



PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

POLICY, CODES OF CONDUCT AND RESPONDING & REPORTING

ST PATRICK'S PARISH, PAKENHAM, VIC 3810

When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Matthew 10:14

Review

This document is intended to be a living, working, dynamic document. St Patrick's Parish will review this document regularly and welcomes any comments or suggestions for improvement.

These may be forwarded to the Parish Safety Officer at

safetyofficer@stpatrickspakenham.com.au



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As far as I am concerned the sexual abuse crisis is only the tip of the iceberg. We must look for factors within the very culture of the church which have contributed to and aided and abetted, the sexual abuse crisis.

Parramatta Bishop, Vincent Long Melbourne 25th October 2



SECTION 1: POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

INTRODUCTION

1. St Patrick's Parish Pakenham (the Parish) holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults as an absolutely necessary responsibility. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel (Diocese of Sale Commitment Statement).
2. The Church's social doctrine constantly points out the need to respect the dignity of children. 'In the family, which is a community of persons, special attention must be devoted to the children by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity, and a great respect and generous concern for their rights' (Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio, 26). Indeed, it was Jesus who, when his disciples were arguing among themselves about who was the greatest, directed his attention to a little child and said to his disciples, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me' (Mark 9.37).

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

3. The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of the Parish to the care, safety and wellbeing of people of all ages, with special concern for children, vulnerable adults. It provides an outline of the Parish policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep children safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in the Parish environment, on site, online and in other locations used by the Parish. This policy applies to all Parish personnel, including employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy.

"I wish to assure you that the Diocese of Sale is wholly committed to ensuring the safety, well-being and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults and acknowledges its important spiritual, moral responsibility to create a safe and nurturing environment in our Parishes and Schools for everyone."

Bishop Patrick O'Regan, Bishop of Sale

PRINCIPLES

4. The Catholic Church has a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing environments where children and vulnerable adults are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe



5. The following principles underpin our commitment to the safety of children and vulnerable adults in the Parish:
 - a) A zero tolerance of the abuse of children or vulnerable adults.
 - b) All children and vulnerable adults are entitled to, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
 - c) All adults in the Parish, including staff, clergy, volunteers, parishioners, contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and vulnerable adults and to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.
 - d) The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of children and vulnerable adults are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and vulnerable adults.
 - e) All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
 - f) Staff, clergy, volunteers, parents, Parishioners including children and contractors should be free to raise concerns about safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by the Parish leadership.
 - g) Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

COMMITMENTS

6. All children have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in the care of the Parish is a non-negotiable and top priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.
7. Our commitment to our children and vulnerable adults
 - a) We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and vulnerable adults in our Parish.
 - b) We commit to providing children and vulnerable adults with positive and nurturing experiences.
 - c) We commit to listening to children and vulnerable adults and empowering them by taking their views seriously, and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
 - d) We commit to taking action to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse or harm.
 - e) We commit to give particular attention to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

When children were asked what worried them when they thought that an adult might hurt them, they said they needed;
To know what to do and say
...To have a trusted adult to go to, talk to and get help from
.....For another adult to notice that they aren't OK and for an adult to believe them when they tell them they're not safe



8. Our commitment to Parishioners

- a) We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- b) We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child-safety practices, policies and procedures.
- c) We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of our Parishioners and being sensitive to how this may impact on safety issues.
- d) We commit to ongoing review and improvement of our systems to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse.

9. Our commitment to our Parish staff and volunteers

- a) We commit to providing all St Patrick's Parish staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
- b) We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to the safety, protection and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. This will include training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns.
- c) We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by St Patrick's Parishioners and staff about keeping children and vulnerable adults safe from harm.

RESPONSIBILITIES

10. Everyone employed or volunteering at St Patrick's Parish has a responsibility to understand the important and significant role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and vulnerable adults is a non-negotiable and top priority.
11. Responsibilities of Parish Leadership. The Parish Priest and the Parish Pastoral Council at St Patrick's Parish recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of, and shared responsibility, for child safety. Responsibilities include:
 - a) Creating an environment for children and vulnerable adults to be safe and to feel safe
 - b) Promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and vulnerable adults based on mutual respect and consideration
 - c) Ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff
 - d) Ensuring that Parish personnel have regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address, child safety matters
 - e) Providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child and vulnerable adults protection and wellbeing
 - f) Ensuring the Parish meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
 - g) Ensuring that an audit of Parish procedures and practices relating to the safety of children and vulnerable adults is undertaken annually.



