



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Record Keeping Policy

This document should be read in conjunction with the
Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy (SWCYP Policy).

Parish statement

We are committed to a safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in our Church.

St James the Apostle Parish, Hoppers Crossing North, holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as central and fundamental responsibilities of the Church. This commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel.

We want our children to be safe, happy and empowered.

As a parish within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, St James has a universal expectation for the protection of children. It is resolutely committed to ensuring that all those engaged in the Church and within our parish promote the inherent dignity of children and young people and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe environment. This is particularly so for the most vulnerable children, including aboriginal children, those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

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

Endorsement/approval date	July 2025
Endorsement authority e.g. Parish Priest/Head of Entity/Parish Council	Parish Pastoral Council/Parish Priest



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Introduction

The Safeguarding Children and Young People (SCYP) Record Keeping Policy helps to create a safe environment for children and young people by setting clear expectations on record keeping and ensuring that all Church personnel understand their obligations to keep and maintain records relating to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people within all Archdiocesan environments.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne recognises that record keeping is an important aspect of ensuring that all parishes, agencies and entities are child safe. The Archdiocese endeavours to comply with the Public Record Office Victoria Record Keeping Standards (PROV Standards) insofar as they relate to the creation, capture and control of child safety and wellbeing records.

Commitment to the safety of children and young people

In adopting and publishing this policy, the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne makes a public statement of its commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The Archdiocese has zero tolerance of any form of child abuse, harm, racism and discrimination, and is committed to protecting children and young people from harm.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's commitment to the safety of children and young people is contained within the SWCYP Policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Archdiocesan records relating to child safety and wellbeing are created, maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Archdiocese's obligations.

The policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements in the state of Victoria, including the Child Safe Standards, and is guided by the PROV Standards and the principles for records and record keeping arising out of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission).

For a full list of definitions used throughout this policy, please refer to the back of the SWCYP Policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all Church personnel engaged by the Archdiocese, in conjunction with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne safeguarding documents.

The application of this policy extends to all Archdiocesan environments and all interactions with children and young people, including: • physical and face-to-face contact

- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication, including online messenger services, social media, or online seminars, ministry, prayer groups or liturgies.

Record keeping principles

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne is committed to ensuring that it has thorough record keeping principles in place in relation to child safety and wellbeing, and implements the following record keeping principles, which are based on the recommendations of the Royal Commission:

- Creating and keeping full and accurate records relevant to child safety and wellbeing are in the best interests of children and young people, and are an integral part of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's leadership, governance and culture.
- Full and accurate records are created in relation to all incidents, responses and decisions affecting child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse
- Appropriate records relevant to child safety and wellbeing are maintained.
- Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing are disposed of only in accordance with law and this policy.
- Individuals' existing rights to access, amend or annotate records about themselves are recognised to the fullest extent.

Responsibilities

The Archdiocese will provide:

- policies, processes and systems to ensure record keeping requirements are met in accordance with this policy and its legal obligations
- training to Church personnel, to ensure they understand how to meet their record keeping responsibilities
- support to parishes, agencies and entities, to ensure that correct action is being taken and to rectify any breaches or errors in relation to their record keeping activities. Parish priests, agency and entity leaders will ensure that:
- full and accurate records of all activities, events and services relating to child safety and wellbeing are created and kept, to meet legislative requirements and the needs of the community
- all concerns, complaints, allegations and reports associated with child safety and wellbeing are recorded in accordance with this policy and reported pursuant to the SCYP Reporting Procedure
- child safety and wellbeing records are organised and kept safely to ensure accessibility when required
- child safety and wellbeing records are kept securely, preventing unauthorised access, amendment, use, destruction or disposal of the records
- only authorised persons (the parish priest, agency or entity leader, or their nominee) have authority to access records as appropriate
- child safety and wellbeing records are stored securely in locations and systems that will protect them from misuse, damage, deterioration and/or loss
- child safety and wellbeing records are preserved and kept in a readable and accessible format for their minimum required retention period

- all physical child safety and wellbeing records are securely stored in locations that are locked and that can only be accessed by authorised persons
- all digital and/or electronic child safety and wellbeing records are securely stored by password protection and encryption where possible
- the method used to dispose of child safety and wellbeing records is secure and permanent
- a register of child safety and wellbeing records disposal is kept.

Church personnel will ensure that they:

- create full and accurate records relevant to child safety and wellbeing in accordance with this policy
- seek authorisation from the Safeguarding Unit or the parish priest, agency or entity leader prior to disposing of any child safety and wellbeing records
- do not dispose of any child safety and wellbeing records that may be required in any legal proceeding.

Record keeping systems, storage and preservation

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne ensures that child safety and wellbeing records are, where possible, stored in a way that protects them from misuse, loss, unauthorised amendment, deterioration and damage by:

- ensuring that physical child safety and wellbeing records are:
 - stored in environmental conditions that protect them from fire, water, pests and dust
 - in a format and materials that are likely to remain readable for their lifetime
 - stored securely with access only by authorised Church personnel
 - kept in storage facilities which are well maintained and fit for purpose, including being regularly inspected for water, heat, and pest damage and repaired as required
- ensuring that digital and/or electronic child safety and wellbeing records are:
 - stored on systems which are routinely backed up or restored
 - kept in formats that are expected to remain readable for the required lifetime of the record and/or the format is updated to ensure the records are preserved
 - stored in digital storage systems which are regularly tested, backed-up, maintained and replaced as required
 - stored in digital storage systems which are regularly updated with security software.

Creation of child safety and wellbeing records

The head of parish, agency or entity, or their nominee, must create full and accurate records of Archdiocesan, parish, agency and/or entity functions, activities, services and events (e.g. attendance registers).

