish Leaders may easily become isolated in rural and remote communities when confronted by disclosures or allegations. In seeking advice or support from School personnel, notably the School Principal, a Parish Leader must not breach confidentiality nor may they ask the School Principal to take over their direct responsibilities in responding to an allegation.

However, access to confidential support and advice from local professional people who receive regular training in safeguarding, who share the same faith community as well as the same town community, and who bring experience and competence in safeguarding matters, is an enormous asset to a Parish Leader who may feel very alone in responding to an allegation or disclosure. Members of parishes have much to learn from well educated and well trained teachers, especially Principals, in their local community.

e) Mind of the Church: Vatican II ... Catholic Social Teaching ... Pope Francis ...

Vatican II was and remains an enduring source of faith, wisdom and guidance for the Catholic Church of our day. The sixteen documents of Vatican II, time and again, refer to the unqualified dignity of each human person, especially of those who, for whatever reason or condition, are unable to assert or exercise their human dignity in daily life. Vatican II revisited and reaffirmed the tradition of Catholic Social Teaching in place for more than a century.

Church documents since Vatican II have explored respecting the dignity of the person, the right to participate in society, the life-giving importance of service of the common good of all people, the preferential option for those poor or at risk and the presence of God at the heart of everyday life. In more recent times, Pope Francis has helped us better appreciate the interconnection between care of the poor and care of the earth.

On a number of occasions, Pope Francis has written and acted on safeguarding children and young people. On 22 March 2014 he set up a new body in Rome, the Pontifical Commission for the

Protection of Minors. In May 2019, he wrote to all Bishops and Superiors, Clerics and Religious, reminding them of their responsibility of responding to direct knowledge or reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse, of their responsibility to report to appropriate authorities, civil and church, and that failure to report or failure to act on these matters by Church Leaders would attract consequences affecting the continuing exercise of their office and authority (*Vos Estis Lux Mundi*).

In March 2023, Pope Francis strengthened the provisions of this earlier letter to include Lay Leaders of International Associations, to clarify the understanding of vulnerable adults, to strengthen protection for persons who submit a report of alleged abuse and their witnesses, to require each Diocese to set up an office to receive reports of abuse and to provide support to those who have experienced abuse. Pope Francis has now made the revised *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* document a universal law of the Church, confirming the Church's desire to continue to combat crimes of sexual abuse.

In summary, by drawing on the expertise and experience of these five sources: Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL), Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse, Queensland and Commonwealth Legislation, Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO) and the wisdom and guidance (the Mind) of the Catholic Church: we engage in continuous learning in the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. In particular we are open to the research and professional experience to be found in the wider community beyond the Church and to the insights of modern science that underpin the work involved in these five sources.

Resources and support on each area of this section are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office.

PART THREE: SUPPORT DOCUMENTS and PROVENANCE:

Please note: currently there are several formal guides to responding to abuse and/or harm:

- a) This **Diocesan Safeguarding Policy** with related Procedures, based on the *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2)*; effective from 14 April 2023.
- b) The **National Response Protocol** in responding to concerns and allegations of abuse by Church personnel, approved by the Australian Bishops in November 2020, effective February 2021. This Protocol was amended in May 2022 and a **National Response Framework**, clarifying the approach to be taken by all Church entities, was added in July 2022;
- c) **Vos Estis Lux Mundi (You are the Light of the World) Reporting Procedures**, focusing on allegations and complaints of abuse involving Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Religious and Lay Leaders of International Associations; effective from 30 April 2023;
- d) **National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2: November 2022)**; effective from December 2022.

A) Support Documents: Our work in safeguarding is guided and supported by a range of documents covering different disciplines. These include:

- a) Queensland and Australian Church Documents;
- b) Toowoomba Diocesan Policies and Procedures; and
- c) Legislation: Queensland and Commonwealth.

a) Queensland and Australian Church Documents:

Safeguarding Policies and Procedures from Queensland Dioceses: Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane ...

Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia (June 2004, Reprint 2010)

Integrity in the Service of the Church: A Resource Document of Principles and Standards for Lay Workers in the Catholic Church in Australia (September 2011)

Vos Estis Lux Mundi, Pope Francis, (May 2019); now revised 25 March 2023

Reporting Procedures in relation to Vos Estis Lux Mundi, Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders, (May 2020)(*to be revised April 2023 ...*)

Vademecum: On Certain Points of Procedure in Treating Cases of Sexual Abuse of Minors committed by Clerics: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, (16 July 2020)

The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-Responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia: Implementation Advisory Group and the Governance Review Project Team (15 August 2020)

National Response Protocol: Principles and Procedures: approved by Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders (November 2020, effective February 2021); amended May 2022

National Response Framework (Version 1): approved by Australian Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia and the Association for Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (July 2022)

Created and Loved: A Guide for Catholic Schools on identity and gender, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (2022)

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: (Edition 2: November 2022): ACSL

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Compendium (Edition 2: Nov 2022) ACSL

Vos Estis Lux Mundi, Pope Francis, (May 2019; revised March 2023)

b) Toowoomba Diocesan Documents:

Child Safety Risk Management Strategy: Diocesan and Parish (2021)

Diocesan Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults: Prevention and Protection Policy: (*December 2014: updated 06 November 2020, revised 04 June 2021*)

Human Resources Manual 2018: Employees and Volunteers (2018)

Toowoomba Catholic Schools: Student Protection Processes and Guidelines (Jan 2022)

Diocesan Safeguarding Resources Folder (to be finalised in April 2023)

c) Legislation: Queensland and Commonwealth

Criminal Code Act (Qld) 1899, current as at 15 September 2020, Chapter 22: Offences against morality (sections 207A – 229B)

Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020, in effect 05 July 2021

Child Protection Act (Qld) 1999

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act (Qld) 2000

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation (Qld) 2011

Personal Injuries Proceedings Act (Qld) 2002

Education (General Provisions) Act (Qld) 2006

Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act (Qld) 2012

Mandatory Reporting in Queensland:

Child Protection Act (Qld) 1999: Part 1AA, section 13F

Child Protection Act (Qld) 1999: Part 1AA, section 13E

Education (General Provisions) Act (Qld) 2006: sections 364, 365, 365A, 366, 366A

Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Act (Qld) 2020, in effect 05 July 2021

Privacy Act (Cth) 1988

National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act (Cth) 2018

Operational Manual for Participating Institutions March 2019

Direct Personal Response Guidance Handbook April 2020

*First Interim Report of the Joint Select Committee of the National Redress Scheme
April 2020*

*Final Report: Second Year Review of the National Redress Scheme: Robyn Krok AO
26 March 2021*

B) PROVENANCE and REVIEW of DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING POLICY for CHILDREN and ADULTS AT RISK

This fourth edition of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Adults at Risk has benefitted from discussions and conversations with Parish and Diocesan Ministry leadership personnel across the diocese between 2019 and 2022 and from the constructive experience of the Diocesan Audit in February 2022 and the subsequent Audit Report in March 2022. It continues to be refined through ongoing Parish and Ministry conversations and through discussion within the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Committee.

On 14 April 2023, Bishop Robert McGuckin approved this fourth edition of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Adults at Risk for use in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba. Please replace any earlier copies of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy with this current edition (14 April 2023).

The Diocesan Safeguarding Policy is to be regularly reviewed and updated. The most recent edition is available on the Diocesan website or from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office. Any printed copy of this Policy needs to be checked for currency. Enquiries with the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office are both welcome and encouraged.