12. Responsibilities of Parish Volunteers and Staff. Responsibilities of Parish staff include:
- a) Treating children and vulnerable adults with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, exercising their duty of care, and protecting children and vulnerable adults in their care
 - b) Following the legislative (including mandatory reporting obligations where appropriate) and Diocesan processes if, in the course of their work, they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
 - c) Providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults is nurtured
 - d) Undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults
 - e) Assisting children and vulnerable adults to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
 - f) Abiding by and promoting the Parish's Code of Conduct for Child Safety and for Vulnerable Adults
13. Responsibilities of Parish Safety Officer. The Parish Safety Officer is responsible primarily to develop, facilitate and evaluate the implementation of policies and procedures of the Diocese in relation to the Victorian Government's Child Safe Standards and to ensure a safe environment for children. The major responsibilities of the Parish Safety Officer include:
- a) Working closely with the Parish Priest, Staff, Parish Pastoral Council and volunteers to develop, facilitate and evaluate the implementation of policies and procedures with a particular focus on children and vulnerable adults within the Parish.
 - b) Ensuring that the Parish has systems and processes in place that comply with the Victorian Government's Child Safe Standards and other Child Protection legislation.
 - c) Developing and implement training and workshop initiatives to assist the Parish staff and volunteers in understanding their obligations and responsibilities under the Child Safe Standards and other Child Protection legislation.
 - d) Developing and implementing a model Code of Conduct for all Parish staff or volunteers.
 - e) Ensuring that accessible records are maintained to allow Parish leadership and ministry coordinators to check the currency of volunteer clearances so that only those with clearances are able to exercise Lay Ministry in the Parish.
 - f) Being an integral part of the reporting process, under relevant legislation, when there is a reasonable belief that a child in our Parish environment is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and to provide guidance and procedures on how to make a report.
 - g) Monitoring legislation and regulatory standards and develop plans to respond to these.

All children and vulnerable adults are entitled to, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.

St Patrick's Principle on the Care of Children and Vulnerable Adults



WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

14. Diocesan Policy requires that “all people including employees, contractors, volunteers, clergy, seminarians, and religious brothers and sisters who work or volunteer in Church activities that involve children are required to hold a current Working With Children Check (WWC Check) under the Working With Children Act 2005 and under the Policy of Catholic Diocese of Sale’s”
15. As a consequence of Diocesan Policy, Parish policy is that all staff and any volunteer in any Parish lay ministry must obtain a Working with Children Check before being able to exercise that ministry in the Parish. These ministries include Eucharist Ministers, Lectors/Readers, Collectors, Cleaners, Musicians, Choir, Children’s Liturgy, Group Coordinators of Social groups, Seniors Groups, Youth Groups and Play Groups.
16. Any contractors undertaking commercial activities in the Parish plus any persons or businesses that hire Parish facilities must also have WWWC and ensure that these are produced and recorded at the Parish Office.
17. It is essential to remember that the mere fact of holding a current WWC Check does not of itself imply that a person is suitable to care for children. Holding a WWC Check simply indicates (in general terms) that the holder has neither been convicted of certain sexual, violent or drug related offences, nor has charges for such offences pending. It does not guarantee or imply that a person has the skills or personal attributes of a responsible carer. Clergy, Parish staff, volunteers and parents must maintain constant vigilance in assessing the suitability of all persons (both those with, and those without, a WWC Check) for taking children into their care. Clergy, Parish staff, volunteers and parents should not discount the value of their instincts or observations.

ANNUAL PARISH AUDIT

18. It is a requirement of the Diocese of Sale that all Parishes conduct an audit of processes and practices on an annual basis. Rather than obtaining a negative compliance comment after the occurrence on an annual basis, the Parish intends to conduct a quarterly cyclic audit so that any remedial action can be undertaken immediately.
19. The Audit should in part ensure that:
 - a) All whose names have appeared in the weekly Parish Bulletin have current WWCC.
 - b) Processes in place to record newly gained WWCC and to remove those whose WWCC had expired.
 - c) Action was taken to follow-up existing Parishioners whose WWCC was due to expire.
 - d) Adequate training and workshops were planned or conducted to meet Parish Policy.
 - e) Any allegations of inappropriate behaviour were handled in accordance with Parish and Diocesan Policies
 - f) A child safety risk assessment of Parish facilities and programs has been conducted.



