



DIOCESE OF
LISMORE



Safeguarding Framework

*A Handbook of Policies, Procedures,
Guidelines, and Resources.*

Supporting to embed a culture of safety in your
Ministry for the Diocese of Lismore

Diocese of Lismore
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Acknowledgments

The Safeguarding Office would like to thank the Diocese of Lismore parishes, staff and members of the community for their feedback and guidance in the development of this revised Safeguarding Handbook.

Acknowledgement of Survivors

The Diocese of Lismore acknowledges the experiences of those whom have been subjected to abuse. The Dioceses recognises and acknowledges the long lasting and serious effects that abuse can and does cause. The Diocese is committed to promoting and fostering a culture of safety for all, through vigilance and proactive approaches to safeguarding.

Commitment statement

The Diocese of Lismore has zero tolerance to the abuse and neglect of all within our Diocese and is wholly committed to embedding a culture of Safeguarding in our everyday.

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Acknowledgment of Country

The Diocese of Lismore acknowledges that it resides on the lands of the Bundjalung, Yaegl, Gumbaynggir, Dunghutti and Birpai Nations.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians who have walked and cared for this land for thousands of years and their descendants who maintain these spiritual connections and traditions with land, sea and sky.

We respectfully acknowledge their Elders past, present and future leaders. We celebrate their continuing culture and the living memory of their ancestors. The Land we are on now, the land we live, work, breathe, eat and sleep, always was and always will be Aboriginal Land.

About The Safeguarding Handbook



Pope Francis said:

we all have the duty to welcome openheartedly minors and vulnerable persons and to create a safe environment for them, with their interests as a priority. This requires a continuous and profound conversion, in which personal holiness and moral commitment come together to promote the credibility of the Gospel proclamation and to renew the educational mission of the Church.



What You'll Find in This Handbook





-  **Safeguarding and the Diocese of Lismore** An overview of Safeguarding in the Diocese.
-  **Code of Conduct** Expectations for maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.
-  **Prevention and Protection Practices** Guidelines on prevention and protection
-  **Safe Programs, Practice and Behavioural Guidelines** Guidelines on conducting safe programs and activities, professional behaviour and boundaries, complaints and reporting procedures

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01

Forward



Forward

The care of children and vulnerable adults should be central to the Church's teaching, action and pastoral care. This is what the Gospel asks of every Christian. This handbook sets out policy, procedures and resources to ensure that we, in the Lismore Diocese, place this care in all the works of the diocese.

However this is not enough. No amount of legislation can guarantee the safety of children and vulnerable people. Safeguarding must be in the culture of the diocese. Love and care must be part of our being. We care because the Gospel is in our hearts and in all we do. I pray that this care will be so part of the culture of the diocese that it is unconsciously present in each of us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Greg Homeming".

Most Rev Gregory Homeming OCD

Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Lismore
April 2025

1.1 Introduction / Purpose

The Catholic Diocese of Lismore is wholly committed to creating and maintaining an environment and culture that is safe, supportive, caring and nurturing for all children, young people and adults. Working with parishes and relevant agencies, to fulfil obligations of leadership, compliance and commitment.

The Safeguarding Office was established in May 2017. The role of the Safeguarding Office is to raise awareness regarding our collective responsibility to protect the safety, well-being and dignity of all. For the purpose of strengthening and embedding a safeguarding culture with a 'whole of diocese' approach, while maintaining compliancy with all legislatively and regulatory authorities.



Focusing on the prevention of abuse and harm, the Safeguarding Office supports the implementation of the ten **(10) Child Safe Standards** regulated by the Office of the Children's Guardian and **The (10) National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS)** within the Diocese.



Office of the
Children's Guardian



The Safeguarding Office has developed this Framework and a variety of procedures to support, protect and respond swiftly and appropriately in the rare but regrettable circumstances in which children and or adults at risk are harmed or are at risk of being harmed. These procedures seek not only to ensure safety, well-being and dignity within the Diocese's parishes, entities and agencies, but also outside the Church environment, in the event that a member of the Diocese learns of a matter of concern.

This Framework, and its procedures, are governed by current legislation to ensure the Diocese complies with all legislative requirements and is accountable, and transparent, in all ministries undertaken. However, this Framework goes beyond legal obligations and ensuring due process.

It will guide all in the parishes and pastoral communities to take responsibility for embedding and maintaining an environment that is safe, supportive, caring and nurturing. This proactive approach is transparent in the environments where children and adults at risk know that their community:

- is alert to areas of risk and harm;
- is capable of applying appropriate actions of prevention;
- is confident to voice their concerns; and
- has trust that their concerns will be listened to respectfully and taken seriously,
- is proactive to embed and empower children and adults in decision making

The Diocese of Lismore has zero tolerance to abuse or exploitation of children, young people and adults at risk. All members of the Diocesan family will work together for the protection of these people and for the prevention of any form of abuse, neglect or exploitation – physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual – within our church communities and organisations.



Commitment to Safeguarding Statement

The Diocese of Lismore is committed to fostering communities of safety and care. We acknowledge our legal, moral, and spiritual responsibilities to care for and uphold the dignity and rights of children, young people, and adults at risk. The Diocese of Lismore has;

1. a zero tolerance to the abuse or neglect of children, young people or vulnerable adults and commits to acting in their best interests at all times;
2. established a policy and developed a range of procedures that work together to protect, and, where required, to respond immediately and compassionately to any harm, or risk of harm; safeguarding procedures and practices underpinned by legislation – ensuring ongoing compliance, accountability and transparency in all ministries undertaken by the Church; and
3. acknowledged the experiences of those who have survived child sexual abuse. The effects of abuse are long lasting and serious. The Diocese wishes to prevent future abuse and encourage everyone to champion child safety and commits to preventing future abuse whether it is sexual, physical, emotional or neglect.
- 4.

Creating safe environments is a dynamic process that involves active participation and responsibility by parishes, schools, families and communities. Safe environments are marked by collaboration, vigilance and a proactive approach to safeguarding. Workers have a responsibility to safeguard children, young people and the vulnerable through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment. All workers, including clergy, employees and volunteers are to be taught what is required to undertake their roles in a way that enhances a safe and caring environment.



19th May, 2020

v.2 15th April, 2024

1.3 10 Child Safe Standards



Office of the
Children's Guardian

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, recommended 10 Child Safe Standards, drawing on its findings and extensive research and consultation about what makes organisations safe:

The Child Safe Standards provide tangible guidance for organisations to drive a child safe culture, adopt strategies and to put the interests of children first, whilst keeping them safe from harm.

The NSW Government has delegated the **Office of the Children's Guardian** responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Child Safe Standards for all organisation's working with children and young people.

For more information visit the Office of the Children's Guardian (NSW)

<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/training-and-resources/child-safe-resources/child-safe-standards>

OR

Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional responses to Child Abuse

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/making-institutions-child-safe>

The Child Safe Standards

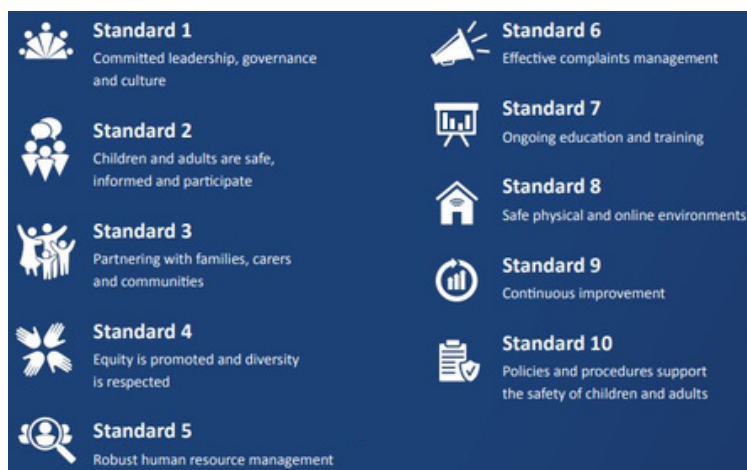


National Catholic Safeguarding Standards



A safe Church for everyone

The Standards (NCSS) create a framework for Catholic entities to promote the safety of children and adults at risk. They outline the policies and activities that will prevent, respond to, and support reporting of concerns regarding abuse.



The Standards work together to ensure that every entity, ministry and organisation across the Catholic Church places the safety of children and adults at risk at the core of how they plan, think and act.

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) have been adopted by The Catholic Diocese of Lismore.

02

Safeguarding and the Diocese of Lismore





2.1

Professional Boundaries

We all have boundaries, these are the rules that govern how we interact in our relationships with others, indicating what we find to be acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

There are legal, ethical and organisational frameworks that protect both workers and children/ young people and or adults at risk from physical and emotional harm, assisting to maintain a safe working environment.

Workers (paid or voluntary) must act professionally at all times as part of their engagement with the Diocese of Lismore.

