Risk Management

The Catholic Church has a mission driven, moral and legal responsibility to create nurturing environments where children, young people, the vulnerable and all in the community are respected, where their voices are heard and where they feel safe, and they are safe. Risk Management is crucial in creating a safe environment for children, young people, the vulnerable and all parishioners, visitors and employees. It is imperative that a risk assessment is undertaken prior to any parish event or activity, immediately following an incident and that it is reviewed annually. Below, each step in the risk assessment process as a component of Risk Management is outlined.

Purpose

This procedure is used to identify child safeguarding risks and risks related to all personnel in specific Parish-related activities, and to then develop risk controls and record these and other information on a Risk Assessment Form.

Risk Assessment 4 P's and OH&S Considerations

- Property - infrastructure/environment/toilet locations etc
- Personnel - staff/WWCC/COC/briefing etc
- Participant - age range, allergies, disabilities etc
- Procedure - how the program is run before, while and after the event e.g., registration forms, sign in sign out forms, checking the building before locking up at the end

Definitions

Risk: a situation which potentially exposes a person to harm.
Likelihood: the probability of a risk resulting in a person being harmed.
Consequence: the outcome should a child or others be injured/harmed.
Risk control: anything that will reduce the likelihood of a child or person being harmed or alarmed and minimise any consequence.
Risk Assessment Form: a template document used to list risks, risk controls, analyse severity of risk, develop further controls to manage risk and clarify implementation/responsibility/resources/maintenance.

Risk Assessment Procedure

Step 1: Consider the nature of the activity. Identify any risks to children, young people, the vulnerable and all participants.
(**Record in Column 1 of Risk Assessment Form**)
When identifying risks, think through the activity from start to finish. Look beyond the normal and consider those abnormal or infrequent occurrences that might give rise to safeguarding risks.

Use the following list to identify risks, but also think beyond these items for other risks.

Property

- Will children, young people or the vulnerable be occupying areas (indoor or outdoor) that are not visible to those supervising?
- For outdoor activities, is the space and surfaces appropriate for the safety of participants?
- Could changes in the weather impact on the safety of the program?
- Are toilet facilities appropriate and suitably supervised for the safety of those attending activity?
- Are doors locked during the activity? Is there a plan in place to safely exit should there be an emergency?
- Are buildings checked prior to locking up?
- Are hazards clearly marked? i.e., trip hazards, slip, sharp edges, head injury, crush injury, burn injury
- Are there hazards such as loose electrical cords, loose carpets or runners, over-crowded seating, fire hazards (including out-of-date fire extinguishers)
- Are chemicals stored correctly and labelled? Are they accessible to unauthorised persons?
- Are correct tools/equipment/workspaces available to perform tasks?
- Is equipment stored in an accessible area?
- Is the storage place for equipment appropriate and uncluttered?
- Is the storage place of First Aid supplies easily identified?
- Are there objects that a toddler might pull over on themself, or fall into or off, sharp edges/corners?
- Is there appropriate and safe access to spaces for all wishing to attend activity?
- Are exit doors free of obstruction in case of an emergency?
- Is there adequate outside lighting when holding night activities?
- If the activity involves the use of an offsite venue, has there been due diligence in ensuring the facility meets the necessary safety measures: I.e., fire hazards, emergency services, theft, security.
- Is OHS an ongoing Agenda item for all Committee/Leaders' Meetings?

Personnel

- Do Leaders/Committee members/helpers have current Working with Children Checks, completed Essential Training and signed the Code of Conduct and undertaken a Police Check where required?
- Has there been due diligence when accepting the services of Leaders/Committee members? e.g., reference checks?
- Are Leaders/Committee members/participants of Groups aware of, and adhere to confidentiality requirements?
- Are leaders under the age of 18 appropriately supervised?
- Is there an appropriate ratio of Adult supervision to participants to provide safety for all?
- Are there always at least two leaders present for any activity?
- Is there appropriate gender balance for the supervision needs of the participants attending the activity?
- When food is being provided, is there someone present who has completed food handling training?
- Have induction sessions been provided?

