



Code of Conduct for Working with Children

Introduction

The Archdiocese, together with our community, is committed to creating and upholding a safe and nurturing environment for Children.

This Code of Conduct seeks to raise awareness amongst people working with Children in the Archdiocese about their obligations under Child protection legislation, and to assist them to create a Child-safe environment for Children who engage with the Catholic Church. This Code should be read in conjunction with the Archdiocesan *Child Protection Policy* which is embodied in the safeguarding training, policies, protocols and fact sheets relevant to Child-related work within the Archdiocese.

Child sexual abuse within Catholic Church contexts has caused deep concern within the Archdiocese, the entire Church and the broader community. This Code of Conduct provides those working with Children in the Archdiocese with a better understanding of how to carry out the important pastoral work of the Catholic Church in a professional, supportive and nurturing way that both protects Children from harm and contributes to their development.

The Code of Conduct applies to, and must be signed by, all Clergy, Religious Appointees, Employees, Volunteers and contractors, who have, or are expected to have, a Child-related role – i.e. **those required to hold a Working with Children Check (WWCC)**. Catechists who are SRE Teachers in NSW public schools are required to sign this Code of Conduct in conjunction with receiving an SRE-specific appendix and mandatory induction training from the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine to meet the NSW Department of Education requirements.

Compliance with Child protection legislation and the Archdiocese's Policy on Safeguarding and Child Protection (The Policy)

1. At any time, prior or during my appointment to a Child-related role in the Archdiocese, I will provide the person employing, engaging or otherwise appointing me with any information that is relevant to determining whether I am suitable to work with Children, including undergoing a Working With Children Check where necessary (and a National Criminal History Check, if required by the Archdiocese).
2. I will maintain appropriate boundaries with Children at all times and remain professional in my actions towards Children.
3. With the exception of information obtained under the seal of confession (if applicable), I will comply with my reporting obligations in the Policy if I reasonably suspect:
 - a. a Child is at risk of a Child Abuse Offence being committed against them;
 - b. a person has engaged in any Reportable Conduct with a Child;
 - c. a person has engaged in any inappropriate conduct with a Child;
 - d. a Child has suffered or is suffering Neglect or Child Abuse including any physical abuse, Sexual Act, Sexual Assault, Sexual Touching or Grooming; and/or

- e. a Child is otherwise at Risk of Significant Harm, either in the Archdiocese environment, at home or elsewhere.

I note that it is not my responsibility to investigate or resolve any suspicions I may have, but simply to report my suspicion to the appropriate authority.

- 4. I will report these matters to my Parish Priest / Agency Head (whichever is applicable) as well as to the Safeguarding Office and, where appropriate, to the relevant State authorities (with assistance from the Safeguarding Office).
- 5. I acknowledge that I have a personal legal obligation to report all Reportable Crimes of which I become aware, and any information that I may have in relation to those offences, to NSW Police. As a matter of practice, I will notify my Parish Priest or Agency Head who will notify the Safeguarding Office. The Safeguarding Office will assist me to report to the NSW Police and will provide a copy of the police report so that I can ensure my personal legal obligation to report has been discharged.
- 6. I will comply with any investigations into Safeguarding Complaints.
- 7. I will immediately notify my supervisor if I am charged with any criminal offence.

Care, respect and compassion

- 8. I will always treat Children with care, respect and compassion even if they behave in a way that I find to be difficult or challenging.
- 9. Recognising that we believe all people to be "made in the image and likeness of God" (Gen 1: 27) I will respect the human dignity of all persons treating them with equal respect and care at all times. In keeping with the Church's preferential option for the poor, I will give particular attention to the needs of more vulnerable people in the community.
- 10. I will take into account the needs of all Children, paying particular attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Children with disability, Children from culturally and linguistically diverse background, and Children with particular vulnerabilities, such as Children who cannot live at home for whatever reason.
- 11. I acknowledge that children, like all human persons, have a need to be listened to and to feel heard. I will seek to actively listen to children in my care and take their opinions and concerns seriously.
- 12. I will always use appropriate, respectful language, and not speak to Children in a sarcastic, derogatory or offensive manner, acknowledging I hold a position of authority and use of this language could negatively affect the wellbeing and development of the Children I work with.
- 13. I will always treat Children in an equal and consistent way, and avoid favouritism, "special relationships" with certain Children and/or singling out particular Children.
- 14. I will never provide gifts to one Child over another Child and I will provide gifts to Children generally only where those gifts are appropriate given the age and circumstances of those Children, e.g. gifts that are inexpensive and inoffensive.