Maintaining an awareness of potential risks or concerns that may arise with children, young people and adults at risk within the Diocese and an extension to relationships outside of the Diocese.




The Diocesan Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk policies extends on professional boundaries and forms part of the workers employment with the Diocese. 'Integrity in Our Common Mission' is a National Code of Conduct for those exercising pastoral ministry in the Diocese, bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians, religious and lay men and lay women who are exercising a pastoral ministry.

Diocesan policies and Codes of Conduct must be read in conjunction with this handbook.

2.2

Roles and Responsibilities

The person with primary responsibility for dealing with child and adult at risk, protection concerns in the Diocese is the Bishop in his relevant capacity, or the Vicar for Safeguarding. The Bishop, as Head of Relevant Entity, has delegated the Safeguarding Manager to directly manage all allegations of reportable conduct for all parishes, ministries and agencies.

 Head of Relevant Entity	Most Rev Bishop Greg Homeming DLCSL P/L Mr Adam Spencer St Agnes Care & Lifestyle P/L & St Agnes Assist P//L Tony Leahy
 Vicar for Safeguarding	Rev Paul Gooley
 Safeguarding Manager	Mrs Julie Patston

However, all persons within the parishes and agencies who have contact with children and adults at risk are accountable for helping to ensure the safety, well-being and dignity of all.

These responsibilities include:

- being caring, respectful and compassionate towards children, young people and adults;
- complying with all legal requirements relating to child protection; including:
- complying with any relevant screening obligations; and
- reporting matters of concern relating to the safety, well-being and dignity of children to the appropriate person, including the NSW Police, where appropriate;
- complying with the Diocese' mandatory reporting and reportable conduct policy and procedures that ensure all reasonable steps are taken to protect children and adults at risk from all forms of harm;
- cooperation with any internal or external investigation regarding the safety, well-being and dignity of a child, young person or adult at risk;
- practices and interventions that continually build a culture of safety, characterised by respect, fairness and the development of mutual trust and reconciliation;
- training in safeguarding and ongoing professional development;
- promotion of open communication, tolerance and positive relationships;
- signing and complying with the Diocesan Code of Conduct.

Parish Priest / Administrator / Supervisor

People in supervisory or leadership type roles play a key role in modelling expected behaviour and the training of workers.

People in such positions can minimise risks by:

- adopting recruiting and selection practices which safeguard children and adults at risk;
 - ensuring that workers who undertake activities with children and adults at risk understand their duties and responsibilities and have clearly articulated and documented role descriptions;
 - providing appropriate training, and understanding of obligations, for those working with children and adults at risk;
 - supporting and encouraging a safe and secure environment;
 - adopting a proactive response to inappropriate behaviour by workers;
 - responding to complaints, suspicions and/or allegations in a prompt and professional manner; and
 - ensuring victimisation is not tolerated
-

Workers / Employees / Volunteers

Diocesan workers whether they are employees, volunteers or students need to be screened, educated and supported to undertake their ministry and/or agency activities.

There is an expectation that employees, volunteers and students on placement who work with children and adults at risk will:

- report issues, activities, equipment, policies and work practices that are unsafe and area potential areas of risk;
 - engage in appropriate behaviour;
 - use appropriate language and interactions that empower those they serve and/or work with;
 - provide the highest standard of service provision;
 - participate in professional training and development; and
 - understand the requirements of their role.
- To achieve the above outcomes, volunteers and employees will need to participate in:
- a recruitment and selection process;
 - an induction into the organisation;
 - training in the role; and
 - performance feedback or an appraisal system (as required).
-

Families and Carers

Families and carers can support a Parish/Agency by:

- providing children and adults at risk with the required support to participate in the various activities including teaching self-protective behaviours;
- taking part in the planning, management and delivery of activities, where appropriate;
- reporting when a child or adult at risk is experiencing bullying or harassment whilst participating in an activity/service; and
- reporting when there is a suspicion that someone is being abused or harmed whilst participating in an activity/service.

Where practicable, there is also a need to encourage children and those at risk in the Diocese's care to contribute to a safe environment by:

- showing respect towards other children and adults;
- being mindful of situations that may place them at risk of harm; and
- speaking up when they may experience or observe inappropriate behaviour or unsafe situations.

Creating a Culturally safe environment

The Diocese of Lismore is committed to working towards a culturally safe environment.

An environment where the diverse and unique identities and experiences of all

Cultures are welcomed.

We will create environments that feel safe, and everyone's identity is respected.

Where everyone is valued.

03

Prevention and Protection Practices





3.1 Safe Recruitment and Selection Practices

It is important that all possible steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people working. While the vast majority of people who want to work with children and adults are well-motivated, effective recruitment and selection procedures will help identify the right people to work, and discourage those who are unsuitable from applying.

It also means that potential workers are learning right from the beginning about the priorities, values and practices of the Diocese of Lismore when working with children and adults at risk.

When recruiting Diocesan workers, ensure safe practices by following the recommended steps of:

- having position descriptions for each role, which defines the positions, tasks, and the skills and experience required;
- asking the recommended child-related interview questions;
- ensuring the candidate is screened appropriately (including reference check, criminal check and Working with Children Check);
- presenting the selected applicant with an engagement letter/employment contract;
- completing an induction process with the new employee/volunteer;
- entering volunteers' details into the volunteer register.



Office of the
Children's Guardian

3.2 Working with Children Check



The WWCC is a legal requirement for anyone who works or volunteers in Child -Related work in NSW. Child-related work as defined by the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012.

- Certain roles within our Diocese, requires workers paid and voluntary to hold a WWCC before they can engage in child-related work.
- Refer to the Working with Children Check Policy,

WWCC Verification process

Verification is the process of confirming an employee's status, (paid or voluntary) prior to commencing child-related work, all workers holding a WWCC for their role must have the WWCC verified by the relevant Parish or Agency.



Failure to do so will attract a substantial fine.

Verifying an employee's status allows the OCG to know that they hold a valid WWCC. In other words, it makes the link between the employee and organisation in the OCG'S continuous monitoring system.

- Verification must be done through the OCG online system. Organisations must not commence employing, or continue to employ, a worker in child-related work unless the organisation has verified the workers relevant details and made a record of those relevant details. Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 NSW.
- If an employee becomes barred in the future, the OCG will advise you to immediately remove that person from child-related work.
- Organisations must also verify again when workers renew their WWCC's after 5 years.

WWCC Renew

WWCC check expire every 5 years. The Office of the Children's Guardian will contact you 3 months prior to the expiry of the check. Ensure you have all current detail to ensure the OCG can contact you at this time. Once you have renewed your WWCC, let your employer or the parish know so they can verify your renewal.



3.3 National Criminal History Check

The Diocese follows the National Criminal History Check (NCHC) Policy when needing to determine whom needs to hold a NCHC for the role in which they hold within the Diocese.

When needing to obtain a NCHC contact the Chancery office for support.

3.4 NDIS Worker Checks

It is a commonwealth Government requirement that certain workers delivering supports or services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) must have a worker screening clearance.

In NSW this is called the NDIS Worker Check (NDISWC) and it is administered by the Office of the Children's Guardian.



3.5 Record Keeping

For record keeping and auditing purposes, it is important to ensure an up to date electronic Working with Children Check Register of those involved in child-related activity is kept at each parish/agency.

This Register should contain the following information:

- WWCC verification
- Role/Ministry
- Safeguarding training completed



3.6 Safeguarding Information and Record Keeping

The Diocese of Lismore Safeguarding Information and Records Keeping Policy sets out the requirements of the relevant legislation and recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, regarding keeping Safeguarding records.

3.7 Visiting Clergy and Religious

In order to carry out a public ministry in the Diocese of Lismore, Visiting Clergy and or Religious are required to be compliant with both Civil Law and Church requirements. Therefore, all Clergy and Religious from outside the Diocese who wish to provide a ministry and/or religious services within the Diocese of Lismore are required to seek permission of the Ordinary (Bishop) by submitting necessary documentation to the Chancery, and receiving confirmation of clearance, prior to undertaking any ministry and/or religious service in the Diocese.

The Chancery will verify the information provided and the Chancery will issue a confirmation letter / email if compliant with details of the visit to:

1. the visiting clergy and/or religious; and
2. parish priest where the visit will take place,

To view the Visiting Clergy and Religious protocol, and associated forms, please visit <https://www.lismorediocese.org/visiting-clergy-religious-protocol/>

For any questions you may have regarding Diocesan requirements, or for further information, please email the Chancery at chancery@lismore.catholic.org.au or phone 02 6622 0407.

Please note: The Visiting Clergy or Religious register is to be retained by the Parish and is to be sent to the Chancery Office 2 x per year at the end of every six-month period (1st Jan / 1st July). For support or further information regarding the Visiting Clergy/Religious register, please contact the Safeguarding Office via email at safeguarding@lismore.catholic.org.au or phone 02 6621 9444.

