



**DIOCESE of TOOWOOMBA**

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY for CHILDREN and ADULTS at RISK**

**06 November 2020**

***Dear Friends, Members of the Diocese of Toowoomba***

*These are times of significant and welcome change in the ministry of safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk in our midst.*

*Our former Diocesan Safeguarding Policy was approved in December 2014. Since then we have had the benefit of the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in December 2017 and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards in May 2019.*

*Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders are currently working on a new National Response Protocol which will inform and guide our response to disclosures and allegations of sexual abuse. When approved, this Protocol will apply consistently across all Dioceses and Religious Orders in Australia.*

*Newly revised National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, with a keen eye to the needs of adults at risk of abuse, are also expected in early 2021.*

*In the meantime, as we work to consolidate our understanding of the safeguarding ministry in our own diocese, this updated Safeguarding Policy provides an important base to our work. In mid 2021 we will revisit and review this Safeguarding Policy as part of our preparation for the Diocesan Audit planned for August or September 2021.*

*As stated in our Safeguarding Policy, as a diocese we commit ourselves to ensure the safety and well-being of children, young people and adults at risk in our community.*

*Thank you for your generous and thoughtful commitment to the safeguarding ministry. May God bless you and those entrusted to your care.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross and the initials 'R. McGuckin'.

***Most Rev. Robert McGuckin  
Bishop of Toowoomba***

*06 November 2020*

## OUR DIOCESAN POLICY

### Policy Statement:

**In the Diocese of Toowoomba we commit ourselves to ensure the safety and well-being of children, young people and adults at risk, in our community. The best interests of the child, young person or adult at risk come first.**

We commit to positive and **immediate response** to those who have experienced abuse in our diocese. We commit to **effective prevention** of abuse in our diocese, parish by parish, through improving our safeguarding practices and policies and providing safeguarding training to our parish personnel. We commit to **continuous learning** in current best practice and information on the abuse of children, young people and adults at risk, in our community. We welcome advice and support from independent experts in the wider community.

The **implementation** of this Safeguarding Policy through its related procedures and practices is essential to addressing and preventing abuse in the diocese.

### Faith foundation:

This Safeguarding Policy and the commitments it gives rise to are grounded in Christian faith, as found in the person, words, works and actions of Jesus and in the living faith experience of the Christian community from its beginning. This Christian faith gives rise to an unqualified belief in the dignity and worth of every person, especially of those least able to exercise or assert their human value and rights in the community. Christian faith calls us to work generously for the common good of all people by focussing first on those on the margins of the community, those in greatest human need. Our safeguarding ministry is faith in action.

### Scope:

This Safeguarding Policy applies to all leadership and ministry personnel in the diocese: Bishop, Priests, Deacons, Parish Leaders, Religious, Pastoral Associates, Agency Coordinators, Parish Secretaries, students on training placements in the diocese, all employees and all volunteers in parish or diocesan ministries. At the same time, this Safeguarding Policy applies to all members of parish communities and ministries. The whole community is responsible for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk in our midst.

## **PART ONE: OUR SAFEGUARDING POLICY in more DETAIL**

### **Setting:**

The Diocese of Toowoomba covers a huge area of southern and south-west Queensland, with a total population of 272,114 people (Census 2016). Of these 24% are Catholic: 65,212. Annual parish statistics indicate that over 5,000 people (9% of the Catholic community) are actively involved in the thirty-seven parishes across the diocese.

This landmass is home to several First Nation peoples, identified by Traditional Owners through historical and cultural connections. The diocese is a multicultural community embracing some forty-two countries of origin as identified by birthplace and language use (ABS 1999), especially in the east in the region around Toowoomba. There are twenty-four faith-based institutions in the region (Census 2016).

We have always valued children in our midst, within our families, our parishes, our schools and our community. But there have also been times when we have failed our children. The Royal Commission into child sexual abuse, over the five years of its work, listened attentively to thousands of people who had been sexually abused as children. In December 2017 the Commission tabled its Final Report. While many institutions were addressed, significant matters were raised with the Catholic Church throughout Australia: in dioceses, parishes, schools, Church-run organisations and personnel.

The Royal Commission was a blessing for us, calling us to account for our failings, some criminal, and guiding us to better practice in the safeguarding and protection of children in our midst. The foundational principle of the Commission, repeated again and again in the seventeen volumes of their Final Report was direct and succinct: the best interests of children come first.