Church personnel must create a full and accurate child safety and wellbeing record when Church personnel become aware of an incident or alleged incident, including:

- forming a reasonable belief that a child or young person is in need of protection
 - identifying or becoming aware of a concern, complaint, allegation or suspicion relating to child safety or the wellbeing of a child or young person
 - making a mandatory notification pursuant to the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
 - identifying or becoming aware of a reportable allegation
 - identifying or becoming aware of any other matters relating to child safety or the safety or wellbeing of a child
 - making any decision in relation to child safety or the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- A child safety and wellbeing record must be created at, or as close as possible to, the time the incident or alleged incident occurred, and must include the following information:
- any relevant dates
 - identifying information for the child or young person, including name, date of birth, age, gender, cultural and/or religious background, and any other diverse characteristic of the child or young person
 - the nature of the allegation, incident, risk or concern
 - any indicators of harm identified
 - any known previous risk or history of abuse or harm
 - family background
 - details of persons alleged to have engaged in abuse or misconduct
 - any affect that it has had on the child or young person (if known)
 - details of any external reports including to police, the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and/or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
 - any internal reports made, including to whom and when
 - details of any internal discussions relating to the incident
 - details of any decisions made in relation to the incident, including who made the decision and their reasons for making the decision
 - details of any actions undertaken, including when the action was undertaken and by whom
 - details of any review of an action.

In respect of an incident or alleged incident occurring, the parish priest or the head of the agency or entity must keep the following records:

- letters or emails making allegations or in relation to allegations
- notes of any verbal conversations where an allegation is made or discussed
- incident reports
- witness statements
- records, including notes of meetings or discussions about the actual or alleged incident
- investigation records
- referrals, notifications and reports to any law enforcement authority, and copies of briefs of evidence supporting cases, including evidence gathered for cases that did not proceed
- reports received from medical professionals, health professionals, psychologists, teachers, coaches, social workers, legal officers, counsellors, chaplains and case officers in relation to actual or alleged incidents
- records documenting support and remedial action (e.g. records of claims, assessments, support, counselling, compensation, redress)
- records of cases or decisions by bodies, tribunals and courts
- rosters, sign-on sheets and personnel records of Church personnel
- records of enrolment, attendance and absence of children and young people
- surveillance images and footage
- program flyers, location maps, photographs of the environment.

Disposal of child safety and wellbeing records

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne ensures that child safety and wellbeing records are only disposed of:

- once they have reached their minimum retention period, in accordance with this policy
- with the authority of the Archbishop and the parish priest or head of agency or entity where appropriate.

The Archdiocese will ensure that records are disposed of using secure permanent methods and will maintain a record evidencing the disposal of records, including:

- the date that the record was produced
- a description of the record
- the date disposal of the record was authorised by the Archdiocese and/or the head of parish, agency or entity
- the type of record and the minimum retention period for the record
- the date the minimum retention period of the record was reached
- the date of disposal of the record • the method of disposal of the record.

The Archdiocese and/or the parish, agency or entity *must not* dispose of:

- any records that are reasonably likely to be required in a legal proceeding
- any records that may be required for a current freedom of information request or an information request under the Child Information Sharing Scheme or the Maram Information Sharing Scheme
- any child safety and wellbeing records or any other records relating to the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Archiving of child safety and wellbeing records

The parish priest or head of the agency or entity must send all child safety and wellbeing records to the Chancellor of the Archdiocese, who will send child safety and wellbeing records to the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne archivist. Upon the death of a member of clergy, all documentation relating to that clergy member will be archived, except in relation to child safety and wellbeing records, which will be maintained in current files.

Policy review

A review of the safeguarding documents will be conducted at least every two years and after every critical child safety and wellbeing incident. The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne welcomes feedback from children, young people, parents, carers, families and the community on how it can improve the safeguarding documents, risk management and the Archdiocesan environment to protect children and young people.

Relevant legislation

- *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
 - Child Safe Standards
 - Reportable Conduct Scheme
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
 - Mandatory Reporting
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) – Sexual offences
 - Grooming offence
 - Failure to disclose offence
 - Failure to respond offence
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
 - Privacy Principles and obligations
- *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic)
 - Working with Children Checks and related offences

Supporting policies, information sheets and guidance documents

- CCYP publications and information sheets regarding the Child Safe Standards
- CCYP publications and information sheets regarding the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's commitment to the safety of children and young people
- Working with Children Check Protocol
- Privacy Compliance Advice
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct and Declaration
- Integrity in Our Common Mission
- National Police Record Check Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Digital Communications Policy
- Workplace Bullying Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Antidiscrimination and Racism Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Reporting Procedure
- 'Empowering children and young people' information sheet
- 'Criminal history record check (police record check)' information sheet
- Safe Programs—Practice and Behavioural Guidelines
- 'Promoting the safety of children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds' information sheet
- 'Promoting the safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people' information sheet
- 'Promoting the safety of children and young people of diverse sexuality' information sheet
- 'Safeguarding risk management process information' sheet
- 'Photography and video of children and young people' information sheet
- 'Electronic communication, including social media' information sheet

Policy administration schedule

Policy owner	Director, Safeguarding Unit
Who the policy applies to	All Church personnel within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
Approval authority	Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
Approval/reviewed date	October 2023
Version number	Version 1.0
Modifications made this version	Not applicable
Next review date by policy owner	2025 A review of this policy will be conducted every two years and may be subject to amendment prior to the review date as a result of: • relevant feedback from stakeholders, including children, young people, parents, carers and the community • legislative changes • a review of critical incidents • a commitment to promote continuous improvement.

Version control

Version number	Purpose/change	Date
1.0	Initial version—approved by Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne	October 2023