3.8 Confidentiality and Privacy

The Diocese of Lismore *Code of Conduct* and *Privacy Policy* sets guidance relating to Confidentiality and Privacy. The Diocese and its agencies collect and store confidential and personal information about children, adults at risk, families and workers.

It is expected that workers will:

- treat confidential and personal information about children, adults at risk, families, or other workers respectfully;
 - exercise caution and sound judgement in discussing other people's confidential and personal information;
 - comply with relevant laws and regulations regarding the collection, dissemination, use and security of all such information;
 - only use such information for work-related and/or authorised purposes;
 - only communicate such information to those who need to know in order to perform their role.
-



3.9 Self-Assessment and Continuous Improvement Action Plan

The Diocese of Lismore Self Assessment has been developed using the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and is intended to be completed annually.

This is an important responsibility for our parishes and agencies to give priority to matters relating to the safety and wellbeing of all.

One of the primary challenges is to bring about a cultural transformation that places the safety of children and adults at risk at the centre of everything we do.

To assist with embedding this culture, a self-assessment and continuous improvement action plan has been developed to assist parishes within the Diocese to continuously improve their safeguarding procedures. It is intended to support parishes in reviewing the safeguarding measures they currently have in place and to identify further improvements that need to take place to ensure compliance.

It further aims to:

- build and strengthen a culture of Safeguarding children and adults at risk within the parish community;
- support and assist parishes within the Diocese to understand, implement and comply with the Child Safe Standards and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards;
- support and assist parishes within the Diocese to understand, implement and comply with legislative requirements, reporting obligations and the Diocese of Lismore's policy and guidance documents;
- identify potential risk of harm in the parish and strive for continuous improvement strategies to protect children, young people and adults at risk.

3.10 Child Safe Self-Assessment



Office of the
Children's Guardian

The Child Safe Self-Assessment assists organisations to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in how an organisation is implementing the NSW Child Safe Standards.

The Safeguarding Office supports all parishes and child-related agencies to complete the assessment, which is overseen by the Office of the Children's Guardian.



3.11 Risk Assessment and Management

The Diocese's commitment to the safety requires a parish/agency to undertake risk assessments of activities and services provided.

As part of the overall risk management strategy, assessing and undertaking effective risk assessments and developing mitigation strategies for activities involving children and/or adults at risk are an important safeguarding strategy used to assist in creating safe environments for all participants.

In assessing any activity or service provision within the Diocese it is important to consider how harm might occur, why and when it could occur. Once the level of risk is determined, the risks can be prioritised and options that effectively control the situation can be considered for implementation.

A few important things to consider are:

What could possibly happen? Think about anything that could possibly go wrong.

This could include things like people hurting themselves, a fire, lack of supervision.

How likely is it to happen? For each risk that you've identified think about how likely it is for it to happen. Consider everything, from the far-fetched to the common, the everyday to the rare.

How serious would the harm be? If it did happen, consider the consequence for the children, adult's, employees, volunteers, organisation etc. if harm did occur.

Risk assessments must be conducted on all activities and services provided within the Diocese that involve children and adults at risk. It's important to have a plan of action for each risk identified. What would you do in response if the identified risk happened? When the harm is serious, and the problem could arise often, you have a risk that needs immediate attention.

These assessments are to be kept on file and reviewed annually or when an adverse incident occurs or the circumstances change significantly.

The risk of harm to children and/or adults at risk can be reduced by:

- ensuring that activities support the interest of those involved;
- providing constant supervision by reliable and trained adults;
- knowing where participants are at all times; and
- implementing appropriate risk mitigation strategies within the environment to keep participants safe.
- Parents/guardians should also complete a registration/consent form for children.

3.12 Education and Training

The Diocese of Lismore Safeguarding Education and Training Policy outlines the Diocese commitment to training all personnel.

As part of the Diocese of Lismore's commitment to ensuring all children and adults at risk are safe respected, protected and supported. It is an expectation that the following groups undertake

Safeguarding Awareness Training:

- Clergy,
- Religious Appointees,
- Parish Employees
- Volunteer who holds a WWCC for their role. *

NOTE: *The Safeguarding Office understands the variant roles of a Volunteer within the Parish and Entity Environments. For a Volunteer who does **not** hold a WWCC for their role, the participation of Safeguarding Awareness training is at the **discretion** of the **Parish Priest**.

The Safeguarding Office encourages all within the Diocese to participate in training, as we promote Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Course Delivery:

The training course can be delivered in multiple ways.

- Face to Face – delivered by the Safeguarding Office or a recognised individual appropriate to deliver the training. Certificates will be provided after the training day.
- Booklet format – completing the training via the booklet format does require a Q & A booklet to be completed. Purpose being to knowledge test those completing the booklet delivery. Booklets will need to be returned to your Parish Office, whom of which will mark and if successful the Parish will provide your name to the Safeguarding Office whom of which will release a certificate of completion. Certificates will not be released to individuals only to Parishes by parish request.
- Online training – is under development.

Exemptions:

The Safeguarding office recognises the active participation of the following within our Diocese and therefore exempt the following from this Safeguarding Training.

- ◉ Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools Limited (DLCSL) teachers who volunteer in their parishes are exempt to the Diocesan Safeguarding Awareness and Mandatory Reporting, Reportable Conduct Training. However, for this exemption to be recorded, teachers must provide the parish with their current certificate of completion.
- ◉ St Vincent's De Paul, parishioners whom volunteer and have completed Safeguarding Training with St Vincent De Paul prior to the Diocesan Training can receive RPL (recognition of prior learning) if they can provide their parish with their current certificate of completion.

Clergy and Seminarians

Clergy with faculties ministering within the Diocese of Lismore and Seminarians:

All Clergy who have faculties and who minister within the Diocese of Lismore, and seminarians, are required to undertake the following training:

- Safeguarding Awareness Training
- Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct
- Ongoing annual Safeguarding Topic Training

Overseas Clergy and Religious

Clergy and Religious from overseas with faculties to minister and Appointments within the Diocese of Lismore:

Clergy and Religious from overseas are required to undertake the following Safeguarding Training:

- Safeguarding Awareness Training
- Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct
- Ongoing annual Safeguarding Topic Training

Religious (Brothers, Religious Women)

Other Religious ministering within the Diocese of Lismore

Religious Brothers and Religious Women are required to undertake the following Safeguarding Training:

- Safeguarding Awareness Training
- Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct

Encouraged to complete ongoing safeguarding training and the Diocese would be happy to provide this.

- Ongoing annual Safeguarding Topic Training

Parish Environments

Parish Employees

Parish Employees are required to undertake the following Safeguarding Training:

- Safeguarding Awareness Training
- Safeguarding Refresher Training every three (3) years

Those holding a role requiring a Working with Children Check **WWCC**

- Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct

Parish Volunteers

Parish Volunteers who hold a **WWCC** are required to undertake the following Safeguarding Training

- Safeguarding Awareness Training
- Safeguarding Refresher Training every three (3) years
- Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct

Youth Ministry Environments

Youth Ministry Team Leaders, Employees and Volunteers

Youth Ministry, team leaders, employees and volunteers are required to undertake the following Safeguarding Training:

- Safeguarding Awareness Training
- Safeguarding Refresher Training every three (3) years

Those holding a role requiring a Working with Children Check **WWCC**

- Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct

Entity Environments

Entity Heads and Employees

Entity Heads and Employees are required to undertake the following Safeguarding Training:

- Safeguarding Awareness Training
- Safeguarding Refresher Training every three (3) years

Those holding a role requiring a Working with Children Check **WWCC**

- Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct

04

Safe Programs, Practice and Behaviour Guidelines





Safe Programs, Practice and Behaviour Guidelines

These guidelines seek to support in the planning and delivery of programs, activities and events with the prevention of safety at its core.

In relation to child safety, physical and social environments within an organisation can be designed or altered to minimise a risk.

A focus on 'how we do things' and 'where we do things' in a parish is important in promoting the safety of all.

The guidelines address four (4) broad areas:

- Conducting programs, activities and events**
- Supporting the wellbeing of children and young people**
- Supervision**
- Child safety offsite**

Conducting programs, activities and events



4.1 Physical Contact

Respect, safety, and appropriate boundaries are the guiding principles for physical contact between Diocesan workers and children or adults. In some circumstances physical contact with children or adults may be required.

These may include.

- management of an injury,
- to assist with toileting etc.

Where practical, an adult should provide an explanation to the child or adult as to what the physical contact will be and why it will occur.

Consideration should be given regarding whether it is necessary to seek permission from the child or adult's parent/carer in relation to the physical contact (depending on the nature of the contact).



4.2 Location

It is not the intention of the guidelines to restrict the social interaction of parishioners and those who come together to socialise, pray and support one another beyond the activities and programs offered by parishes.

Parishes should ensure that they are aware of all relevant programs, activities and events conducted within their parish communities, which provides oversight and monitoring to promote the safety of all and respond when there are concerns of safety.