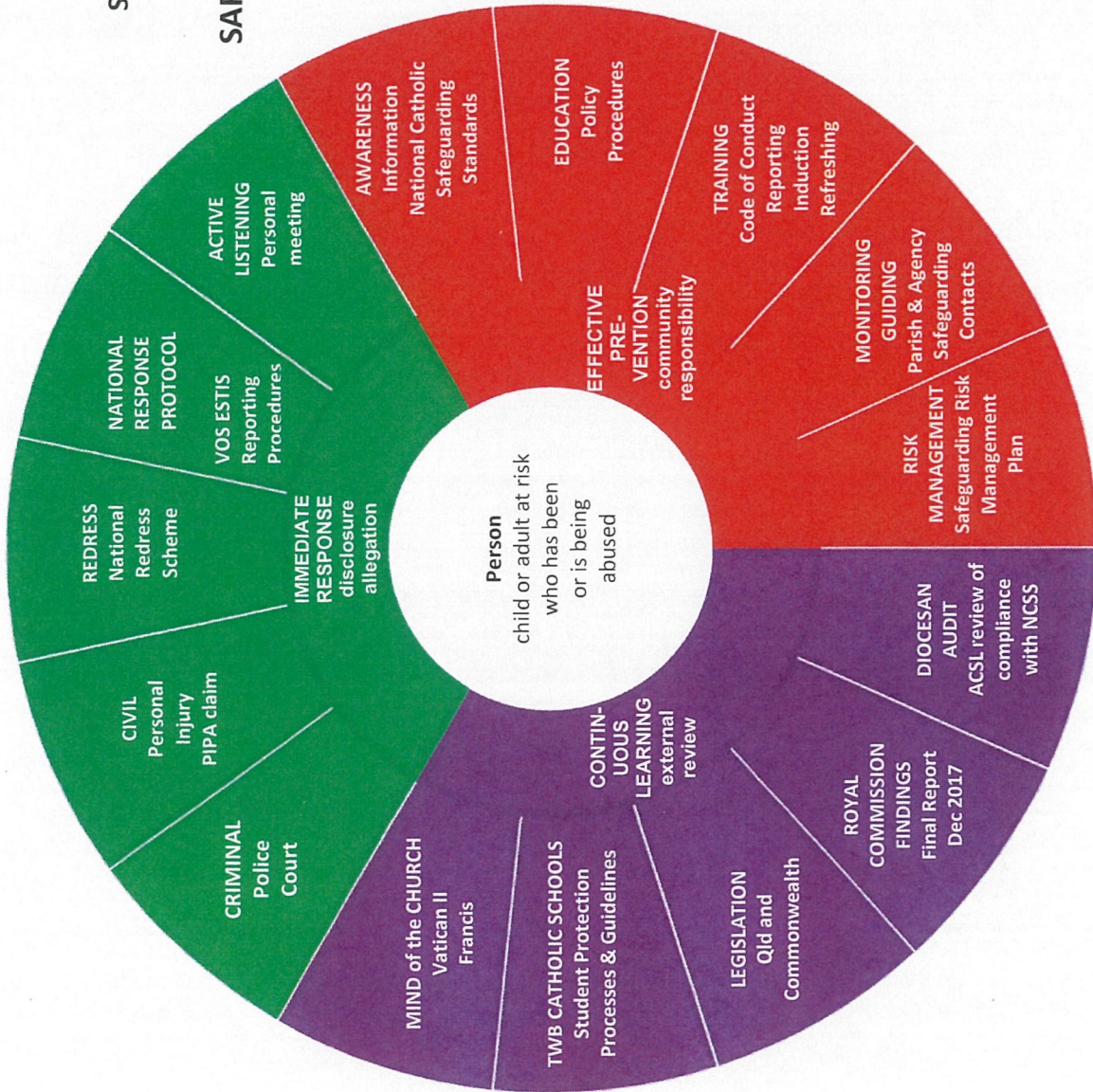
Contact information for the Diocesan Safeguarding and Standards Ministry Office:
phone (07) 4638 1379; email profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au; and
address: Bishop's House, 73 Margaret Street, Toowoomba Qld 4350

Policy Review History:

Date	Version	Reviewing body	Amend/update	Next Review date
December 2014	Edition 1	Diocesan Safeguarding and Standards Committee	New Diocesan Policy	October 2020
06 November 2020	Edition 2	Diocesan Safeguarding and Standards Committee	This edition replaces the original Policy	May 2021
04 June 2021	Edition 3	Diocesan Safeguarding and Standards Committee	This edition replaces the second edition	March 2023
14 April 2023	Edition 4	Diocesan Safeguarding and Standards Committee	This edition replaces the third edition	March 2025

**CHILD and ADULT at RISK
SAFEGUARDING and STANDARDS
MINISTRY**

SAFEGUARDING MINISTRY GUIDE
(April 2023)



NATIONAL CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS
(Ed 2: Nov 2022)

1. Committed leadership, governance and culture
2. Children are safe, informed and participate
3. Partnering with families, carers and communities
4. Equity is promoted and diversity respected
5. Robust human resource management
6. Effective complaints management
7. Ongoing education and training
8. Safe physical and online environments
9. Continuous improvement
10. Policies and procedures support child safety

Diocesan Safeguarding and Standards Ministry office:

