



## TOOWOOMBA DIOCESE SAFEGUARDING CODE of CONDUCT

14 April 2023

Clergy, Religious, employees and volunteers in diocesan and parish **ministries involving children, young people and adults at risk**, are required to sign and commit to this Diocesan Safeguarding Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is recommended to all parish members.

The Code of Conduct is essential in preventing abuse, harm and inappropriate behaviour in our Church communities. We commit to a safe and nurturing culture for all children, young people and adults at risk in our midst. We want our children and young people to be safe, respected and heard, and to flourish. We want adults at risk to be respected and empowered in their decision-making, participation and wellbeing. The Diocese takes a zero tolerance approach to all forms of abuse.

The Code of Conduct names and affirms 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.

All personnel are expected to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct in their physical and online interactions with children and young people under the age of eighteen years, and with adults at risk.

In the list of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, noted in the 'dot points', some matters focus on children and young people, some on adults at risk. These matters are indicated with an opening phrase '*In ministry with Children and young people*' or '*In ministry with Adults at risk*'. All other behavioural matters apply to ministry with both groups, Children, young people and adults at risk.

<b>Commit to safe and supportive relationships ...</b>	<p><b>I WILL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Act in accordance with the <i>Diocesan Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Adults at risk (April 2023)</i> and its procedures, at all times.</li><li>• <i>In ministry with Children and young people</i>, hold a current Blue Card and Positive Notice Letter and be linked with the relevant Church organisation: diocese or parish.</li><li>• <i>In ministry with Adults at risk</i>, hold a current Police Check (Criminal History Check) and be registered with the relevant Church organisation, diocese or parish, as a volunteer or paid employee in this ministry.</li><li>• Take part in safeguarding training and education provided by the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry or the Parish.</li><li>• Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries in behaviour, dress and performance of duties.</li><li>• Ensure that physical contact is appropriate, non-intrusive and not sexual in nature.</li></ul>
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<p><i>Safe and supportive relationships (continued ...)</i></p>	<p><b>I WILL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an environment that promotes and enables the participation of children, young people and adults at risk, and their families; an environment that is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive.</li> <li>• Ensure that children, young people and adults at risk involved in diocesan or parish activities will be appropriately supervised at all times.</li> <li>• Involve children, young people and adults at risk in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them, wherever possible.</li> <li>• Strive for excellence in all work by accepting professional responsibility in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk, from all forms of abuse and harm.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Uphold dignity and respect ...</b></p>	<p><b>I WILL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in positive and respectful interactions with children, young people and adults at risk which uphold their rights and dignity.</li> <li>• Use respectful language and tone when communicating with children, young people and adults at risk.</li> <li>• <i>In ministry with Children and young people</i>, ensure that photos or videos of children, involved in diocesan or parish activities, are only taken with the consent of parents or guardians.</li> <li>• <i>In ministry with Adults at risk</i>, ensure that photos or videos of adults at risk are only taken with their permission.</li> <li>• Support the inclusion of children, young people and adults at risk who live with disability, have culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, or are of diverse sexuality.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Act with justice and fairness ...</b></p>	<p><b>I WILL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children, young people and adults at risk in the diocesan or parish community.</li> <li>• Act with personal integrity and honesty in professional conduct and involvement with children, young people and adults at risk.</li> <li>• Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children, young people and adults at risk.</li> <li>• Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families, young persons and adults at risk, and towards other leadership staff and volunteers.</li> <li>• Support the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and adults at risk, and their families, in diocesan and parish activities, where they choose to be involved.</li> </ul>

*Justice and Fairness  
(continued)*

**Be diligent in  
Safeguarding  
practice ...**

- Have special regard for children, young people and adults at risk who are impoverished and marginalised, living on the edge of the community.

**I WILL**

- *In ministry with Children and young people*, listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they communicate, verbally or non-verbally, that they do not feel safe or have experienced abuse or harm.
- *In ministry with Adults at risk*, listen and respond to concerns and disclosures by adults at risk of any form of abuse: sexual, physical, emotional, psychological or neglect.
- Document with care any disclosures or concerns received from a child, young person or adult at risk, of current or historical abuse, in line with the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, using the *Receiving and Recording a Disclosure Form*.
- *In ministry with Children and young people*, report all matters of immediate risk or criminal abuse involving a child to Qld Police (000), using the *Reporting a Disclosure or Allegation to Authorities Form*.
- *In ministry with Children and young people*, report all matters of suspected significant harm against a child with no parent willing or able to protect the child, to Child Safety Services, using the *Reporting a Disclosure or Allegation to Authorities Form*.
- *In ministry with Children and young people*, report concerns on the safety of a child that do not meet these thresholds of immediate risk, criminal behaviour, suspected significant harm, to the Parish Safeguarding Contact/Parish Leader and the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office, for referral to Support Services in the community (eg Family and Child Connect), using the *Receiving and Recording a Disclosure Form*.
- Where uncertain of the appropriate response, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office immediately (0408 459 045; 4638 1379), for advice, support and guidance.
- Identify and mitigate risks to the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk as required by the *Parish Safeguarding Risk Management Plan*.
- Ensure that a second adult is present, during or at least in line of sight of any activity involving children, young people and adults at risk (two person rule).
- Ensure that where transport of children, young people and adults at risk is required, that the driver hold a current Licence, that the vehicle is roadworthy, insured and equipped with safety belts or seat restraints according to age, and that there is another adult passenger to supervise the children, young people and adults at risk.