Programs, activities and events should be;

- conducted in venues that are physically suitable (e.g safe, not isolated),
- enable adequate supervision and monitoring to occur and,
- have direct lines of sight.

4.3 Two (2) Adult Rule



General safe practice in all activities, recommends the application of the *Two Adult Rule* which serves to keep children and adults at risk, as well as those supporting them, safe.

Wherever practical no fewer than two adults should be present at all times during any parish/agency program, activity/event or ministry involving children or adults at risk.

It is best that these two adults are not directly related.

This approach is an important safeguarding measure because it:

- significantly reduces the risk of an incident of abuse occurring;
- protects the adults against false allegations;
- reduces the possibility of a claim of negligence;
- may encourage other people to volunteer if they know there will be assistance on a regular basis;
- provides help if there is an accident or emergency; and
- sends a clear statement from the Diocese that everyone is important and valued.

In some smaller parishes, due to capacity, this rule may be difficult to enforce. In such circumstances it is important to communicate with your parish priest/administrator, supervisor, or the Safeguarding Office to discuss alternate strategies.

These may include;

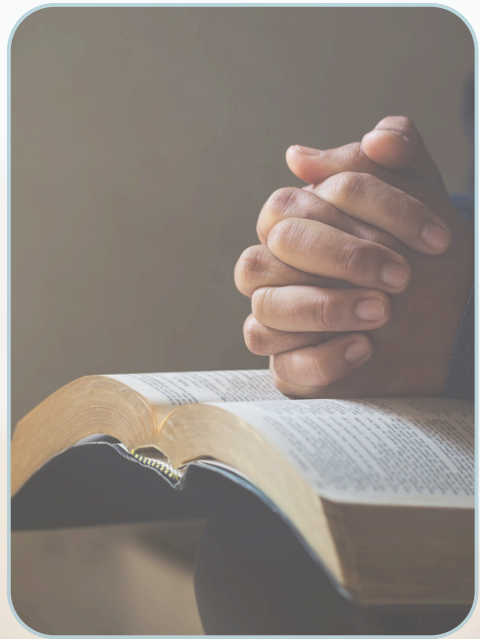
- invite a parent or other parishioner to join the activity to act as a second supervising adult;
- use an open space or leave building doors open for visibility;
- put glass windows in the doors;
- communicate with parish priest/administrator the detail of the activity prior to it starting, request calling-in throughout the activity (at least once) and calling-in again after activity to ensure your time is accounted for;
- take notes after the activity to document the events such as time, call-ins, witnesses etc. This will help provide confidence and reassurance that good practice in safeguarding is in place.

NOTE: These are just some examples of protective strategies to consider if the *Two Adult Rule* is not possible.

You should discuss with your parish priest/administrator, supervisor, or Safeguarding Office if you are unsure or worried.

4.4 Pastoral Support

Clergy, employees and volunteers provide pastoral support to families, children and young people in a range of settings e.g. in the home, hospitals, immigration detention centres, prison, juvenile justice settings, schools.



For example:

- A priest attends the home of a parishioner after a bereavement.
- A chronically ill young person receives communion in their home from an extraordinary minister of communion.
- Volunteers dropping off material or food aid to a refugee family who has recently moved into the parish provides an important welcome and sense of connection for the family.
- A soup van on a cold night provides warmth and substance for young people experiencing homelessness and sleeping rough in the community.

At all times in ministry, clergy, employees and volunteers must be mindful of safety expectations.

- When providing pastoral support in a home setting, where children, young people and or adults at risk are present, it is important to minimise the possible risks to all.
- Contact a family and arrange a suitable time to attend the home when parents and or guardians are present.
- Do not enter a home when a parent or carer is not present i.e. when a child or children may be home alone.
- Avoid any situation in the home where you are unsupervised or left alone with children, young person or adult at risk.
- Interact in open and visible area of the home (e.g. kitchens, lounge rooms) avoid private areas (e.g. bathrooms, bedrooms, garages).
- Do not undertake any activities, which are beyond the boundaries of a pastoral role and beyond the supervision of others (e.g. offer to babysit, take a child individually on an outing).



4.5 Enrolment and Registration Process

Registration processes (i.e. forms) for children and young people under the age of 18 years, must be obtained to assist in the planning and preparation of programs, activities and events where a parent and or guardian are not present.

Examples are;

- contact information,
- emergency contact information,
- permission from parents and or guardians, medical and emergency information and contacts.

Enrolment or registration processes can also assist in communicating,

- programs,
- activities or
- events to parents and guardians.

Whom of which can begin conversations with children and young people and the behavioural expectations in relation to a child's participation (e.g. a detailed description of the program event or activity, the individuals responsible or in leaderships roles).

4.6 Sign IN/OUT Arrangements

Having sign in and out processes, are a valuable tool for recording who is present during a program, activity or event. e.g. participants, clergy, employees and volunteers.

This information is important in ensuring that:

- appropriate levels of supervision and care are provided
- we can identify the members of the clergy, employees and volunteers who are supervising the program, activity or event
- in an emergency situation, we can act to evacuate safely those present
- when an incident occurs, it is possible to determine who was present, who may have been impacted or who may have witnessed the incident.

Sign in and out processes records the transfer of responsibility from parents and or guardians to those responsible for supervising programs, activities or events and vice versa.



4.7 Identification

Identity badges or name tags are a useful tool and best practice when improving safety as they;

- help to build connection with ‘workers’ by knowing their names
- assist to distinguish those who are “in leadership “or have a role from others who may be present) e.g. members of public)
- assist to know who to speak with if requiring assistance or when someone may be feeling unsafe.

When conducting or attending large events (e.g. fetes, morning teas, retreats), it may be advisable to clearly identify those responsible for safety (e.g. coloured T-shirt, high visibility vest), so that participants know who can be approached in relation to safety concerns.

4.8 Record Keeping

Diocese parishes, agencies and entities have an obligation to maintain records in line with the *Diocesan Safeguarding Information and Record Keeping Policy*.





4.9 Photography / Video Recording

Parishes/agencies host a range of activities including liturgical, pastoral and formational activities. It is not uncommon for parents and other family members to take photographs of these occasions. It is important, however, to be aware there are some people who may attend these activities who may take inappropriate photographs or footage of children.

It is key for parishes/agencies to highlight the need for respectful and safe photography practices and make it clear to all in attendance that taking a photograph can be construed as obtaining personal information and therefore should be treated as any other item of personal and confidential information.

Attendees are to be encouraged to use sensitivity when taking photographs and to confirm with the parents of children other than their own that they are comfortable to have their child included in photographs taken by someone other than their own family members.

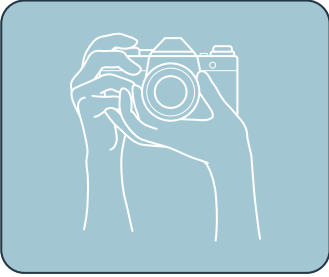
A similar courtesy should also be extended to adults who may be included in the photographs.

In a parish context, the responsibility for this notification lies with the parish priest, but may be delegated, for example to the coordinator of the activity. A suggested script is found in *Appendix 27 Script for Use of Photography / Videos*.

Remember:

- The interests and welfare of children and vulnerable adults taking part in events is paramount.
- Parents, carers, children and vulnerable adults have the right to decide whether children's and/or vulnerable adult's images are to be taken and how those images may be used.
- Refusal of consent should not in any way limit children's participation in activities.





Where appropriate, parishes/agencies may restrict photography on its premises by setting conditions of entry.

Where such restrictions are used they should be clear, tailored, publicised and capable of enforcement.

For example.

- There may be a general parish policy in regard to sacraments that says 'No photography or recording is permitted during sacraments without the express permission of the parish priest or administrator' may be promulgated.
- When restriction is notified, failure to comply may result in exclusion from parish premises or activities.

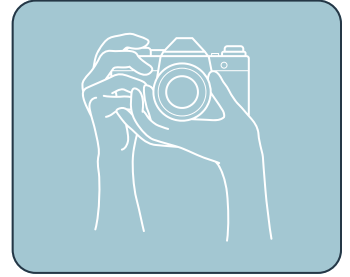
To capture parish events and activities, parishes may also wish children to be filmed or photographed from time-to-time.

It is important to follow the *Diocesan Film and Photography Guidelines outlined in Appendix 29*, and obtain necessary consent to film and/or photograph children or young people. The *Consent to film and photograph form can be found in Appendix 28*, and within the *Diocesan Social Networking Policy*.

Questions to consider:

- What is the reason for this photography?
- Do you have permission to take and use images of children?
- Have you asked the child or young person how they may feel about the use of their image?
- Have you provided enough information about the image so the parent/carer can give informed consent?
- How will others interpret the image?
- Does the use of the image exploit the person in any way?
- Will you put the person at risk if you photograph them?
- Who will see promotional material containing the image?





4.10 Risks of sharing images online

Clear communication must be made to all whom attend programs, activities and events including the guidelines on the use of the images, as sharing photographs and images of children or adults at risk on social media or other online platforms carries potential risks.