### **Commitment Statements:**

The Diocese through the Bishop and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, commits to the safeguarding and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk, through a public written statement. Each Parish through the Parish Priest, Administrator or Parish Leader and local Parish Pastoral Council, makes a similar Safeguarding Commitment Statement. These Commitment Statements are to be publicly displayed in Church, Diocesan and Parish buildings and are to be available in their respective communities.

### **Code of Conduct:**

All personnel in the diocese are required to read, understand and commit to the Diocesan Safeguarding Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct names and affirms the standards of respectful and responsible behaviour expected of all personnel in their relationships and involvement with children, young people and adults at risk. Breaches of the Code of Conduct through criminal or inappropriate actions that become the subject of a complaint will involve consequences for continuing appointment, employment or voluntary involvement in diocesan or parish ministries. The Code of Conduct is essential in preventing abuse, harm and inappropriate behaviour.

### **Framework for effective action:**

Our efforts in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk are guided and measured by the ten *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (May 2019)* based on the ten *Child Safe Standards* developed by the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse (Final Report, December 2017). These Catholic Safeguarding Standards are aligned with the Australian Government's *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* based on the work of the Royal Commission.

### **National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (May 2019):**

1. Committed leadership, governance and culture:  
*child safeguarding is embedded in the leadership, governance and culture of the diocese*
2. Children are safe, informed and participate:  
*children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously*
3. Partnering with families, carers and communities:  
*families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safeguarding*
4. Equity is promoted and diversity is respected:  
*equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice*
5. Robust Human Resource management:  
*people working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safeguarding values in practice*
6. Effective Complaints management:  
*processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, families, carers, communities, and personnel*
7. Ongoing education and training:  
*personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through information, ongoing education and training*
8. Safe physical and online environments:  
*physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed*
9. Continuous improvement:  
*the diocese regularly reviews and improves implementation of its systems for keeping children safe*
10. Policies and procedures support child safety:  
*policies and procedures document how the diocese is safe for children.*

### **Focus on children and young people:**

As this Safeguarding Policy moves into more detailed matters, the focus is on children and young people. In early 2021 new information will be available from Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL) on the safety and well-being of adults at risk. This material will then be incorporated into our Diocesan Safeguarding Policy.

**Resources and support on each area of this section are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office.**

## **PART TWO: OUR SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENTS**

### **A) IMMEDIATE RESPONSE:**

**We commit to positive and immediate response to those who have experienced abuse in our diocese. This involves:**

- a) understanding and recognising abuse and harm; and
- b) responding to abuse and harm;

#### **a) Understanding and recognising abuse and harm:**

All children and young people have the right to be safe from abuse and harm. Where this is not the case, adults have a responsibility to act. As a first step, it is important that parish members understand what is meant by the terms 'abuse' and 'harm'.

In general terms, types of abuse may be summarised as: sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, and neglect. These types of abuse may cause the following types of harm to a child: physical harm, emotional harm or psychological harm. In essence, abuse is the action against a child, harm is the detrimental impact of that action on the child. Children may experience multiple types of abuse, which in turn may cause multiple types of harm.

Children and young people may be abused, or experience harm, from a number of sources:

- a) a person associated with the parish (staff member, volunteer, another child in the parish);
- b) a family person/relative of the child (parent/care provider, sibling, grandparent, other relative);
- c) another person in the community (family friend, neighbour, coach, tutor, stranger, another young person); or
- d) through self-harming by the child against his or her self.

#### *What is sexual abuse?*

Sexual abuse happens when a person uses power, force or authority to involve a child or young person in any form of unwanted or illegal sexual activity. This may involve touching or no contact at all. Sexual abuse may take the form of forcing children to watch or take part in sexual acts. It may involve forcing or coercing children to have sex or to engage in sexual acts with other children or adults. It may involve taking sexually explicit photographs or videos of children.

#### *What is grooming?*

Grooming refers to a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging with a child as a precursor to sexual abuse. It includes establishing a 'special' friendship or relationship with the child. Grooming may include the conditioning of parents and other adults to think that the relationship with the child is 'normal' and positive. This process of grooming may take as little as a few days or as long as months or even years.

