



## DIOCESE OF SALE GUIDELINES FOR RISK MANAGEMENT IN PARISHES WITH A FOCUS ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK

### PURPOSE

In accordance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS)<sup>1</sup> and the Victorian Child Safe Standards, the Diocese of Sale is committed to identifying and assessing risks in the Parish context and putting into place controls to mitigate these risks. These Guidelines have been produced to assist in identifying risks and their management in the Parish context.

### TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for these guidelines are the Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) who will use this to liaise with Church Personnel including the Parish Priest and Parish Council.

### PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW

All PSOs and Parish Secretaries have been sent both an **Issue and Risk Register** (in Excel format) to complete for their Parish (see page 7 for Risk Register). Instruction has been provided as to how these are to be completed. The Diocese Parish Safeguarding and Professional Standards Officer(DPSO) will provide individual support to enable these to be completed. These Registers are to be sent to the DPSO by the scheduled dates that have been provided or when there has been a specific issue or risk that has come to the attention of the Parish and discussed with the DPSO.

Note that if the Parish holds a one-off or specific activity such as taking children on an outing (e.g. to a Youth Festival which is overnight or a day outing) or an online event, a risk assessment for that particular activity must be undertaken. Support for the risk assessment will be provided by the DPSO. A template is provided in this document (see page 9 for Risk Assessment template).

### POTENTIAL RISKS

**Area of Risk: Leadership, Administration and Parish volunteers (known collectively as 'Personnel')**

Potential risks	Management of risk
Minimal awareness and commitment to Safeguarding	Appointment of PSO
	Posters displayed in all church buildings
	Code of Conduct displayed in all church buildings
	Parish Commitment Statement on website
	Safeguarding is an ongoing agenda item within the leadership group
	All Personnel to attend Safeguarding Training that is offered by the Diocese/Parish and attend annual refresher training. Records of their attendance to be recorded.
Parish bulletins to state commitment to Safeguarding of children and adults at risk.	
Not reporting abuse	Ensure Safeguarding training is conducted to reinforce this; Poster 'Reporting abuse' is displayed clearly in the church

<sup>1</sup> NCSS Draft Version 2 includes adults at risk.



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Potential risks	Management of risk
Unscreened Personnel	Working with Children Check, WWCC to be obtained
Misconduct or incident unreported	Ensure that Code of Conduct of appropriate behaviours is signed by all Personnel annually. There is an electronic means for this.
Personnel unaware of Child Protection Laws (grooming, failure to protect, failure to disclose)	All Personnel to attend Safeguarding Training annually as conducted by the Diocese/Parish.
	Ensure that Personnel have read the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct (both currently being updated)
Inappropriate engagement with children and adults at risk online and breaching the Code of Conduct	Ensure that Personnel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have read the Diocesan Policy on Social Media and Websites</li> <li>• Have understood the Parish Ministry Meetings in the Online Environment</li> <li>• Have signed the Parish Code of Conduct (which should have mention of this)</li> </ul>
Use of images or video of children without parental consent or images of adults at risk without consent	Ensure Personnel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not take photos or videos without obtaining consent.</li> <li>• Have signed the Parish Code of Conduct (which should have this mentioned)</li> <li>• Have access to Permission forms.</li> </ul>
Not receiving consent forms for children on activities – with the exemption of Children’s Liturgy	Children cannot be left in the care of Personnel without both Information and Permission forms signed by the parent or guardian.
The risk of someone’s personal information provided to a third party without consent	The Parish is required to have a Privacy Policy which needs to be adhered to by all Personnel.
The risk of a known offender attending Mass or Parish event	Contact the DPSO to discuss how to manage this.
The risk of ‘unsanctioned’ ministries advertised in the parish bulletin	If the ministry is being conducted by visitors from outside the Diocese, clearance is required from the Bishop’s office. The ministry or event cannot be advertised or conducted until this clearance is granted. See Diocesan Policy on Screening and Sign-in.