For example:

May become vulnerable to grooming if a photograph is shared alongside information that makes them identifiable.

This includes: personal details,

- a tag with location information, visual details such as a school uniform;
- inappropriate images may be shared online;
- images may be copied, downloaded, screenshotted or shared by anyone;
- images of children or adults may be adapted and used inappropriately;
- photos or video recordings may appear in internet search results;
- each photo or video, and any comments on them, become a part of a child or adult's public image.

4.11 Social Media

'Social media' is the term commonly given to web-based tools that allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, and interests online.

There are many types of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, You Tube, WhatsApp, Snap Chat.

As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement.

The underpinning principle for use of social media by workers is Christ-centred love for others and respect for human dignity, both on-line and off-line, in both private and professional life.

Users of parish/agency networks also have a duty of care to maintain network security and are required to adhere to accepted policies and procedures for the professional use of electronic mail (Email) and the internet.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- duty of care;
- ethical and appropriate use;
- the need to maintain privacy, confidentiality and the rights of individuals and copyright owners;
- adherence to considered and appropriate records management practices;
- appropriate use of systems, accounts, and passwords.

When using social media, workers are bound by the *Code of Conduct* policy and other relevant policies such as the Diocese of Lismore *Social networking* policy and *Acceptable use of electronic communication systems* (including email) and *devices* policy.

4.12 Smoking, Alcohol Consumption and the Use of Drugs

Tobacco or illicit drugs must not be provided to a child or young person under any circumstances.

Alcohol may only be provided to a child in the context of administering sacramental wine during Holy Communion with the authorisation of the child's parent or guardian.

Those running activities for children must not use, provide or permit the use of alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs.

Where it is reasonably suspected that a worker is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (including medication) which may impair their judgement or impact on their performance, or is consuming alcohol or using drugs during a Church activity, this must be reported to the supervisor/group leader who will act to make the situation safe in the first instance and then address the issue.

This will include completing a *concern/complaints form* (Appendix 13) and informing the parish priest who will follow the process of reporting.

Similarly, where it is reasonably suspected that a child has attended an activity under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or it is reasonably suspected that a child is using drugs or alcohol during a Church activity, the child needs to be managed to ensure their safety and the safety of everyone in attendance, and consideration should be given to reporting the incident to the appropriate authority.

If a worker requires medication, this should be safely secured and not accessible by children and young people.

Support and Resources.

Appendix 31

Fact Sheet – Use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs

Supporting the Wellbeing of Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

4.13 Managing Medical Conditions and additional support needs

Anyone attending a parish activity or program may have existing medical conditions and/or additional support needs such as food intolerances, allergies, disabilities, diabetes, asthma, anaphylaxis, epilepsy.

To ensure safe participation,

It is important to gather information regarding their existing medical conditions and/or additional support needs during the registration process.

Primary consideration for children and young people is safety, it is important to consider the requirements of the child, young person or adult at risk and assess whether and how these additional needs might be accommodated with the activity.

Collaboration between parents/guardians and event organisers to work together with families and the child, young person or adult at risk (depending on their age and ability) to develop a strategy to effectively support safe participation which is authorised by the parent or carer and a person in a leadership position within the parish.

While program and activities are designed to promote inclusion and independence, we recognise that often there are limited resources and capacity to effectively manage serious medical conditions and/or accommodate significant support needs (e.g. assistance with feeding, bathing, toileting). In these circumstances, a parent or carer may be engaged to attend.



4.14 Provisions of First Aid

First Aid provisions must be taken into consideration in the planning process of events, programs and activities.

Risk management plans must ensure that:

- emergency service contact information is accessible to all (e.g. 000) is clearly displayed in visible areas.
- parental consent has been approved via written consent upon registration or permission forms.
- parental emergency contact information is accessible, and obtained at registration.
- First Aid kits are available and adequately stocked to respond to injuries and illnesses that may occur. Considering the number of attendees on how many kits are required and if offsite a portable kit is accessible.
- Supervisors that are suitably qualified in first aid are involved in the care of children and young people.
- First aid is provided in a supervised manner with another adult or child present.

First aid kits and training can be sourced from reputable organisations such as:

- St Johns Ambulance <https://stjohnnsw.com.au/>
- Australian Red Cross <https://www.redcross.org.au/firstaid/>

4.15 Administering Medication

Medication including prescription medication can only be administered (or self-administered) with written permission from a parent, guardian or carer.

Medication must be provided in original packaging, with the child's name and the original pharmacy script sticker/details to be followed.

Medical consent forms should include:

- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Administration instructions
- Emergency contact details of parents and/or guardians
- Name and contact details of health practitioner

4.16 Responding to Mental Health Concerns

Mental health concerns may become apparent when working with children, young people and adults at risk e.g. self-harm, suicidal ideation, depression, anxiety.

Respond by listening in a supportive, non-judgemental and calm manner.

Be clear that other relevant and appropriate persons (e.g. parent, relative, program supervisor or parish priest) may need to be involved to provide support to an individual and that contact is made with these persons at the earliest possible time.

The Safeguarding Office has resources with information and contact numbers of support services.



4.17 Physical contact initiated by a child or young person

Where a child or young person seeks to initiate physical contact that is concerning or inappropriate for example;

- excessive hugging,
- insisting on sitting on a person's lap,
- kissing,
- excessive touching

It is important to redirect the child or young person's behaviour in a supportive but clear manner.

This can be achieved by offering an alternative gesture, re-positioning or creating some distance (e.g. giving a high five or asking the child to sit next to you).

In situations where, particular behaviour can be anticipated, it may be important to be proactive in offering an alternative appropriate gesture.

It is important to keep in mind that very young children or those with an intellectual disability may have difficulty understanding or regulating their behaviour, so as adults it may be important to redirect behaviour in a sensitive manner.

Clergy, employees and volunteers should be proactive in seeking assistance from an immediate supervisor when behaviour is concerning, impacting or harming other children and young people.

Ensuring this behaviour is documented and recorded.



Supervision



4.18 Supervision when parents, guardians and carers ARE present

When children, young people and adults at risk attend activities with their parents, guardians or carers, it is important to communicate to these individuals that they are responsible for the supervision of those they attend with and must ensure they are safe at all times.

The Safeguarding office has made resources to support you in promoting this responsibility to those attending your parish, activity, program and or event.

4.19 Supervision when parents guardians and carers are NOT present

Where children, young people or adults at risk attend parish activities without their parents, guardians or carers.

Event organisers or those in leadership roles, clergy, employees and or volunteers are responsible for actively supervising children, young people and adults at risk, ensuring that they:

- are present and accounted for,
- engage appropriately with other participants and do not engage in peer-to-peer abuse,
- are in a safe environment,
- are protected from possible external threats (e.g. other patrons).

4.19 Continued

Supervision when parents guardians and carers are NOT present

Parishes need to demonstrate that they have undertaken a risk assessment of the activity, program or event to ensure that appropriate levels of supervision are in place to promote the safety and wellbeing for all.

It is important that no clergy, employee or volunteer conducts any activity, program or event on their own, for safety reasons *The Two Adult Rule* applies.

When determining the appropriate ratio of supervisors, it is important to consider factors such as:

- the experience and skill level of the supervisors
- the size of the group and number of children, young people and or adults at risk attending a program activity or event
- the age range and/or development stage (maturity) of children, young people and adults at risk (e.g. primary school aged children)
- the specific needs of those attending (e.g. medical conditions, disabilities)
- the location & duration of the activity, program or event
- the nature of the activities to be undertaken (e.g. adventure)
- the gender of those providing supervision; it is advisable to have male and female supervisors for mixed gender groups
- whether parents, guardians or carers will be present
- whether children, young people or adults at risk will have contact with others (e.g. parishioners, members of the public, other groups of children, young people and or adults at risk).

- In circumstances where it is difficult to recruit supervisors to have appropriate levels of supervision, it is advisable to request that parents or guardians attend and participate with their child.
- Where parents or guardians accompany their child to support their child's participation, they are not subject to volunteer screening or induction practices.
- Where parents and guardians volunteer to assist with an activity and perform a specific role (e.g. coach, camp supervisor, sacrament preparation program) they will be subject to volunteer screening and induction practices.

4.20 Supervision when children and young people are dressing

There are a range of activities where a child or young person may need to get changed or undressed (e.g. child changing into robes for altar service in the sacristy, young people getting changed into bathers to go swimming while on camp, showering or bathing during overnight stays, putting on a costume for a performance).

Supervision in change room settings is important for ensuring that:

- behaviour of supervisors is appropriate
- the likelihood of peer-peer abuse is minimised
- other persons (e.g. patrons, adults) do not pose a risk to children and young people.



