

SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS



Commitment of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

The Parish of St Peter's Epping, Epping North and Wollert, is committed to upholding the safety and dignity of each child and young person, by acknowledging and following the requirements of the Archdiocese of Melbourne.



We are committed to upholding the safety and dignity of each child and young person, and to ensure that they are able to grow and develop in a caring and supportive environment in our Church.

The Catholic Church proclaims that all human life is sacred, and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation and hope for the flourishing of humanity and society—a message that is at the heart of the Gospel. As such, all in the Catholic Church have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing environments where children are respected, where their voices are heard and where they are safe and feel safe.

We acknowledge that preventing child abuse requires proactive approaches across policies, procedures and practices consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards. Through these policies, procedures and practices, we strive to prevent abuse in the first instance and to respond effectively and pastorally if abuse does occur.

We are committed to creating a child-safe culture across the Archdiocese that safeguards children and young people from all forms of abuse.

We are resolutely committed to ensuring that all those engaged in the Church are aware of the inherent vulnerability of children and young people, and that they acknowledge their own responsibility to promote the dignity of children and young people and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe environment.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every person involved in the Catholic Church has an obligation to understand the important and specific role he or she plays, individually and collectively. Together we ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people are at the forefront of everything we do and every decision we make.

We are committed to zero tolerance of all forms of child abuse and discrimination, and will always act to safeguard children and young people and report suspected abuse promptly to the appropriate authorities.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne sets clear behavioural expectations and has an overarching commitment to the protection of children and young people from all forms of abuse. All child safety concerns and allegations will be treated seriously and reported in line

with our moral and legal obligations as articulated in the Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy and other Safeguarding of Children and Young People Framework documents.

We are committed to ensuring that all persons who have, or may be expected to have, contact with children and young people acknowledge their responsibility to safeguard children and young people from abuse and discrimination.

We acknowledge and welcome diversity in our Church community. We recognise that cultural safety and inclusion serve as protective factors in relation to child safety—particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, and children and young people of diverse sexuality—and are sensitive to the impact these factors may have on child safety.

Child abuse

Child abuse or child safety-related misconduct is defined as an act (or series of acts) that endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development and/or a failure to provide conditions to the extent that the health and development of the child or young person is significantly impaired or placed at risk.

Clergy, employees and volunteers play a vital role in identifying child abuse or child safety-related misconduct. They are encouraged to be vigilant in responding to possible indicators or signs, disclosures, allegations and reports, and to take action to support a child or young person who is at risk of or experiencing harm.

Reporting child abuse and safety-related misconduct

Any person (such as a child, young person, adult, priest, employee or volunteer) can make a report in relation to current or historical child abuse or child safety-related misconduct.

All clergy, employees and volunteers are required to make a report if they have formed a 'reasonable belief' that a child or young person has experienced abuse, is experiencing abuse or is at risk of harm from child safety-related misconduct.

All concerns, allegations or complaints of current or historical abuse and child-safety related misconduct will be taken seriously, treated with sensitivity, and acted upon consistent with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's moral, ethical and legal obligations.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne acknowledges that preventing child abuse requires proactive approaches across policies, procedures and practices within parishes, agencies and entities consistent with the requirements of the:

Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework

- Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Commission for Children and Young People, Victoria)
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Human Rights Commission)
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Catholic Professional Standards Limited)

In fulfilling this responsibility, the Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework has been developed to guide the implementation of child safety policies, procedures and practices within parishes, agencies and entities with the aim of promoting the safety of children and young people.