#### *What is physical abuse?*

Physical abuse refers to any non-accidental physically aggressive act against a child. Physical abuse may be intentional or may be the inadvertent result of physical punishment. Physically abusive behaviours may include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning and kicking.

#### *What is emotional or psychological abuse?*

Emotional or psychological abuse refers to inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts against a child. This may include a failure to provide adequate non-physical nurture or emotional availability. Psychologically abusive behaviours may include rejecting, ignoring, isolating, terrorising, corrupting, verbal abuse and belittlement. It may include exposure to domestic or family violence. Emotional or psychological abuse may involve the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child which in turn may cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional and psychological development.

#### *What is neglect?*

Neglect happens when a caregiver fails to provide the basic requirements for meeting the physical and emotional developmental needs of a child. Physically neglectful behaviours may include a failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene or medical attention. The basic needs of a child include the timely provision of medical treatment and dental care. Adequate supervision and protection are needed for a child's optimal growth and development. Neglect may result in a significant impact on a child's physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing.

*What is significant harm?*

Harm may be caused by sexual, physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect. Harm refers to the detrimental effect or impact of abuse or neglect on a child. For intervention to occur through a report to Child Safety Services, there must be information to suggest:

- a) that the child has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and
- b) that there is a reasonable suspicion that there may not be a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm.

A child or young person is considered to be at unacceptable risk of suffering harm if there are grounds to suspect that, unless someone intervenes to prevent it, the actions of another person will result in, or is likely to result in, a detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, emotional and/or psychological wellbeing.

*Summary: relationship between abuse and harm*

In essence, abuse is the action against a child, harm is the impact of that action on the child. As noted earlier, children may experience multiple types of abuse, which in turn may cause multiple types of harm.

**b) Responding to abuse and harm:**

An adult member of the parish or diocesan community who has direct knowledge or reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused or is at risk of being abused, must report that information to the Police (if abuse) or Child Safety Services (if significant harm).

*A Recording and Reporting Form is provided in the Resources section of the 2014 Diocesan Prevention and Protection Policy (Appendix 10, pages 49-54) or is available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office: 4638 1379 or email [profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au](mailto:profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au).*

This information may be received in different ways:

- a) direct knowledge through witnessing the abuse of the child or recognising signs of harm;
- b) disclosure by a child about themselves or about another child;
- c) disclosure by an adult about a child or about themselves.

Where information involves a child or young person, the first response must be: *in this immediate moment, is this child or another child being abused or at risk of abuse?*

If yes, notify the Police immediately: ring 000.

Once immediate risk has been addressed, if the matter involves the sexual abuse or likely suspected abuse of a child or young person, the matter is to be reported to the Police, in an open report, by the person receiving the information.

Where a **child** discloses that they have been sexually abused, in our response to them, we must:

- a) listen with great care and attention;
- b) assure them that we believe what they are telling us; and
- c) assure them they are not responsible for what happened to them, they are not to blame.

Then we have to explain to the child that we will take the necessary action to ensure that they are safe. On our part, as the person receiving the information, this will require reporting the matter to the Police.

Appropriate Reporting Forms are available to assist in preparing both a record of the meeting and the notification to the Police. *Refer to the Resources section of the 2014 Diocesan Prevention and Protection Policy (Appendix 10, pages 49-54) or contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office: 4638 1379 or email [profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au](mailto:profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au).*

Where an **adult** discloses that they have been sexually abused as a child, the person receiving this personal information is to listen to them with respect, believe their lived experience of abuse and harm, assure the person that it was not their fault, and provide the person with advice on action that they may choose to take.

This advice includes:

- a) reporting this criminal allegation to the Police for investigation: all disclosures of child sexual abuse are to be reported to Police. After assessment, Police will decide on appropriate action.

*in addition to this the adult may consider:*

- b) engaging a lawyer to take civil action, on the ground of personal injury, against the alleged offender if still alive, or against the institution responsible for employing or appointing the alleged offender;
- c) making an application to the National Redress Scheme, accessible through an internet search ([www.nationalredress.gov.au](http://www.nationalredress.gov.au)) or through information provided by the Redress Scheme itself. Free legal advice may be accessed through Knowmore Legal Services, or may be available through other lawyers;
- d) engaging the Catholic Church process of responding to allegations known as Towards Healing, either directly (by phone 3324 3070 or 1800 337 928, email [psogld@catholic.net.au](mailto:psogld@catholic.net.au) or interview) or indirectly through the Diocesan Safeguarding Office in Toowoomba: phone 4638 1379 or email [profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au](mailto:profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au);
- e) requesting a personal interview with a trusted Church leader, parish or diocesan, to confidentially disclose or discuss the lived experience of sexual abuse which may have happened in the past but which remains just as searing and immediate in the present.