Guidelines to be observed to promote safety:

- Avoid settings where a member of clergy, an employee or volunteer is alone with a child or young person who is dressing. For example, if a child is alone in a room dressing, it would be advisable for a member of clergy, an employee or volunteer to stand outside the room near the door.
- Adults should not be in a state of undress when children and young people are present. Adults should change or shower in a different room if possible, or undertake these activities when children and young people are not present.
- Individuals should have separate changing rooms or bathroom facilities if they are required to undress. With no one entering these facilities while an individual is utilising these.
- Children and young people should be supervised by more than one supervisor when in change rooms, and in a manner that preserves their privacy. For example, volunteers can position themselves near the change rooms entrances, scanning the room when required to be assured that children and young people are safe.
- Supervisors should encourage and support a child or young person's independence by allowing them to dress, bath and toilet themselves. If assistance is required, the volunteers can supervise each other to ensure that assistance is provided appropriately (e.g. when a child has asked for help).
- Where appropriate, parents and guardians should be enlisted to assist children to get changed. For example, before a performance of a play, a parent can assist their children to change into their costume.
- Where other patrons may be present (e.g. swimming centre, camp site), additional supervision may be required to ensure that children and young people are not targeted by others in the setting.

4.21 Supervision when children and young people need the bathroom







Children and Young people should be afforded privacy when using toilets and change rooms.

Responsible practice requires that adequate and appropriate supervision be given to children in these circumstances.

Where an adult needs to assist a child, the principles set out in *Physical Contact apply*.

A number of factors need to be considered when supervising children and young people in toilet areas.

The location of the toilet may determine the level of supervision that is required:

-  If the venue is onsite, in the line of sight of adults conducting the program, easily accessible and there are no other persons present, it may be safe for the children and young people to attend on their own.
-  However if the toilets are located out of the line of sight, in a separate building or it is likely that there are other patrons present onsite, it may be advisable to use a strategy to minimise risk to children and young people (e.g. checking the facility to ensure that there are not person present who may pose a risk, have two or more children or young people accompany each other to the toilet, or have an adult accompany two or more children).
-  If the toilet facilities is in a public venue with other persons present, it is advisable for an adult to accompany younger children to the toilet in a group (two or more) and wait inside or outside the toilet area to maintain an appropriate level of supervision depending on the perceived level of risk from other persons.
-  For young people, it is advisable for them to attend toilets in pairs. However, depending on the perceived level of risk from other patrons (e.g. drunkenness, violence), there may also be a need to provide adult supervision.
-  A child's age and developmental stage may also influence the level of supervision that is required when children use the toilet.
-  Supervising adults should work to maintain the privacy of the individuals, such as announcing entry to the room.

- When parents, guardians or carers are present they are responsible for accompanying their own children to the bathrooms. (e.g. If a child needs to go to the bathroom during a Mass, the parent, guardian or carer, are responsible for accompanying the child to the bathroom, it is not best practice for a child to go alone).
- In situations where parents are not present, if it is safe to do so it is advisable to enlist a child(ren) to accompany the child who needs to use the toilet and/or a volunteer. In circumstances, where an employee or volunteer is required to accompany a child to the toilet (i.e. wait outside), they should alert a colleague in the vicinity that they are taking a child to the toilet.
- Do not assist a child with toileting unless the child has requested assistance.
- If a child has wet or soiled themselves, call for assistance from another adult, so that they are present and able to provide assistance and/or contact the parent or carer.



Child Safety Offsite



4.22 Transportation

Some ministry activities may include the offer of transportation to those attending. As with any ministry practice, there are certain considerations that need to be thought through in order to establish the protocols and boundaries to keep transportation safe and accountable.

Diocese of Lismore workers should not transport children or young people in their vehicles without written consent from their parent or guardian. In the event that a child or young person needs to be transported for safety reasons the Two Adult Rule applies. All people travelling in a vehicle must wear seat belts, the driver should be appropriately licensed and the vehicles registered, insured and safe to drive.

Ensure written consent has been given by Child's parent/guardian before travelling. Ensure Child's emergency contact information is readily available. A minimum of two verified adults to accompany Children while being transported. A volunteer driver who is transporting Children, Adults at Risk or other adults should always be a minimum of 21 years of age, with the preferred minimum age being 25 years of age.

All drivers must hold a valid NSW driving license and be fully licensed (not a "P" plate driver) and a copy of their driver's license is to be provided to the supervisor. All drivers must have comprehensive insurance to drive the vehicle before transporting Children and/or Adults at Risk. Before transporting Children and/or Adults at Risk, all drivers are to provide documentation to the supervisor ensuring that their vehicle is fit for purpose, roadworthy and registered. All drivers are to maintain a transportation log while transporting Children and/or Adults at Risk that includes time/date, route taken, and the names of the driver/s and the people being transported. Ensure all drivers that are transporting Children and/or Adults at Risk have completed the Safeguarding and Child Protection Training and have read and signed the Code of Conduct for Working with Children and Adults at Risk prior to driving. All drivers transporting Children are to provide a valid Working with Children Check which will need to be verified by organiser.

Key message

All risk assessments and planning documentation, registrations and permissions, must be kept to demonstrate that a rigorous approach has been taken to reducing possible risks to children, young people and adults at risk.



4.23 Excursions

Parents and or guardians will be informed in writing of an excursion and their permission will be required before a child or young person is permitted to attend.

Risk assessments and planning processes need to be undertaken by those organising.

Factors to be addressed, including but not limited to:

- purpose of the excursion
- planned activities and associated risks (e.g. water activities, environmental considerations)
- suitability of the environment or venue for an excursion (e.g. child safety arrangements, location, environmental conditions, amenities)
- supervision arrangements
- Logistics (e.g. costs, transportation arrangements, catering)
- Provision of first aid inclusive of managing medical conditions
- supporting the participation of children and young people with additional needs
- emergency management plans
- risks specific to child safety and mitigation strategies
- risks specific to physical safety (e.g. hydration, managing medical conditions).

4.24 Online

Keeping children, young people and adults at risk us a shared responsibility. This extends to the online environment.

The online environment is used in accordance with the Diocese Code of Conduct and policies relating to the online environment.

Key points to know in playing your role in protecting:

- know the risks
- know how to help someone report online abuse
- include online risks in policies and procedures
- make your commitment public
- use digital technologies safely
- stay up to date
- order and display resources and supports



Visit esafety.gov.au for more resources



05

Culture of Reporting





5.1 Recognising Abuse

Children, young people and adults at risk have a right to be safe in their own homes and in the community, and live without violence and abuse. It is therefore the responsibility of every Worker of the Diocese of Lismore to have some understanding of the indicators of abuse.

Abuse is defined as any action that intentionally harms or injures another person. In short, someone who purposefully harms another in any way is committing abuse.

‘there are many types of abuse that a person may encounter including:

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional and psychological abuse
- Sexual misconduct
- Sexual offences
- Grooming
- Domestic
- Online
- Spiritual Abuse can also occur on churches and faith-based organisations
- Financial and Material abuse
- Modern Slavery
- Discriminatory
- Organisational and Institutional



**The pages following describes in detail some of the above
TYPES OF ABUSE**

5.2 Types of Abuse

Neglect :-

is when a child's basic needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met.

Neglect in the following areas:

- Supervision
- Medical Care
- Nutrition
- Shelter
- Education



Look for:

Behaviours that concern you over time.

- These might relate to: Does the appearance of the child look cared for?
- Is the child reluctant to go home?

Sexual Abuse :-

A child or young person has been or is at risk of being sexually abused.

Sexual abuse is sexual activity or behaviour that is imposed, or is likely to be imposed, on a child or young person by another person.

Sexual activity includes the following sexual acts:

- exposure to sexually explicit material.
- inducing or coercing a child or young person to engage in, or assist others to engage in, sexually explicit conduct.
- exposing the child or young person to circumstances where there is risk that they may be sexually abused.

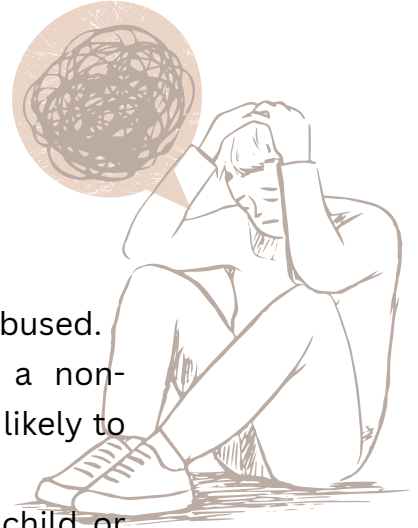
Watch and listen for:

Behaviours that concern you.

- Does a participant share detailed stories or disclose stories of a sexual nature?
- Has a participant's behaviour or attitude changed in recent gatherings?
- Do participants speak of sharing inappropriate photos?



Types of Abuse



Physical Abuse :-

A child or young person has been or is at risk of being physically abused. Physical abuse occurs if a child or young person sustains a non-accidental injury or is being treated in a way that may have or is likely to cause injury.

The injury may be inflicted by a parent, carer, other adult or child or young person.