15. I will not engage in any activity with a Child that is likely to cause them physical, emotional or psychological harm.
16. Except in the context of family gatherings with the permission of parents, I will not invite unaccompanied Children to my home, nor invite them to engage in activities or events that are not associated with the Archdiocese or its parishes or agencies.

Proper supervision of Children

17. I will always diligently supervise all Children for whom I am responsible
18. If I am responsible for organising activities involving children, I will ensure the activities are appropriate to the children's age and needs, that the necessary risk assessment has been undertaken, and that it is adhered to in the conduct of the activities.
19. When supervising children, I will take care to protect them from obvious dangers such as motor vehicles, and outdoor risks such as unsafe bodies of water, sun exposure or strangers.
20. I will not leave children in my care unsupervised. I will be punctual for my appointments with Children. If I am unable to attend an activity with children which I have agreed to supervise, I will communicate with the relevant supervisor in my parish or agency as soon as possible.
21. When supervising children, I will always take care in planning activities to make sure they are appropriate given the Children's age and other needs

Disciplining Children

22. I acknowledge that in appropriate circumstances, discipline may be necessary to prevent future misbehaviour by Children, including misbehaviour that places the Child and others at risk.
23. If, in my judgment, it is necessary to discipline a Child, I will only do so in a reasonable manner that is proportionate to their misbehaviour and does not isolate or degrade the Child. I will always explain to the Child why he or she is being disciplined.
24. I will never use corporal punishment to discipline a Child.

Contact with Children

25. I will avoid situations where I would be alone with children except in so far as it would normally be required as part of my role.
26. I will avoid physical contact with a child except in so far as it would normally be required as part of my role (e.g. to administer the sacraments) or as circumstances might reasonably require (e.g. to protect a child from harm or to comfort when distressed), or when greeting a child appropriately (e.g. the popular Hi-5).
27. I will not engage in any covert or overt sexual or intimate behaviours with any child or young person; I will not engage in any sexual innuendo, sexual conversations, jokes or the display of such material.

28. I will not message, call, text, visit or otherwise contact a child to the exclusion of their parent(s) when organising, arranging or engaging in church activities.
29. If I engage with a child or family whom I have contact with through my role in the church outside of that role (e.g. socially, in a business relationship, etc.), I do so in my individual capacity only and not as a representative of the Church.

Use of social media and other technology to communicate with Children

30. I will comply with that part of the Policy relating to the use of social media and other technology, which provides that amongst other things I must:
 - a. be respectful, polite and considerate in all communications with Children and communicate in a manner that is consistent with my role and responsibility within or in relation to the Archdiocese;
 - b. not invite or accept invitations from Children I have met through the Archdiocese as “friends” on my personal social media site, or otherwise interact with them on that site;
 - c. not communicate on an individual (one on one) basis via technology or social media (including mobile phone, text messages or email) with any Child unless I have obtained the written consent of that Child’s parent or guardian and include the Child’s parent or guardian as a participant in the communication; and
 - d. not record or distribute any Intimate Images of a Child or any Cyber Bullying Material targeted at a Child.

Use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs

31. I will comply with that part of the Policy relating to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, which provides that:
 - a. I must never give or provide alcohol, tobacco or other drugs to Children (This rule does not apply when parents approve of their child receiving Holy Communion from the Chalice).
 - b. I must never perform work with Children when I am under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs, and will inform my supervisor if I am under the influence of any prescription medication that may adversely affect my capacity to effectively supervise Children and keep them safe; and
 - c. if I am supervising Children in any capacity, including general gatherings, at an overnight camp or excursion where Children are present, I will not consume alcohol or illicit drugs, or smoke tobacco during these events.

Medication

32. I will never administer any medication to any Child without their parent or guardian’s consent.

Material involving Children

33. I will always obtain the permission of a Child's parent or guardian before taking or using the Child's name or image in any report, website or other publication.
34. In a school setting I will always seek the permission of the school before taking or using the Child's name or image in any report, website or other publication.
35. If suitable, I will also gain the permission of the Child to take or use their image in any report, website or other publication.
36. I will not possess, distribute or produce any material that depicts or describes Children in an offensive way

Please see the Archdiocese's protocol and fact sheets on 'Behaviours to encourage and avoid', 'Use of technology and social media to communicate with Children' and 'Use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs' for a complete list of obligations.

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that:

- I have read and will comply with the Policy and this Code of Conduct.
- I understand the behaviours that are expected of me in my interactions with Children.
- I understand the behaviours that are not acceptable by the Archdiocese, its parishes and agencies, at any time.
- Serious breach of this Code will lead to termination of my work with children within the Archdiocese.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____