In all of the options noted earlier, personal and appropriate support is to be provided by the person first receiving the disclosure, whether by parish leaders, by personnel from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry, or by Diocesan personnel with competence in safeguarding.

**All instances of child sexual abuse, current or historic, are to be reported to the Police, by the person receiving the information.**

***Resources and support on each area of this section are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office.***

## **B) EFFECTIVE PREVENTION:**

**We commit to effective prevention of abuse in our diocese, parish by parish, through improving our safeguarding practices and policies and providing safeguarding training to our parish personnel. This involves building a culture of safety through effective education by:**

- a) building an awareness of safeguarding in the Parish community;
- b) providing education in safeguarding for the Parish community;
- c) providing training in safeguarding for all parish personnel involved in leadership in the Parish community;
- d) monitoring and guiding child safety in the Parish community; and
- e) managing child safety risks in the Parish community.

### ***a) Building an awareness of safety and safeguarding in the Parish Community ...***

Posters and brochures containing clear and summary information on safeguarding children and young people are to be displayed in Church and Parish buildings. This information is to include the name and contact information of the Parish Safeguarding Contact, the Parish Safety Commitment Statement, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, and the Diocesan Child Safeguarding



Policy. From time to time, particular information (eg the annual celebration of Child Protection Sunday in early September) is to be displayed. The whole community is responsible for the safeguarding of children and young people in its midst.

**b) *Providing education in safeguarding for the Parish Community ...***

Parish Safeguarding Policies with related Procedures are to be developed by Parish Councils and endorsed in each parish community. The Diocesan Safeguarding Policy is to guide and resource this process of education and the development of a local parish Safeguarding Policy. This step marks a move from awareness of safeguarding to a better understanding of the issues and responsibilities involved in building a culture of safety in the parish community. Parish Policies must be consistent with the Diocesan Policy.

**c) *Providing training in safeguarding for all parish leadership personnel in the Parish Community ...***

This training embraces Parish Priests and Associate Priests, Administrators, Parish Leaders, Parish Councils, Parish employees full-time or part-time (eg Secretaries, Groundkeepers, Bookkeepers), and Volunteers in Parish Ministry. This training is to be appropriate to the different levels and areas of Parish responsibility.

Training is to include the Parish and Diocesan Child Safeguarding Policies, the Parish Safeguarding Commitment Statement, the Diocesan Safeguarding Code of Conduct, Procedures for Reporting direct knowledge or reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse, the Parish Child Safety Risk Management Strategy and e-Safety Education. Training in safeguarding is to take place as part of the induction process of a person new to a position of responsibility in the Parish Community. Refresher training is to take place at a set time each year to ensure consistency in training.

Care is to be taken in the process of recruitment and selection of parish personnel. Safeguarding knowledge and experience is required. If the parish position involves the provision of services to or activities with children and young people, a Blue Card (Queensland Working with Children Check) is required before employment or voluntary involvement begins: 'No Card No Start'.

As a reminder of the need for ongoing training and education in safeguarding, child safety is to be a standing item in the agenda of each Parish Pastoral Council meeting. Each year the Parish Council is responsible for reviewing and updating the Parish Child Safeguarding Policy, the Parish Child Safety Risk Management Strategy and completing the annual Parish Compliance Checklist on the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

**d) *Monitoring and guiding child safety in the Parish Community ...***

In each Parish Community the Parish Safeguarding Contact is the local person who continually asks: is our parish a safe community for children? Are children and young people safe in our community? While Parish personnel (notably Priest, Parish Leader, Parish Council) exercise responsible leadership in different areas of safeguarding, the Parish Safeguarding Contact is the thoughtful, intuitive, responsive presence in the Parish Community.

The Safeguarding Contact is to be open to receiving disclosures, complaints, allegations or concerns around abuse, especially from children. The Safeguarding Contact is to provide advice and guidance to Parish personnel exercising responsible leadership in safeguarding. The Safeguarding Contact is to be supportive of parish members in their commitment to the safety of children and young people.