Watch and listen for:

- Are there any physical signs that may indicate physical abuse? e.g. bruising
- Can you see unexplained physical bruising?
- Does a child consistently wear jumpers in hot weather?
- Are there changes in behaviour that may include signs of bullying and rough play?

Psychological Harm: -

A parent or caregiver acts in such a way towards the child or young person, that the child or young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering from psychological harm. e.g. Rejecting, isolating, terrorising, ignoring or corrupting.

Domestic & Family Violence: -

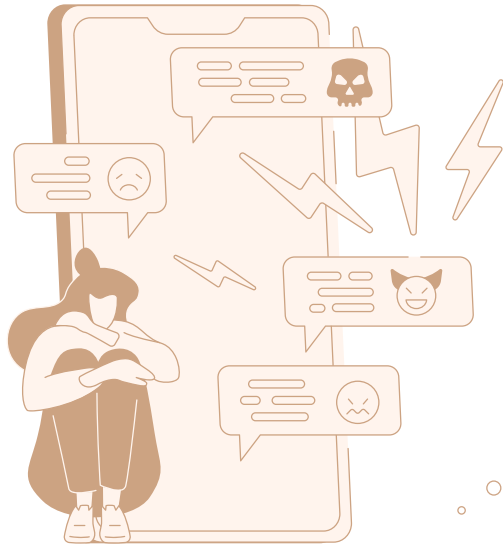
The child or young person is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence, and as a consequence, the child or young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious physical or psychological harm.



Watch and listen for:

- Do you hear a parent speaking aggressively to their child?
- Do you see a parent aggressively handling a child?
- Are there changes in behaviour that may include signs of withdrawal or not engaging in activities?
- Does the child share disturbing stories? e.g. detailed stories about drug abuse / criminal behaviour / sexual activity
- Does the child begin challenging the group's Code of Conduct?

Types of Abuse



Online Abuse :-

Online abuse is behaviour that has a threatening, intimidating, harassing or humiliating affect on a person.

Online abuse can hurt you socially or psychologically, or even lead to physical harm.

It can take many forms, including stalking and sexual harassment.

eSafety has legal powers to help protect people who live in

- Australia from the most serious online abuse and harmful content.

Watch and listen for:

- **Trolling** - Someone online is deliberately provoking an argument or emotional reaction from someone.
- **Image-based abuse** - Someone has shared or threatened to share intimate images or videos of an individual without someone's consent
- **Sexual extortion** - Someone is using a persons intimate images or videos to blackmail them.
- **Impersonation accounts** - A fake social media account has been set up in someone's name to humiliate them.
- **Doxing** - A personal details have been shared online, resulting in offensive comments and unwanted contact from strangers
- **Deepfakes/morphing** - Someone's face has been added to a nude of someone else's body and posted online
- **Defamatory comments** - Someone has posted comments intended to harm an individuals reputation.

Further information and supports can be found on the eSafety Commissioner website.

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/>



Grooming

Grooming behaviour is...

Grooming activities used to draw victims towards perpetrators of abuse.

Grooming refers to actions deliberately undertaken to befriend and influence a child or young person and sometimes members of a child's family, with the intention of achieving a criminal objective of sexual activity with children or young people.

Grooming can occur in person and online ;

Examples include.

- befriending a family with the purpose to gain a trusting connection with a specific child, where the person spends more and more time with a child.
- building a trusting relationship with a child or child's family, building connection over days, weeks, months and even years.

Listen and Watch for;

- an individual who vocalises they have a child as a 'special friend'
- someone whom isolates a child or children from other adults unnecessarily
- someone whom encourages 'secrets' in children
- someone whom looks or encourages others to look at child pornography
- someone whom seems unclear about boundaries
- someone whom continually does not follow the code of conduct and the clear behaviour boundaries the code sets



Disclosure what next,

5.3 Support for you, points to remember

The recommendations below advise on how you can best support the person who has disclosed.

It is also encouraged that you approach this person with positive support only, listen and show empathy to what they are sharing.

Remember your role is to support and listen to the child or vulnerable adult, not to investigate.



- When there is a disclosure of an allegation of abuse and/or harm, only ask questions to confirm your understanding of the victim's situation and/or what might need to be reported to an appropriate authority.
- When a Diocesan worker witnesses or receives an allegation of harm and/or suspected harm, they must report. In situations where there is uncertainty, questions or concern regarding the reporting of an allegation of harm, clarity should be sought from the Safeguarding office.
- Debriefing and pastoral care after a disclosure or suspicion of harm is received and reported is very important for your own self-care and well-being. Diocesan workers who have been involved with a disclosure and/or suspicion of harm can be debriefed and supported through the **Employee Assistance Program** on **1800 81 87 28** or visit accesseap.com.au
- Support services for survivors of abuse and others impacted by harm can be found in the final section of this Handbook.

Disclosure what next,

5.4 Concern Complaint Form

If a Diocesan worker has, or is notified of, a Safeguarding concern they should complete a Concern-Complaint Form as soon as possible. A Safeguarding concern includes a suspicion, allegation or disclosure of abuse, or a complaint of inappropriate conduct.

This form should contain relevant details of the concern, including:

- accurate information as far as it is known. This should include the name and address of the person who has raised a concern (as well as parents'/carers' names and addresses when the person who has raised a concern/allegation is a child);
- the name of the individual against whom the concern/allegation is being raised and any other identifying information;
- as much information as possible about the circumstances that led to the concern/allegation being raised, including why the person reporting is worried about the welfare and safety of the child or vulnerable person;
- dates when the concern arose, or when the incident(s) occurred;
- circumstances in which the concern arose, or when the incident (s) occurred;
- any explanation offered to account for the risk, injury or concern;
- the victim's own statement using the words they actually used to describe the events or incident(s), if possible. Do not make assumptions about the intended meaning of the words used;
- details of any action already taken concerning the incident/concern/allegation; and
- any views expressed by other family members, carers, parent(s) or guardian(s) about the matter.

Records relating to Safeguarding concerns should be as detailed, accurate and objective as possible. Do not be selective in your recall of events and include detail that may to you seem irrelevant. This information may prove very useful should a subsequent investigation be deemed necessary.

Any copies of records retained must be stored in a secure manner to maintain confidentiality.

Discuss the matter with the parish priest or Safeguarding office and decide what action needs to be taken. It is important not to discuss the concern with anyone other than those detailed in these procedures.



Disclosure what next,

5.5 Confidentiality

It is very important to ensure the safety of all parties once an allegation is made, including the notifier. The circumstances surrounding suspected or alleged harm and/or abuse to children and the vulnerable are highly sensitive and should be dealt with in a way that respects the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

Any reports or documentation on disclosures must be kept secure at all times and only passed to appropriate authorities and/or individuals. Access should be strictly limited to those involved in the matter and only discussed with relevant workers or authorities.



5.6 Critical Steps when you become aware of an allegation

- 1 immediately report any allegation of a criminal offence to police and consult about risk management
- 2 promptly report any RISK of Significant Harm of a child/ren to the Child Protection Helpline 132 111
- 3 notify any reportable allegations to the OCG within 7 business days
- 4 for advice or guidance - contact the OCG'S Reportable Conduct Enquiries Line 8219 3800

Disclosure what next,

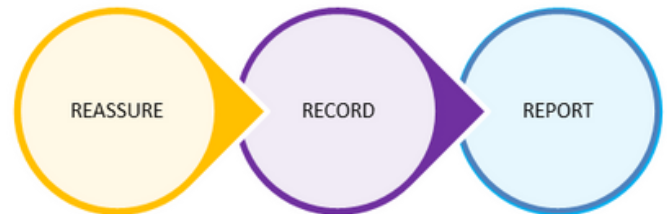
5.7 How to respond to a concern



Where there is a disclosure or a suspicion of concern.

The following is a guide for your behaviour in responding to the disclosure:

- remain calm and patient;
- listen attentively, supportively and non-judgmentally;
- ensure a private conversation occurs, respecting confidentiality, whilst remaining in an open space;
- respect that the person may not disclose full details;
- acknowledge the person's courage and strength.



Reassure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reassure the person they have done the right thing by telling you; • respond empathically, objectively and use supportive language; • if the person is a child, or young person, ensure you advise and reassure them that the disclosure cannot remain a secret and it is necessary to advise someone in order to get help; • reassure the person that you will act.
Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage the person to talk in their own words and ensure just enough open ended questions are asked to act protectively (e.g. "Can you tell me what happened?" or 'Can you tell me more about that?'). Don't ask leading questions which tend to suggest an answer; • record exactly what the person has said, not your interpretation; • do not attempt to investigate or mediate an outcome.
Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the child or vulnerable adult is in a life-threatening situation, you should immediately notify NSW police on 000; • explain that you will need to refer their disclosure to someone who can help; • ensure to keep a copy of your notes in case they are required by Court; • in all cases you should advise the Diocesan Safeguarding office and complete a <i>Concern - Complaint Form (Appendix 13)</i> recording all details that support the suspicion. The Safeguarding office can assist you with completing this document if required.