Participant

- Can participants wander away from supervised areas?
- Are children, the young or vulnerable likely to come in contact with others not connected with the activity/event?
- How are toileting arrangements managed for children? Is the, "never alone with a child" rule taken into account?
- Have special needs been considered (e.g., disability, language barriers, medical conditions)?
- Have cultural needs been considered in the planning and implementation of the program/activity?
- Are there custody arrangements or family issues that need to be adhered to/considered?
- Is there clearly communicated behavioural expectations for children, young people and adults who are part of any program/activity?
- Do behavioural expectations include the right for all participants to feel safe and respected?
- Is there appropriate access and facilities for all participants?
- How are participants exited into parent/guarding control? Are they supervised as they leave?
- How do people find out about Groups? Are advertising processes inclusive of all?
- Are there processes in place to ensure new participants complete the expected compliance requirements?
- Is there a process in place where participants are welcomed and provided with support to successfully integrate within the Group/activity?
- Are participants given a voice in relation to the activities or structure of such?
- Is there a feedback opportunity for participants?

Procedure

- Have all leaders been fully briefed in relation to the goal, processes and requirements of the activity?
- When present, are parents/guardians reminded that they are responsible for the supervision of their children?
- Are registration forms, sign in/sign out forms, parental/guardian permission forms (for the activity), photo permission forms being utilised?
- Is there a mechanism in place to ensure all participants are present and accounted for?
- Are medical management forms available and utilised which include: name of medication (provided in its original container), dosage, administration instructions, emergency contacts for parent/guardian and health provider?
- Are outsiders likely to be present (or could they gain unauthorised access to the premises)?
- Should doors be kept locked during the activity? If so, is there a plan in place for a quick, safe exit if needed?
- Does the activity require/allow an adult to be alone with 1 or 2 children (excl. parent of the child)?
- Can all areas used in the activity be supervised to the extent needed?
- If food will be made available or shared, have food allergies or intolerances been considered?
- Is there a way of contacting the Group if an emergency situation arises i.e., fire, dangerous persons in the area, traffic concern?
- Does the Group have a form of communication to raise the alarm should there be an incident?
- How is online communication conducted? Are parents, carers and other Parish representatives e.g., the Parish Priest, Program co-ordinator “copied in” to emails?
- Is communication kept to issues directly associated with the delivery of the program? It is not appropriate to engage with children or young people sharing personal content.
- How is communication managed? It is not appropriate to use any private communication channels e.g., personal email accounts, personal social media accounts to conduct Parish communication.
- Has there been consideration to the appropriate and inclusive manner of communication as not all people have a mobile phone, email account etc.?
- Do children/young people communicate with each other in private online settings? Be aware of channels of communication that may not be inappropriate.
- How are photos, images used? Written permission from the person involved and parent/guardian (in the case of a child), must be sort in-order to share photos, images in any form of communication/advertising i.e., Parish Bulletins, social media, Facebook etc.
- Where are photos stored? They should be kept on a Parish device and not kept on any personal devices.
- Are personal details of participants including addresses, contact numbers etc, only made available to the necessary Committee/Group leaders and stored in a secure manner? In what manner is this information shared?
- Are confidentiality practices and requirements re-visited on a regular basis at Committee/Leader Meetings?
- Are minutes of meetings, correspondence, registration forms, sign in/sign out forms, medical forms and risk assessments stored correctly and kept on file for future reference? i.e., 100 years

- Are participants aware of processes whereby a concern/complaint/report can be made?
- If the Group utilises a Contractor or Third party for its activities, are safeguarding matters taken into account? i.e., WWCC, Risk Assessment completed, presentation of contractor's/third party's Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Has an agreement been signed?
- Is written permission on file should a participant need to be transported by private car?
- If transporting Group members/participant by car, has due diligence been applied in relation to drivers' licence, car registration/ insurance, road worthy?
- If drivers are being used, is there an awareness of, "never alone with a child"?
- Do activities off site have a register of participants that includes the contact numbers of next of kin, medical details in case of a medical incident including health provider details?
- If holding an outing, has there been consideration as to what could go wrong? E.g., someone has a medical episode; a person becomes lost; there is a delay. What could be put in place should there be such an occurrence?
- When visiting homes, do volunteers know the occupants and have details of their next of kin should an emergency arise?
- Do volunteers visit homes alone? Has this been considered as a risk?
- Has manual handling training been provided?
- Are there oversight processes in place for activities where money is collected/raised through the activity?
- Do members of the Finance Team have the necessary skills to advise the Parish Priest on financial matters?
- Is the generation of financial reports performed independently of the Finance Committee members?
- Are there practices in place to ensure only the Parish Priest has access to Parish Funds?
- Is there provision for Finance Committee members to be updated on legal and regulatory changes?
- Is there security around the handling of money? i.e., cash receipts and donations accounted for and deposited with Parish manager oversight
- How is money conveyed to the Bank?