**e) *Managing child safety risks in the Parish Community ...***

In each parish, the Parish Priest, Parish Leader, Parish Council and Parish Safeguarding Contact are to identify areas of risk, in relation to the safety of children and young people, in the life and activities of the Parish Community. This is to include all sacramental and ministry activities, all services provided through the parish, all special events celebrated by the parish, and in particular all services or activities directly involving children and young people.

*Guidance on how to identify risk is provided in the Parish Child Safety Risk Management Strategy (2013) document, held in the Parish Office.*

This Parish Child Safety Risk Management Strategy and its implementation is to be reviewed and endorsed each year. As well as its necessity for the safe functioning of parish life, this Child Safe Risk Management Strategy meets compliance requirements under Queensland Legislation on Working with Children Checks (Blue Card).

In summary, these five areas of preventive action: Building Awareness, Providing Education, Providing Training, Monitoring and Guiding, and Managing Child Safety Risks: remind us that the whole community is responsible for the safeguarding of children and young people in our midst.

This proactive responsibility for preventing abuse and harm to children and young people at a parish level is to be addressed in the same way at a diocesan level. The Diocese, through the Safeguarding and Standards Ministry, commits to resourcing, supporting and complementing action taken in Parish communities.

***Resources and support on each area of this section are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office.***

**C) CONTINUOUS LEARNING:**

**We commit to continuous learning in current best practice and information on the abuse of children, young people and adults at risk, in our community. We welcome advice and support from independent experts in the wider community. This involves:**

- a) Diocesan Audit of Compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (May 2019);
- b) Royal Commission Findings, Research and Recommendations (December 2017);
- c) Legislation on Child Safety: Queensland and Commonwealth;
- d) Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office, Professional Development resources;
- e) Catholic Church teaching and tradition: notably Vatican II through to Pope Francis.

**a) *Diocesan Audit of Compliance with National Catholic Safeguarding Standards ...***

The Toowoomba Diocese, in company with all Dioceses and Religious Orders in Australia, has committed to a process of External Audit, currently facilitated by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL). This Diocesan Audit is to take place every three years and is to involve one quarter of the parishes, agencies and diocesan bodies in each audit. This will ensure that the whole diocese will be audited across a twelve year period. The Audit is an open process of review with the final report to be made publicly available.

The purpose of the Audit is twofold: to affirm and strengthen positive efforts in safeguarding already in place in parishes and in the diocese, and to identify areas or practices that need attention and improvement. The overall aim is to increase the capacity of the diocese and of each parish and agency to better safeguard children and young people in their midst.

**b) Royal Commission findings, research and recommendations ...**

The Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse, after five years of constructive work involving personal interviews, research, case studies and public hearings, provided its detailed Final Report and Recommendations in December 2017. All of this material, including the Case Study Reports (including Case Study 6 on Toowoomba) and Research Papers, is available online: simply search under 'Royal Commission Child Sexual Abuse' or [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au)

Of particular interest are the sections on the ten Child Safe Standards developed by the Commission and the section on recommendations to the Catholic Church in Australia. The Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders publicly responded to these recommendations in August 2018. The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, approved in May 2019, are based on the Child Safe Standards of the Commission.

**c) Legislation on child safety: Queensland and Commonwealth ...**

Both Commonwealth and Queensland Governments have passed legislation that focus on child safety and the legal responsibilities of institutions, organisations and persons involved in the safeguarding of children and young people. Penalties have been set for breaches of legislation across a range of criminal offences against children (a person under the age of 18 years).

*Of particular note are the Child Protection Act (Qld) 1999, the Working with Children Act (Qld) 2000, the Criminal Code Act (Qld) 1899 (current as at 15 September 2020), and the National Redress Scheme Act (Cth) 2018.*

**d) Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office: TCSO ... professional development ... resources ...**

In February 2104, the Public Hearing related to Case Study 6 of the Royal Commission took place in Brisbane. Case Study 6 dealt with the response of a primary school and the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office to the conduct of an offending teacher. In January 2015, the Commission provided its Report, available at [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au)

In early 2009, following the identification of the sexual abuse perpetrated by the offending teacher, the Toowoomba Catholic Education Office (now known as the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office: TCSO), commenced a thorough review and updating of Student Protection Guidelines and Procedures. The Public Hearing and Case Study Report of the Royal Commission reinforced this comprehensive review.