Peter Dorfield (EO)
Peter Albion (p/t)
Theresa Harvey (sec)
Phone: 07 4638 1379
Mobile: 0408 459 045
profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au
Bishop's House,
73 Margaret Street
Toowoomba Q 4350

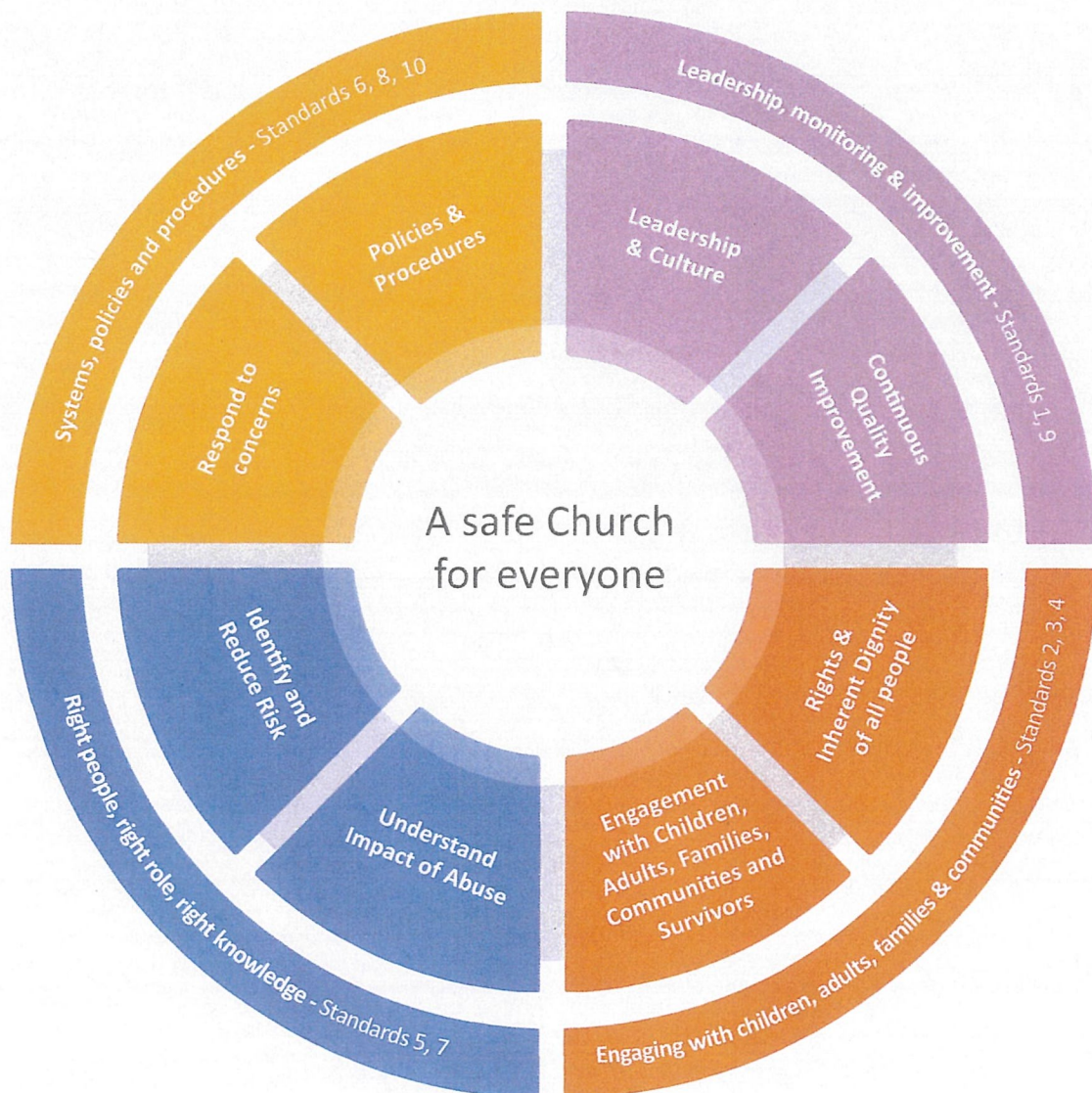
Diocesan Child Safeguarding and Professional Standards Committee:

Bishop Robert McGuckin
Majella Albion
Peter Albion
Kate Venables
Tanya Machin
Pat Nunan
Pat Coughlan
Fr John Quinlan
Fr Peter Dorfield (EO)

HOW THE STANDARDS WORK TOGETHER

The 10 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards are interrelated and interdependent. They work together to ensure every entity, ministry, and organisation across the Catholic Church in Australia places the safety of children and adults at risk at the core of how they plan, think and act.