Please Note: overnight activities require further diligence. Please refer to Melbourne Archdiocese Safeguarding Unit:
INFORMATION SHEET Safe Programs – Practice and Behavioural Guidelines

Step 2: List any current risk controls, if any, that are in place to manage these risks
(Record in Column 2 of Risk Assessment Form)

Step 3: Considering the current risk controls if any, what is the likelihood of harm. Record whether it is Likely **(L)** Possible **(P)** or Remote **(R).**
(Record in Column 3 of Risk Assessment Form)

Step 4: Now consider the possible consequence should the risk cause harm.

- Would there be minimal disruption to the program?
- Would it be likely that first aid would be required?
- Could the risk eventuate in a serious injury or in a fatality?
- Would ongoing medical treatment be required?
- Could a participant/leader/Committee member suffer mental or physical health issues?
- Would there be a need to report to authorities?
- Would there be a financial loss to the Parish?
- Could there be the need to cancel any such activity in the future?
- Would there be a reluctance to trust the program?
- Would there be a loss of reputation to the Parish/activity?
- Would litigation be an outcome?

Record whether the consequence would be Catastrophic **(C)** Serious **(S)** or Minor **(M)**.
(Record in Column 4 of Risk Assessment Form)

Step 5: From your evaluation of risk of harm and the level of consequence, think about other controls that would eliminate the risk or at least minimize it. Develop new risk control or maintain current risk control if satisfied with its effectiveness.
(Record in Column 5 of Risk Assessment Form)

Consider the following when determining new risk controls.

- Eliminate the risk if possible or else reduce the likelihood of that situation leading to harm
- Ensure effective supervision especially in high-risk areas (respecting children’s right to privacy)
- Be mindful of end of activity supervision/exiting procedures
- Ensure at least two adults are present at the activity at all times
- Be vigilant in watching for grooming behaviour (an adult giving undue attention to a child)
- Be mindful of online communication dangers
- Be vigilant as to how records, communication, contact details are stored
- Implement a ‘no closed door’ policy for internal doors (unless door fitted with large windows)
- Ensure good lighting in all areas both internally and externally
- If possible, use rooms with large, unobstructed windows with curtains/blinds open
- Conduct random checks of unsupervised areas (e.g., toilets, unused rooms, remote areas)

- Use guidelines to clarify expectations if 1:1 interaction between a child and an adult
- Provide increased supervision and support for children/vulnerable persons with special needs
- Monitor who is present at all times, especially outsiders or contractors
- Use guidelines for transport (if needed) including pick-up at the end of an activity
- How will you respond if an incident occurs – what can be prepared in advance (just in case)?
- Provide basic first aid facilities and preferably have a person with a current first-aid certificate present
- Check fire and emergency plans – do these take children into consideration?
- Ensure Emergency contact details are available
- When engaging in an offsite activity, always carry a First Aid Kit, know where medical help can be sourced (nearest hospital), ensure premises/accommodation is appropriate and meets all safety requirements
- Have registration forms listing relevant personal details available
- Complete Attendance Form
- Have available an accident Register
- Keep a record of communication within the Parish i.e., save copies of communication
- Direct communication to the Group rather than to an individual
- Review OHS requirements regularly
- Consider the health and wellbeing of all participants
- Consider how processes/practices could be further developed so all Leaders/ Committee Members understand their responsibilities and/or confidentiality expectations
- Review how and who should have access to personal /financial records etc.?
- Consider whether induction of Leaders/Committee members could be improved?

If unable to establish an acceptable risk control, then seek advice from Parish Leadership before proceeding.

Step 6: List who is responsible for the required resources and the implementation and maintenance of risk controls.

Always Review Risk Assessment Following Any Incident and Annually When Notified by the Safeguarding Committee.