SECTION 2: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAFEGAURDING CHILDREN

Definitions

Child: a person who is under the age of 18 years. Throughout this Code of Conduct any reference to either 'child' or 'children' is a reference to a person or persons under the age of 18.

Child abuse includes:

(a) any act committed against a child involving:

- a sexual offence
- an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)

(b) the infliction on a child of:

- physical violence
- serious emotional or psychological harm

(c) serious neglect of a child.

Grooming. The term 'grooming' refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and influencing a child, and, in some circumstances, members of the child/young person's family, for the purpose of sexual activity with the child/young person. These actions are designed to establish an emotional connection in order to lower the child/young person's inhibitions and gain access to the intended victim. In this respect, grooming involves psychological manipulation that is usually very subtle, drawn out, calculated, controlling and premeditated. Grooming can also occur on line.

Parent/Guardian: Is a person who has the authority and responsibility for the day-to-day care of a child.

INTRODUCTION

20. This section sets out general guidance for parishioners and employees of St Patrick's Parish in regard to the care, protection and safety of children. It is also intended to communicate to parents and guardians St Patrick's standards for children's activities.
21. The principles set out in this Code of Conduct are intended to support and underpin the pastoral care role of Parish Priests, religious brothers and sisters, pastoral associates, pastoral workers, employees, contractors, and the invaluable contribution of parishioners and other volunteers. The principles aim to address perceptions of risk in interactions between children and adults and to provide guidance as to behaviours and practices that are beyond reproach. They are not intended to unnecessarily restrict the work of clergy, religious and lay people but to promote an open and



accountable environment in which the dignity and safety of adults and children alike is paramount.

*'Let us find the courage needed to take all necessary measures and to protect in every way the lives of our children, so that such crimes may never be repeated. In this area, let us adhere, clearly and faithfully, to 'zero tolerance'.
Pope Francis, December 2016*

CREATING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

22. The protection and promotion of children's wellbeing is the responsibility of all adults. Adults who are involved in children's activities within St Patrick's Parish are responsible for creating a harmonious, safe and nurturing environment by:
- a) Being a positive role model. Children's encounters with adults in the Church have lasting consequences. It is important for children's formation that such encounters create a positive experience of the Church. Adult behaviour that positively embraces Gospel beliefs and values is of paramount importance.
 - b) Treating children with dignity and respect; listen to and value their ideas and opinions.
 - c) Involving children, where possible and appropriate, in decision making.
 - d) Rewarding efforts as well as achievements, and provide praise and positive encouragement where appropriate.
 - e) Respecting everybody's privacy – for example avoid discussing a child's personal problems or situations in a group setting unless the child has consented to and feels comfortable with the discussion.

PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

23. When planning an activity, consider the possible risks associated with the activity and how likely those risks are to eventuate. Consider what actions can take or how can the activity be structured to minimise those risks and, if a situation should arise, to manage it effectively. Consider each circumstance on its merits.
- a) Structure any activity to minimise the possible risks.
 - b) Ensure there are sufficient adults at the activity to properly care for children' taking into consideration their ages, the nature of the location and children with special requirements.
 - c) Ensure the physical environment is safe considering the ages of children involved and issues such as obvious hazards like sharp edges, poisonous substances or water hazards.
 - d) Be aware of emergency procedures applicable to the immediate physical environment of any activity especially egress in case of a fire alert.



APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR FOR ADULTS

24. When caring for children or young people, adults are in a position of trust and authority and should:
- a) Take care not to form inappropriate relationships; for instance, by placing yourself in a position where they may come to rely on you emotionally in an inappropriate manner, or by attempting to act as a surrogate parent
 - b) The provision of tobacco, alcohol or illicit drugs to a child is unacceptable and illegal and use of these substances by a child in the context of a Parish activity cannot be condoned, nor can the misuse of other medication.
 - c) No person who is caring for children or involved in any activity with children should consume or be under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs or have misused other medication. It is not appropriate to smoke tobacco while in the presence of children.
 - d) If you are taking a child home at the end of an activity, ensure that a parent/guardian has given prior consent (whether verbal or written) and that, as a general rule, you are not alone with the child.
 - e) As with any unlawful behaviour, any illegal activities conducted over the internet or through use of a computer should be reported to the appropriate authority in accordance with this Code of Conduct.
 - f) It is best practice to always have another adult with you when you are with a child or children, and/or to have other children present. Avoid being alone with a child or children unless an open and supervised environment can be maintained.
 - g) Activities, which by their very nature give rise to one-on-one child/adult encounters (such as the Sacrament of Reconciliation), should be conducted in a manner and space in clear view of other people. This creates an environment that safeguards both the child's wellbeing and the adult's integrity.
 - h) Do not touch a person in an inappropriate or unnecessary fashion. In particular, do not touch breasts, buttocks or groin, and avoid touching or behaviour which could be construed as sexual.
 - i) Any steps you take to manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour should not degrade or isolate the person. Corporal punishment is never acceptable.
 - j) If a person's behaviour is causing immediate danger to those around him or her, you should ask for assistance and, if necessary, contact police. Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort or in an emergency.
 - k) Favouritism to any particular child; for instance, through gifts or continually showing greater attention than is given to others should not occur.
 - l) It is inappropriate to secretly spend time alone with a child, to privately arrange to meet a child or children, or to make personal contact with children through social networking sites or through mobile phones (such as texting). Never send personal photographs or messages by mobile phone or by the use of a social networking site. Do not accept or offer friend status on social network sites from a child for whom you have a duty of care.



- m) Avoid providing assistance of a personal nature that the individual can manage for him or herself (such as using the toilet or changing clothes) except where their developmental level or incapacity is such that he or she requires assistance. Ensure the presence of another adult in such circumstances.
- n) Take care not to swear or use offensive language.
- o) Avoid behaving or speaking in a manner that may embarrass or humiliate.

PROMOTING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR BY CHILDREN

25. It is always the responsibility of the adult, not the child, to set appropriate guidelines and boundaries.
- a) Provide children with guidance about what constitutes acceptable behaviour. This will vary with the group and developmental level of the children in your activity. It may be useful to discuss acceptable and unacceptable behaviours appropriate for their age group.
 - b) If children act outside acceptable limits, use verbal directions to manage behaviour. Ensure that the children know how and to whom they can report anything they are worried about
 - c) A child's behaviour (whether verbal, physical, psychological or sexual) which could be construed as bullying is not acceptable.
 - d) Where a child's behaviour is disruptive to the group activity or unsafe you will need to take steps to manage the behaviour. The steps you take should be appropriate having regard to the circumstances, behaviour and age of the child.

AWARENESS OF CHILD GROOMING BEHAVIOUR

26. Identifying grooming is a complex and difficult task, mainly because grooming can consist of a range of behaviours, techniques and activities many of which may not be clearly of a sexual or abusive nature in themselves. Grooming behaviours can also co-exist with other regular behaviour or functions within an otherwise normal relationship with a child.
27. Sexually inappropriate behaviour with a child often begins with grooming. In some instances, children are made to feel special and protected; buying gifts or looking for opportunities to be alone with the child to build a rapport of trust, leading to greater intimacy and sometimes dependency. The behaviours are varied and mostly conducted secretly, usually in isolated settings and away from easy line of sight or supervision. On-line grooming is especially prevalent.
28. Many of the inappropriate behaviours listed in this Code of Conduct could be seen as activating grooming especially when multiple violations occur. Staff and volunteers should always be sensitive to such perceptions and conduct their relationships with children in a transparent and open manner so that there can be no misconception that grooming is a possibility.



SECTION 3: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

Definition

People who are or may be vulnerable include:

- a) The frail and elderly.
- b) Refugees.
- c) An adult who has suffered bereavement, marriage or relationship breakdown or other adversity which puts them in particular need of pastoral support.
- d) A person who has an intellectual disability, mental illness or an impairment that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse or exploitation.
- e) A person under the effects of drugs or alcohol.
- f) A person for whom English is not their first language.

