

Safeguarding Code of Conduct for Youth Ministry

FOR SUPERVISING ADULTS (YOUTH MINISTRY LEADERS & SUPERVISING ADULTS)

Central to the mission of [Parish name] is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity of children and young people, providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. All Church personnel are expected to actively contribute to a culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms the Gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice.

Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at [Parish name] against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It sets out principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour for ministry in the parish.

Acceptable behaviours

All Church Personnel (clergy, volunteers, staff, contractors) are expected to:

- adhere to the Parish Safeguarding Policy, possess a current WWCC and uphold the Parish's Statement of Commitment to the safety of children and young people
- undertake annual and refresher training (online and face to face) in safeguarding
- take all reasonable steps to protect children and youth from abuse and harm
- treat everyone in the Parish community with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe pastoral environment)
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of those who:
 - are from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-identification)
 - have a disability.

Interactions with children and young people - Church personnel must:

- obtain written consent of a parent or legal guardian (who has provided the contact details) before contacting them for Parish purposes only
- ensure as far as practicable that you are not alone with them and that public visibility is maintained whenever possible
- listen and respond to their views or concerns, particularly if they are worried about their safety or the safety of another person.
- Be vigilant and observe behaviours of all other adults and youth, particularly when there is excessive favouritism that may amount to grooming.
- Be vigilant of unregistered adults on site.
- Adhere to the Diocese of Sale's Guidelines for Ministry with Children and Youth.

Reporting – Church personnel must:

- immediately report any incidents, disclosures, allegations, suspicions and concerns, as per the Diocesan Complaints Handling and Reporting Policy. Adhere to 'Five Critical Actions for Church Personnel' which is accessible from any member of the parish office or PSO.

Unacceptable behaviours

All Church Personnel (clergy, volunteers, staff, contractors) must **not**:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed abuse of a child and young person
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate language
- consume drugs on parish premises or at parish events.

Interactions with children and young persons– Church personnel must **not**:

- photograph or film them without the consent of their parent or legal guardians.
- develop any 'special' relationships with them that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children).
- exhibit behaviours which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps).
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with them. This includes doing things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with them or their family who is/are not family or socially related. An exception is made if a youth leader is required to communicate with parents regarding permission forms or use WhatsApp to discuss the youth activity for that week. If I go away on an event with youth, I may use WhatsApp to communicate with youth but I must copy parents in the conversation on WhatsApp.
- have physical contact with them or their family who is/are not socially related outside of the pastoral duties without the Parish Priest's or Parish Safeguarding Officer's knowledge and/or consent (other than accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street).
- have any online contact (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) with them or their family who is/are not family or socially related (unless necessary e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters).
- use any personal communication channels (private mobile phone, email account) to conduct parish communications with them without explicit permission from the Parish Priest.
- in any circumstance put them at risk by the locking of doors of any room they enter nor should an adult be alone with them in any room without good cause.
- manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating them. The use of corporal punishment is never acceptable. Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort.
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in their presence.
- discriminate against them because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- work with them while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

I have read, understood and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ___/___/20___