This in turn led to improved training in safeguarding for Principals and School Leadership Teams, School Safeguarding Contacts and all school Staff including teachers and ancillary staff. Under the proactive leadership of the TCSO Professional Standards Team, every person involved in Catholic education has been better trained in safeguarding the children in their care.

For Parish leadership personnel, this has provided substantial local support and guidance in responding to disclosures or allegations of abuse. Priests and Parish Leaders may easily become isolated in rural and remote communities when confronted by disclosures or allegations. In seeking advice or support from School personnel, a Parish leader must not breach confidentiality nor may they ask School leaders to take over their direct responsibilities in responding to an allegation. However seeking advice in this way, importantly provides access to local professional people who receive regular training in safeguarding, who share the same faith community as well as the same town community, and who bring experience and competence in supporting a Parish leader who may feel very alone in responding to an allegation or disclosure. Members of parishes have much to learn from well educated and well trained teachers, especially Principals, in their local community.

**e) *Mind of the Church: Vatican II ... Catholic Social Teaching ... Pope Francis ...***

Vatican II was and remains an enduring source of faith, wisdom and guidance for the Catholic Church of our day. The sixteen documents of Vatican II, time and again, refer to the unqualified dignity of each human person, especially of those who, for whatever reason or condition, are unable to assert or exercise their human dignity in daily life. Vatican II revisited and reaffirmed the tradition of Catholic Social Teaching in place for more than a century.

Church documents since Vatican II have explored respecting the dignity of the person, the right to participate in society, the life-giving importance of service of the common good of all people, the preferential option for those poor or at risk and the presence of God at the heart of everyday life. In more recent times, Pope Francis has helped us better appreciate the interconnection between care of the poor and care of the earth.

On a number of occasions, Pope Francis has written and acted on safeguarding children and young people. On 22 March 2014 he set up a new body in Rome, the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. In May 2019, he wrote to all Bishops and Superiors, Clerics and Religious, reminding them of their responsibility of responding to direct knowledge or reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse, of their responsibility to report to appropriate authorities, civil and church, and that failure to report or failure to act on these matters by Church Leaders would attract consequences affecting the continuing exercise of their office and authority.

In summary, by drawing on the expertise and experience of these five sources: Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL), Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse, Queensland and Commonwealth Legislation, Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO) and the Teaching and Traditions (the Mind) of the Catholic Church: we engage in continuous learning in the safeguarding of children and young people. In particular we are open to the research and professional experience to be found in the wider community beyond the Church and to the insights of modern science that underpin the work involved in these five sources.

***Resources and support on each area of this section are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office.***

**PART THREE: SUPPORT DOCUMENTS and PROVENANCE:**

*Please note: currently there are several formal guides to responding to abuse and/or harm:*

- a) This Safeguarding Policy with related Procedures, based on the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards; effective from 06 November 2020;*
- b) Vos Estis Lux Mundi Reporting Procedures, focusing on allegations and complaints of abuse involving Bishops, Priests, Deacons and Religious; effective from 01 June 2020;*
- c) The National Response Protocol for Catholic Church Authorities in responding to concerns and allegations of abuse, currently being developed by the Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders; to be effective in early 2021.*

*Our Diocesan Safeguarding Policy will incorporate provisions from both the Vos Estis Procedures and the National Response Protocol once finalised.*

**A) Support Documents: Our work in safeguarding is guided and supported by a range of documents covering different disciplines. These include:**

- a) Queensland and Australian Church Documents;
  - b) Toowoomba Diocesan Policies and Procedures; and
  - c) Legislation: Queensland and Commonwealth.
  
- a) Queensland and Australian Church Documents:
  - Safeguarding Policies and Procedures from Queensland Dioceses: Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane
  - Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia (June 2004, Reprint 2010)
  - Integrity in the Service of the Church: A Resource Document of Principles and Standards for Lay Workers in the Catholic Church in Australia (September 2011)
  - Towards Healing: Principles and Procedures in responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia (January 2010, amended October 2015, updated digital edition 2016)
  - Towards Healing: Guidelines for Church Authorities (February 2011)
  - National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: CPSL (Edition One May 2019)
  - National Catholic Safeguarding Standards: Implementation Guide Standards 1-10: CPSL (Edition One 2019)
  - The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-Responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia: Implementation Advisory Group and the Governance Review Project Team (15 August 2020)
  - Vos Estis Lux Mundi, Pope Francis, (May 2019)
  - Reporting Procedures in relation to Vos Estis Lux Mundi, Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders, (May 2020)
  - Vademecum: On Certain Points of Procedure in Treating Cases of Sexual Abuse of Minors committed by Clerics: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 16 July 2020
  - National Response Protocol: Principles and Procedures (in process during 2020) to replace Towards Healing and the Melbourne Response*
  