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Area of Risk: Altar servers

Potential risks	Management of risk
Altar servers vesting in the Sacristy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An altar server is allowed to vest alone with no one else present but should not be in the sacristy for more than 20 minutes on his or her own.</li> <li>• However, if there is a priest (or deacon) present as they are both vesting in the same room (Sacristy), then there needs to be <b>two</b> adults in addition to the priest (or deacon). The adults can be a parent and another person such as a sacristan who must have a WWCC and inducted in Safeguarding training.</li> <li>• Children are not required to remove clothing whilst preparing for Mass.</li> <li>• Lines of sights into areas where children are preparing are to be clear and visible</li> <li>• Access to the area of preparation is regulated, with responsibility assigned to the sacristan.</li> <li>• Lighting in sacristy is appropriate.</li> </ul>
Participation in altar server training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training is conducted by the Altar Server Coordinator (who has WWCC) or Priest or Deacon in an open venue.</li> <li>• There must be one other adult present (parent and/or others with WWCC) in addition to the Priest or Deacon or Altar Server Coordinator. The ratio being 1 adult (in addition to the Parish priest) to 10 children (primary age) and 2 adults to 20 children (secondary age). This is less strict than in a confined space like the Sacristy.</li> <li>• The Parish office is always advised in advance of any training and will need to record the date, venue and the names of those attending.</li> </ul>
Not maintaining altar server records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each parish is required to maintain altar server records as per Diocesan guidelines (still to be written).</li> </ul>
Participation in altar servers' picnic or similar events without adequate safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Information consent form is required from parents/guardians prior to the event.</li> <li>• Risk assessment of the specific event must be conducted.</li> <li>• Not including the Priest or Deacon, the recommended adult (with WWCC) to child ratio –is at least 2 adults to 10 children (for those of primary school age). It can be 2 adults to 20 for older children with no high risk activities.</li> </ul>



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**Area of Risk: Children in Church Environment**

Potential risks	Management of risk
Children alone in the confessional	The sacrament of reconciliation for all children should ideally be conducted in the sanctuary of the Church or in an area where there is a clear visible line of sight of other adults. If this does not occur, the rite of confession for the child should not be performed.
Children present while church is being cleaned or flowers being arranged or money being counted.  Children present while presbytery is being cleaned	No children are allowed in the presbytery unless supervised by a parent / guardian.  Flower arrangement is done at a time when children are not present in the church.  Money counting is done in the Parish Office or Presbytery where children are not allowed.
Contact with gardener	Gardening carried out when children are not normally around. Incidental contact may happen. Ensure gardener has been screened carefully (WWCC and references) before appointment is made.
Children on Church premises - Church, office/presbytery	No children are allowed in the Church, Office and Presbytery unless supervised by a parent or adult with a WWCC. Line of sight of children by their parent or adult with WWCC.
Socialising in the Narthex/Foyer, Church grounds	All children to be under the supervision of a parent/guardian/teacher..
Online grooming of children	Refer to the Diocesan policy on Social Media and Websites, as well as the Guidelines for Parish Ministry Meetings (online);
Children may be present when visiting homes on behalf of the Parish.	All Personnel who visit homes on behalf of the Parish must have a WWCC and are reference checked. They must be up to date with Safeguarding training and have signed the Parish Code of Conduct.  All Personnel are to register their visit with the Parish office including dates/times, names and addresses of people being visited. This would be recorded in the Parish visits Log.



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**Area of Risk: Children’s Liturgy, Sacrament Preparation/Catechises, Children’s Youth Group**

Potential risks	Management of risk
<p>Inadequate supervision of children; Leaders are not appropriate persons to work with children; Children’s personal information being brought home by leaders; Events are held in a location not visible to others outside of the space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommended adult to child ratio –is at least 2 adults to 10 children (for those of primary school age). It can be 2 adults to 20 for older children.</li> <li>• Leaders to have a current WWCC and to have signed the Parish Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• All personal information collected about children (in the Information Collection Forms) to be held at the Parish Office and not to be removed.</li> <li>• Although not always possible, it is ideal if the location is in clear lines of sight of others.</li> <li>• Procedure for managing injury and incidents to be complied with (covered by Safeguarding training).</li> </ul>

**Area of Risk: Toilets / Change rooms**

Potential risks	Management of risk
<p>Children encountering people in the outside toilet / change room who may do them harm</p>	<p>If parents/ guardians are with children at Mass, then children are to be accompanied by their parents / guardians to the toilet.</p> <p>If an activity is being held where children do not have parents with them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders to check the toilets or change room (for syringes, others present) first before each group activity commences.</li> <li>• Children to go in pairs (with a buddy). Secondary age children of 16+ can go on their own.</li> <li>• Follow up with children if they have not returned after 5 minutes.</li> <li>• A Leader is not to take a child to the toilet or change room alone (to safeguard both the Leader and the child). Two adults are permitted to take the child.</li> <li>• Toilets currently located outside church building and are to be locked when the church is not in use.</li> </ul>