INTRODUCTION

30. Caring for the vulnerable is a privileged position. The work can make such a positive difference to the life of a vulnerable person if it is conducted with integrity and respect and with clearly defined boundaries. This is achieved if we acknowledge each persons' intrinsic value as a human being, allow others to maintain their dignity and acknowledge each person's personal autonomy.
31. This Code of Conduct will help establish a sense of equality which is important and which ensures that nobody feels overly responsible for another person or taken for granted or exhausted by a relationship where the boundaries are blurred.
32. Parish pastoral activities that involve contact with adults who are or may be vulnerable include, for example;
 - a) Visitation of the sick and elderly,
 - b) Support for refugees,
 - c) Provision of the Eucharist in the home,
 - d) Counselling and support of the bereaved, or
 - e) Counselling those who have undergone a relationship breakdown or other adversity.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13:34-3



CREATING AN APPROPRIATE RELATIONSHIP

33. In providing pastoral care you have a particular task or job description. This defines your role and gives you boundaries. You do not want to cause emotional or physical dependence in the vulnerable by becoming overly involved in their lives.
- a) You are not expected to be on call as you have your own life, so in normal circumstances do not give out your personal details such as your phone number or address.
 - b) Ensure that the arrangements to visit a vulnerable person are clear so that the person knows when to expect your visit.
 - c) Don't assume that the vulnerable person wants you to visit. Uncertainty can be a problem in circumstances where the worker has a personal relationship with the vulnerable person. In these circumstances, be completely clear that the vulnerable person wants you to visit and remember that it will be hard for the vulnerable person to say no to your visit.
 - d) Do not call on a vulnerable person unannounced or outside the designated visiting times without prior agreement as vulnerable people also have a need for their own personal space and the right to say no to extra visits.
 - e) It is generally inappropriate to contact a vulnerable person through social networking sites or by mobile phone (such as texting). Do not accept or offer friend status on social network sites from a vulnerable person for whom you have a duty of care.
 - f) Keep the focus on the vulnerable person rather than your own personal needs or concerns.
 - g) Respect the vulnerable person's right to hold beliefs and values that may be different to yours without imposing your ideas on them.

RESPECT OF PERSONAL SPACE

34. We all have our own personal space. This may differ from one person to another and from one culture to another. Personal space is one's own safety zone within which there are invisible boundary lines which must be respected.
- a) Other than for personal care or therapeutic purposes touching a vulnerable person needs to be approached with extreme care and caution as it can easily be misinterpreted and create discomfort even when well intentioned.
 - b) Kissing and hugging is generally inappropriate but on some occasions, may be an accepted form of greeting. If this is the case always allow the vulnerable person to take the initiative and respond appropriately.
 - c) Always be very sensitive to the individual needs and expectations of the vulnerable person.
 - d) When at a person's home you are a guest and it is not appropriate to go through cupboards or touch their possessions or help yourself to a cup of coffee without permission. This gives esteem to the vulnerable person by showing respect for their personal boundaries and identity



RESPECTING PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

35. The terms 'privacy' and 'confidentiality' are commonly used interchangeably. However, they are related but not identical concepts. Privacy includes physical privacy, confidentiality relates to information only. This Code requires that you be sensitive to and protective of the physical privacy and private information of those in their care.
- a) Personal and sensitive information relating to the vulnerable person is to be kept confidential.
 - b) Information regarding the vulnerable and their circumstances must never be used or passed onto others for personal or business reasons as their vulnerability places them at risk.
 - c) Respect the vulnerable person's privacy. Always knock before entering the person's home or room if at an aged care facility. Wait outside if they are dressing or receiving personal care.
 - d) A carer's role does not permit him/her to have access to a vulnerable person's bank details or personal identification number (PIN). This also includes telephone and internet banking on behalf of a vulnerable person.
 - e) Under no circumstances should carers or their family or friends give financial advice to a vulnerable person.
 - f) Privacy also involves respecting the person's right not to discuss issues they do not wish to.