- b) Toowoomba Diocesan Documents:
  - Child Safety Risk Management Strategy: Diocesan and Parish (2013)  
*(to be updated in November 2020)*
  - Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults: Prevention and Protection Policy: (December 2014)
  - Human Resources Manual 2018: Employees and Volunteers (2018)
  - Toowoomba Catholic Schools: Student Protection Processes and Guidelines (February 2019)
  - Diocesan Safeguarding Resources Booklet *(to be finalised in November 2020)*
  
- c) Legislation: Queensland and Commonwealth
  - Criminal Code Act (Qld) 1899, current as at 15 September 2020, Chapter 22: Offences against morality (sections 207A – 229B)
  - Child Protection Act (Qld) 1999
  - Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act (Qld) 2000
  - Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation (Qld) 2011
  - Personal Injuries Proceedings Act (Qld) 2002
  - Education (General Provisions) Act (Qld) 2006
  - Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act (Qld) 2012

*Mandatory Reporting in Queensland:*

Child Protection Act (Qld) 1999: Part 1AA, section 13F

Child Protection Act (Qld) 1999: Part 1AA, section 13E

Education (General Provisions) Act (Qld) 2006: sections 364, 365, 365A, 366, 366A

Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Act (Qld) 2020

Privacy Act (Cth) 1988

National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act (Cth) 2018

*Operational Manual for Participating Institutions March 2019*

*Direct Personal Response Guidance Handbook April 2020*

*First Interim Report of the Joint Select Committee of the National Redress Scheme April 2020*

**B) PROVENANCE and REVIEW of DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING POLICY for CHILDREN and ADULTS AT RISK**

This Diocesan Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at Risk has been developed over the past twelve months through discussions and conversations with parish leadership personnel in each parish in the diocese. It continues to be refined through ongoing parish conversations and through discussion within the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Committee.

On 06 November 2020, Bishop Robert McGuckin approved this Diocesan Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at Risk for use in the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba.

The Policy is to be regularly reviewed and updated. The most recent edition is available on the Diocesan website or from the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office. Any printed copy of this Policy needs to be checked for currency. Enquiries with the Safeguarding Ministry Office are both welcome and encouraged.

Contact information for the Diocesan Safeguarding and Standards Ministry Office:  
phone (07) 4638 1379; email [profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au](mailto:profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au); and  
address: Bishop's House, 73 Margaret Street, Toowoomba Qld 4350

**Policy Review History:**

| <b>Date</b>      | <b>Version</b> | <b>Reviewing body</b>                         | <b>Amend/update</b>                       | <b>Next Review date</b> |
|------------------|----------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| December 2014    | Edition 1      | Diocesan Safeguarding and Standards Committee | New Diocesan Policy                       | ...                     |
| 06 November 2020 | Edition 2      | Diocesan Safeguarding and Standards Committee | This version replaces the original Policy | May 2021                |
|                  |                |   |   |                         |



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**Diocesan Child Safeguarding and Professional Standards Committee:**

Bishop Robert McGuckin  
 Majella Albion  
 Peter Albion  
 Kate Venables  
 Tanya Machin  
 Pat Nunan  
 Pat Coughlan  
 Fr John Quinlan  
 Fr Peter Dorfield (EO)



**CHILD and ADULT at RISK  
 SAFEGUARDING and STANDARDS  
 MINISTRY**

**SAFEGUARDING MINISTRY GUIDE**

(November 2020)

**NATIONAL CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS (Ed 1: 2019)**

1. Committed leadership, governance and culture
2. Children are safe, informed and participate
3. Partnering with families, carers and communities
4. Equity is promoted and diversity respected
5. Robust human resource management
6. Effective complaints management
7. Ongoing education and training
8. Safe physical and online environments
9. Continuous improvement
10. Policies and procedures support child safety