<p><i>Diligent Safeguarding practice (continued)</i></p> <p><b>Maintain confidentiality ...</b></p> <p><b>Be responsible in management of information and records ...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use social media and digital communication in a manner that does not exploit or endanger children, young people and adults at risk.</li> <li>• Contribute where appropriate to diocesan and parish policies, discussions, learnings and reviews about the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk.</li> <li>• Participate in an annual performance review of my involvement in ministry.</li> </ul> <p><b>I WILL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain confidentiality of all privileged information, verbal, written or online, except where required by proper discharge of service or ministry, or if required by law.</li> </ul> <p><b>I WILL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep information, documents and records involving children, young people and adults at risk in a safe place, in locked fittings or secure computer files.</li> <li>• Ensure that Parish records and information are safe and secure.</li> <li>• Comply with legal requirements and Diocesan policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In committing to safe and supportive relationships ...</b></p> <p><b>In upholding dignity and respect ...</b></p>	<p><b>I WILL NOT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form inappropriate emotional attachments with children, young people and adults at risk.</li> <li>• Form or engage in personal relationships that are inappropriate or sexual.</li> <li>• <i>In ministry with Adults at risk</i>, accept gifts or enter into financial relationships or transactions.</li> <li>• Disclose inappropriate personal information about myself.</li> <li>• Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child, young person or adult at risk.</li> <li>• Develop relationships with children, young people and adults at risk that could be experienced or construed as favouritism and/or grooming.</li> </ul> <p><b>I WILL NOT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use language that is sexual, discriminatory and racist in nature including suggestive humour, jokes or innuendo.</li> <li>• Take part in or support any action that is racist or discriminatory towards children, young people or adults at risk, or their family members.</li> <li>• Take part in or support any action that disrespects or humiliates children, young people and adults at risk who live with disability, or their family members; or those who live with gender variance and are of diverse sexuality.</li> </ul>

<p><b>In acting with justice and fairness ....</b></p>	<p><b>I WILL NOT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use any form of physical punishment or degrading, cruel or frightening language or treatment with children, young people and adults at risk.</li> <li>• Work with children, young people and adults at risk while under the influence of prescribed medications, alcohol or prohibited drugs.</li> <li>• Supply alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children, young people and adults at risk.</li> <li>• Engage in any unlawful or criminal activity with or in relation to a young person or adult at risk.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In being diligent in Safeguarding practice ...</b></p>	<p><b>I WILL NOT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed harm or abuse involving a child, young person or an adult at risk.</li> <li>• Stay silent or be inactive when in possession of knowledge of the abuse of a child, young person or adult at risk, or of a reasonable suspicion of significant harm to a child, young person or adult at risk.</li> <li>• Refuse to participate in safeguarding training and education provided by the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry or the Parish.</li> <li>• Be alone with a child, young person or adult at risk unnecessarily (two person rule).</li> <li>• <i>In ministry with Children and young people</i>, arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children I am working with, for a purpose unrelated to Diocesan or Parish activities.</li> <li>• Show or provide access to inappropriate images, material or pornography, to children, young people and adults at risk.</li> <li>• Dismiss or disregard physical and environmental risks to the safety of children, young people and adults at risk, especially those identified in the <i>Parish Safeguarding Management Plan</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In maintaining confidentiality ....</b></p>	<p><b>I WILL NOT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, young person or adult at risk, including personal images, unless required to do so by law or by Diocesan policy on reporting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In responsible management of information and records ...</b></p>	<p><b>I WILL NOT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destroy personal or confidential information or records.</li> <li>• Leave storage facilities, physical or digital, unlocked and accessible.</li> </ul>

<p><b>If I think this Safeguarding Code of Conduct has been breached by another person in the Diocese or Parish ...</b></p>	<p><b>I WILL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act promptly to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are safe and not in immediate risk.</li> <li>• Act to ensure that the best interests of children, young people and adults at risk come first.</li> <li>• Comply with legal requirements on reporting to Police or Child Safety Services, as required.</li> <li>• Report concerns in relation to the breach of the Code of Conduct to the Diocesan Safeguarding Executive Officer, the Parish Safeguarding Contact, or the Parish Priest or Parish Leader, for further assessment and action.</li> <li>• Comply with Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and procedures on internal and external reporting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>I agree to abide by this Safeguarding Code of Conduct during my appointment, employment or volunteer involvement with the Diocese or Parish.</b></p> <p>I understand that breaches of this Safeguarding Code of Conduct <b>will</b> lead to disciplinary action or termination of my appointment or employment with the Diocese or Parish, or termination of my involvement as a volunteer.</p>	<p>..... <i>Signature</i></p> <p>..... <i>Full Name (Please print)</i></p> <p>..... <i>Date</i></p> <p>..... <i>Ministry</i></p>

All instances of child sexual abuse, current or historical, are to be reported to Police (if involving immediate risk or criminal behaviour) or to Child Safety Services (if involving reasonable suspicion of significant harm and there is no parent willing or able to protect the child). Additional matters of concern may be addressed through Support Services in the wider community (eg Family and Child Connect) through referral to the Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry Office.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

- a) Qld Police: 000 or local Police Station number ...  
Child Protection Investigation Unit (CPIU):  
Toowoomba (4631 6355), Warwick (4660 4436), Roma (4622 9358),  
Cunnamulla (4655 8900), Dalby (4669 9260)  
Email: [CPIU.Toowoomba@police.qld.gov.au](mailto:CPIU.Toowoomba@police.qld.gov.au) (change CPIU name in email address)
- b) Child Safety Services: 1300 683 390 [swintake@communities.qld.gov.au](mailto:swintake@communities.qld.gov.au)
- c) Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry: 4638 1379 or 0408 459 045 [profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au](mailto:profstandards@twb.catholic.org.au)

In the Diocese of Toowoomba we commit ourselves to ensuring 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. Our Diocese takes a zero tolerance approach to all forms of abuse.

**Diocesan Safeguarding Ministry, Diocese of Toowoomba, 14 April 2023**