AWARENESS OF VULNERABLE ADULT GROOMING BEHAVIOUR

36. Grooming of vulnerable adults is the predatory act of manoeuvring the vulnerable adult into a position that makes them more isolated, dependent, likely to trust, and more susceptible to abusive behaviour. Adult grooming resembles child grooming and applies to any situation where an adult is primed to allow themselves to be exploited or abused. On-line grooming is especially prevalent.
37. Many of the inappropriate behaviours listed in this Code of Conduct could be seen as instigating grooming especially when multiple violations occur. Staff and volunteers should always be sensitive to such perceptions and conduct their relationships with vulnerable adults in a transparent and open manner so that there can be no misconception that grooming is a possibility.

"Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are anger and courage; anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain the way they are".

St Augustine



SECTION 4: RESPONDING AND REPORTING ABUSE

Definition

Mandatory Reporting: The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. Mandated persons include teachers, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical practitioners.

Reasonable Belief: When an adult is concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or vulnerable adult, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

INTRODUCTION

38. All adults in the Parish, including staff, clergy, volunteers, parishioners, contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and vulnerable adults and to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse. The application of this principle expects that all parishioners would uphold a strong sense of moral obligation to report any inappropriate or criminal activity to the designated authority

RESPONDING: "SEE ME, HEAR ME"

39. Seen and Heard. Parishes in which children and vulnerable adults are seen and heard, where their participation is valued and where their families can get the support they need are stronger communities which contribute to overall parish safety.
40. Listening. Conversation begins with a listening heart. Listening reveals our desire to learn and to grow through understanding the wisdom others offer especially the vulnerable, it involves the suspension of our viewpoint to attempt to truly hear and understand another. Listening is a complex process, and we need to develop our listening skills to be able to sort through all we might hear to get to the essential truth of a situation. The presence or absence of listening, especially to the young and to those who are vulnerable, acts as the barometer of our health and vitality as a Church.
41. Responding. The change for the greater protection of our most vulnerable will occur only as we respect them, ask what they are going through, watch what others are doing regarding them, listen to what they are trying to tell us, do what we are supposed to do for them, inform them



about danger, and stand up and speak out for them. In so doing, we maintain our most treasured within the nurturing bonds of community.

REPORTING: WHAT TO REPORT

42. You may form a reasonable belief that a child or vulnerable adult in our parish environment is in need of protection, or a criminal offence has been committed. You should always report circumstances that cause you concern. These circumstances may include:
- a) Any breach of the St Patrick's Code of Conduct;
 - b) A disclosure made to you by a child or vulnerable adult.
 - c) Observing events that cause you to form an objectively reasonable belief that a child or vulnerable adult is being harmed or abused, or is at risk of being harmed or abused.
 - d) Any incident in which a child is seriously harmed or goes missing;
 - e) Any emergency situation including a medical emergency;
 - f) Any hazard or risk of harm to a child that is not being adequately addressed;

REPORTING: TO WHOM TO MAKE A REPORT

43. Criminal Offence. If a criminal offence may have been committed, report the allegations to police. For example, the following circumstances could indicate that a criminal offence has been committed:
- a) Any allegation of sexual misconduct.
 - b) Any disclosure by a child, or an objectively reasonable belief you have formed, that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse of any kind.
 - c) Any allegation of violence inflicted by an adult upon a child.
 - d) Any incident in which a child has been seriously harmed or injured (either physically or psychologically) or is at risk of harm or injury.
44. Victoria Police will explain the options that are available to victims and what each pathway may involve. Contact with Victoria Police can be made to the SANO Taskforce of (03) 9247 6666 or, if urgent, by dialling 000. SANO investigators are trained experts in sexual assault matters who will maintain the confidentiality of anyone who makes a complaint or wishes to provide information regarding child sexual abuse.
45. Parish Matters. If you have a reasonable belief that a report should be made on any breach of St Patrick's Code of Conduct and wish to pursue your complaint through the Church, you should contact the Parish Priest or Parish Safety Officer. If the complaint relates to the Parish Priest or Safety Officer, contact the Diocesan Safety Officer at the Diocesan Office Sale. Victims can always contact the Melbourne Response on (03) 9225 6422 or Towards Healing on 1800 816 030.
46. Unsatisfied. If you consider that the parish response you have received is not satisfactory you may refer your report to the Diocesan Safety Officer at the Diocesan Office Sale.