In Edition 1, the 10 Standards were grouped into four areas according to common safeguarding principles. Edition 2 builds on this foundation by establishing core capabilities and linking key competencies for each area. The four capability groupings and how they work together holistically are represented below:



Standard 9 Continuous Improvement

Safeguarding Policy Commitment Statement Code of Conduct

Standard 1 Committed Leadership Governance Culture

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Ed 2) (Nov 2022)

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Standard 10 Policies + Procedures support safety of Children + Adults

Safeguarding Policy

eSafety Training

Standard 8 safe physical & online Environments

Receiving Disclosures Reporting Disclosures Complaints Handling Information sharing Record keeping

SYSTEMS POLICIES PROCEDURES

A SAFE CHURCH FOR EVERYONE

LEADERSHIP MONITORING IMPROVEMENT

Child-friendly Safety resources

Standard 2 Children + Adults safe, informed participate

ENGAGEMENT with CHILDREN, ADULTS, FAMILIES COMMUNITIES SURVIVORS

ENGAGING CHILDREN ADULTS FAMILIES COMMUNITIE

Standard 3 Partnering Families, Carers, Communities

Standard 6 Effective Complaints management

RIGHT PEOPLE RIGHT ROLE KNOWLEDGE

Standard 4 Equity promoted Diversity respected

RIGHTS and INHERENT DIGNITY of ALL PEOPLE

RESPOND TO CONCERNS

Standard 7 Ongoing Education + Training

Risk Management Strategy Receiving Disclosures Reporting Disclosures Code of Conduct

Standard 5 Robust Human Resource Management

Staff employment policy Volunteers in Ministry policy Blue Cards ... Police Checks UNDERSTAND IMPACT of ABUSE

IDENTIFY AND REDUCE RISK

**SAFEGUARDING
RESOURCES GUIDE**

DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING MINISTRY (April 2023)

[DSM A PV5 SFG RES GUIDE 14Apr23]

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE to DISCLOSURE, ALLEGATION or COMPLAINT

Diocesan Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Adults at Risk (April 2023)
 Receiving and Recording a Disclosure Form
 Reporting a Disclosure or Allegation to Authorities Form
 Personal Injury Claim (through a Lawyer)
 National Redress Scheme (through a NRS Application Form)
 National Response Protocol and Framework
 Personal Meeting with Church Leader
 Vos Estis Lux Mundi (Pope Frances)

CONTINUOUS LEARNING: research, study, review

Encounter person and values of Jesus
 Living faith experience of Christian community
 Wisdom and guidance of Vatican II
 Francis: Commission for Protection of Minors
 Twb Cath Schools Student Protection Policy
 Legislation: Commonwealth and Queensland
 Royal Commission: Final Report (Dec 2017)
 (RC Recommendations to Catholic Church)
 (Catholic Church Response (August 2018))
 Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL)
 Diocesan Audit and Report (Feb-March 2022)
 eSafety Education and Training
 Light from the Southern Cross: ACBC + CRA
 Safeguarding Prayer and Mission



EFFECTIVE PREVENTION: aware, educate, risk manage

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS Ed2)
 Safeguarding Commitment Statements:
 Diocesan, Parish, Diocesan Ministry
 Safeguarding Code of Conduct
 Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy (April 2023)
 Parish and Diocesan Risk Registers
 Online Learning: Safeguarding program with GRC solutions
 Parish Safety Poster: Parish Safeguarding Contact
 Parish Ministry Volunteer Application Form
 Parish Ministry Guide for Safeguarding requirements
 Parish Ministry Volunteer Review Form
 Safeguarding Resources for Children (posters)
 Parish Blue Card Register:
 Blue Card Forms: Applying, Linking, Delinking
 Police Check Qld: Criminal History Check
 Parish Safeguarding Annual Checklist (NCSS Ed2)
 Parish brochure: prevention and support in the community
 Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy
 Third Party engagement in Parish: facilities or services
 Responding to known Offenders Guide

Our whole community is responsible for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. We take a zero tolerance approach to all forms of abuse.