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**Area of Risk: Sacraments – Baptisms, Holy Communion, Confirmation, Weddings.  
Other Church events such as Funerals**

Potential risks	Management of risk
Opportunistic 'grooming' when a group of parents and children are together during preparation for Sacraments (e.g. Reconciliation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For all facilitators to have 'an abundance of caution' when there is a group of parents and children together. Being aware of this is the only feasible management of the risk.</li> </ul>
Predators coming into the Church and noting the names and photos of children who are preparing for the Sacraments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid placing photos of children with their names around the Church.</li> </ul>
Photographing and filming of children without consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get written consent of families (when the bookings are made for Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation) to allow photographs to be taken by other families who are participating in the same Sacraments. It should be made clear that photos should not be taken of people who are not their family (as far as possible). Photos taken which include other children where consent has not been given are to be deleted. Consent form to be completed by Professional Photographer.</li> <li>• Request all attendees to take photos after the ceremony (less favourable option).</li> </ul>
Opportunistic 'outsiders' who attend Weddings and other Sacraments held in the Church. For example, in the Cathedral Church at Sale, 'people come from everywhere'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure most doors are locked and there is one common entry for those who attend. Due to sign-in for COVID reasons, this is the new normal.</li> <li>• Person appointed to observe and monitor, if possible.</li> </ul>
Inadequate supervision of children preparing for sacraments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure there is adequate supervision by adults or parents.</li> </ul>



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### Area of Risk: Parish Events/Community celebrations/Working bees/Parish Fete

Potential risks	Management of risk
Safeguarding risks	All proposed parish events particularly day outings and overnight camps <b>must have a separate risk assessment conducted</b> of the activities being proposed (see page 9). Contact the DPSO for support with this. Events are to be conducted by Personnel who have the WWCC and have signed the Parish Code of Conduct.

### Area of Risk: Visiting parishioners in their homes

Potential risks	Management of risk
Abuse of adults at risk through visits by Church Personnel who visit their homes (to bring Holy Communion, parish bulletins, to check on well-being, social)	All Personnel visiting adults at home need to have their visits recorded by the Parish office. Personnel are to understand and sign the Parish Code of Conduct which specifically details the boundaries involved with adults at risk. Personnel are not permitted to book medical appointments or conduct financial transactions for the housebound adults without the express permission in writing of the adults' family or Powers of Attorney.

### Area of Risk: Third party uses parish premises

Potential risks	Management of risk
The use of Church premises by a third party	A risk assessment is to be conducted on a case by case basis. Broadly, it is important to minimise contact between attendees of the group attending the premises and children. However, in some cases the group using the premises consists of children. Discuss with the DPSO.



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## Risk Register

Diocese of Sale Risk Register. Parish Name: [Name of Parish]

Area of Risk:						
No	Risk	Date	Probability (Likelihood) and Impact (Consequence)	Management of risk (Actions to be taken)	Risk Owner	Risk Actionee(s)
1	Sample Risk 1 [Owing to the lack of professional development of all Personnel, there may be a minimal awareness and commitment to safeguarding of children and adults at risk]	Jan 2021			Parish Priest	
		Jan 2022				
		Jan 2023				
2	Risk 2	Jan 2021				
		Jan 2022				
		Jan 2023				





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**Risk Assessment**

This is a risk assessment of the \_\_\_\_\_[Activity]\_\_\_\_\_ conducted at \_\_\_[Name of Parish]\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Date (when Plan was created):</b>		<b>Date Plan was approved:</b>		
<b>Overview of the Activity/Event/Project including area within the Parish:</b>		<b>Person(s) responsible for activity/event/project:</b>		
		<b>Activity co-coordinator:</b>		
<b>Identified Risks, Probability &amp; Impact (on the objectives of the activity/project), Risk Responses (Management of the risk/Containment Measures), Monitoring/Control (Risk Owner/Risk Actionee)</b>				
<b>Identified Risks</b>	<b>Probability (Likelihood) and Impact (Consequence)</b>	<b>Risk Responses</b>	<b>Risk Owner</b>	<b>Risk Actionee(s)</b>