Understanding your Reporting Obligations

5.8 Government Agencies



There are three (3) statutory bodies that an organisation may need to report to when there has been an allegation of child abuse in NSW. These are the Police, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), and the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG). Each of these organisations have a different role which means there are different definitions and thresholds of abuse and harm. Its important workers understand the difference and know who to report to.

There may also be other regulatory obligations agencies must report allegations to, such as to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission or Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate. It is important organisations with additional reporting obligations understand how these reports may impact with statutory obligations. Many organisations will also have their own internal reporting mechanisms and procedures that need to be followed.

 <p>NSW Police Force</p>  <p>Make a report to police if the matter involves conduct towards a child that you suspect may be criminal in nature.</p> <p>For emergencies call 000 For police assistance and general enquiries call 131 444</p> 	 <p>Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)</p>  <p>Make a report to DCJ if you suspect a child is at risk of significant harm.</p> <p>Types of abuse include neglect, sexual, physical and emotional.</p> <p>Call the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111</p> 	 <p>Reportable Conduct Scheme</p>  <p>Notify reportable allegations against staff, certain volunteers and contractors within 7 working days.</p> <p>For advice and support contact 02 8219 3800 reportableconduct@ocg.nsw.gov.au</p> 	 <p>NSW Regulatory Authority</p>  <p>Notify incidents, complaints and allegations via the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS).</p> <p>You can also call 1800 619 113 or email ececd@det.nsw.edu.au</p> 
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Mandatory Reporting & Reportable Conduct

The purpose of the Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct policies is to contribute to a framework for creating safe and supportive environments throughout the Diocese, particularly for Children and Young People.

These policies identify the way in which the Bishop, Safeguarding Office, Parish Priests and Workers, as defined by the Act, are to work together to act upon concerns about possible abuse or neglect of Children and Young People, in compliance with reporting obligations under the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) (**Children's Guardian Act**) and the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (**Care Act**).

These Policies identify the need to:

- Ensure that everyone within the Diocese understands what they are required to do when reporting concerns that a Child is at Risk of Significant Harm.
- Recognise the importance of reporting concerns about Children at Risk of Significant Harm to the Department of Communities and Justice in promoting the safety and wellbeing of Children and Young People.
- Understand the importance of providing support to Children and Young People at risk in accordance with the Diocesan commitment to Safeguarding.
- Ensure that everyone within the Diocese understands what they are required to do in order to protect children from harm by reporting Reportable Allegations and Reportable Convictions.
- Recognise the role of Workers reporting Reportable Allegations and Reportable Convictions to the Safeguarding Office as an important strategy for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Recognise the role of the Safeguarding Office in receiving reports from Workers regarding Reportable Allegations and Reportable Convictions and making appropriate reports to the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian (**Children's Guardian**) as an important strategy for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

5.9 What is Mandatory Reporting?

Mandatory reporting is the legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities.

In NSW, mandatory reporting is regulated by the [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#) (the Care Act)

5.10 What is Reportable Conduct?

Reportable Conduct refers to the following conduct pursuant to the Children's Guardian Act 2019 NSW.

- a sexual offence
- sexual misconduct
- ill-treatment of a child
- neglect of a child
- an assault against a child
- an offence under s 43B (failure to protect) or s 316A (failure to report) of the Crimes Act 1900; and
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

5.11 Reporting to Police

Under the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW), all adults in NSW are required to report information to police if they know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child (Under 18 years) has been abused. It is an offence not to do so, and failing to report a Child Abuse Offence to NSW Police without a reasonable excuse may be considered a Concealing Child Abuse Offence, which is punishable by up to two years imprisonment. In the state of NSW this does not currently extend to clergy in the sacrament of Confession. It does apply to clergy for all other situations outside this Sacrament.

An adult working in the Diocese will also commit an offence if they know another adult working there poses a serious risk of abusing children, and they have the power to reduce or remove the risk and they negligently fail to do so.

In addition, Diocesan workers have a legislative requirement to report Serious Indictable Offences to NSW Police and failure to report can result in imprisonment. There are a vast number of Serious Indictable Offences and Child Abuse Offences (referred to as Reportable Crimes) that are listed in the *Appendix 19 – Table of reportable crimes*. Broadly speaking, Reportable Crimes that present at the parishes and agencies may include:

1. Physical Assault of a child or adult;
2. Sexual Assault of a child or adult;
3. Indecent Assault of a child or adult;
4. Committing a Sexual Act or Sexual Touching against a child;
5. Grooming behaviour;
6. The possession, dissemination or production of 'child abuse material', which includes child pornography and any material depicting a child as a victim of torture or cruelty;
7. The recording or distributing of 'intimate images' without consent; and
8. Stealing.

The parish priest/manager and/or Safeguarding Office will be able to provide support with making a report to NSW Police. Workers may choose to contact the Police directly by contacting their local police station or calling the Police Assistance Line on 131 444, or 000 in an emergency. If making a report directly to the Police, workers must also report all suspected offences to the parish priest/manager and/or Safeguarding Office.

No worker should attempt to undertake their own investigation before reporting the matter.

Concealing Child abuse (Failure to Report) Offence:

If an adult fails to report a Child Abuse Offence to the NSW Police this may constitute a Concealing Child Abuse Offence under s316A of the Crimes Act if they:

- believe, know or reasonably ought to know that a Child abuse Offence has been committed against another person; and
- believe, know or reasonably ought to know that they have information that might be of material assistance to the NSW Police in securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of the person who has committed that offence; and
- do not have a 'reasonable excuse' not to report the information.

Reasonable excuses for not reporting to Police may include:

- if you believe (on reasonable grounds) that the information is already known to Police;
- if you have made a Report/to another government body such as Department of Communities and Justice or the Office of the Children's Guardian;
- if the alleged victim is no longer a child and you have reasonable grounds to believe that the person does not want the information reported to Police;
- if you have reasonable grounds to fear for the safety of the alleged victim or any other person (other than the offender) if the information is reported to Police.

NSW Police:

- life threatening/Emergency situations: 000
- police Assistance Line: 131 444



5.12 What is a disclosure of harm or abuse?

A disclosure of harm or abuse occurs when someone, including a child or adult, tells you about harm that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen to a child or vulnerable adult.

Disclosures of harm may start with:

‘I think I saw...’

‘Somebody told me that...’

‘Just think you should know...’

‘I’m not sure what I want you to do, but...’

It’s important to act quickly and in the best interests of the child, young person, or vulnerable adult after a disclosure of harm is received, irrespective of the alleged source of harm.

5.13 What is a suspicion of abuse?

A **suspicion** of harm or abuse is when someone has a reasonable suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has suffered, is suffering, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm. A child or vulnerable adult who has been, or may be experiencing, abuse may show behavioural, emotional or physical signs of stress and abuse.

There may also be other circumstances where there is concern for a child or vulnerable adult’s welfare but it does not reach the threshold to be considered a disclosure or suspicion of harm. You have a duty of care to follow up any suspicions of harm or potential risk of harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults in your care. You can do this by observing and recording the actions of children or vulnerable adults who might be at risk, and reporting concerns to the relevant authority.

You can suspect harm if:

- a child or young person tells you they have been harmed;
- someone else, for example another child, a parent/carer, or an employee, tells you that harm has occurred or is likely to occur;
- a child or young person tells you they know someone who has been harmed (it is possible that they may be referring to themselves);
- you are concerned at significant changes in the behaviour of a child or young person, or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries; or
- you see the harm happening.

5.14 How to report

You have an obligation to report alleged reportable conduct of colleagues towards children both during and outside 'work' hours. If you are concerned about the potentially reportable conduct of a worker towards a child under 18 years, you must:

Immediately inform your manager/parish priest of this concern, in line with the Diocese Reportable Conduct Flowchart (Appendix 15). If your manager is unavailable, please report the alleged conduct to the Safeguarding Office.

For managers/parish priests receiving the allegation, you must report the concern to the Head of Relevant Entity (Diocesan Safeguarding Manager) within 24 hours of being informed.

Once a report is made to the Safeguarding Office, the Safeguarding Manager will assess the information and, where required, report to the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.

Use the **Concern-Complaint form (Appendix 13)** to report such concerns and maintain for record keeping purposes.

5.15 Whistle blowers

Workers can be reluctant to raise their concerns because they fear that there may be adverse actions taken against them by those involved in the circumstances of their disclosure. The Diocese of Lismore completely supports workers that report child protection concerns, and is committed to listening to concerns and ensuring that they are treated in a respectful and dignified manner.

It's important that you have reasonable grounds to suspect that the information you are disclosing indicates that misconduct or illegal conduct has occurred. You must also make the disclosure in 'good faith'. This means your disclosure must be honest and genuine.

The Diocese of Lismore will report any worker to the relevant authority who takes, or threatens to take, detrimental action against a person who has reported in good faith. Disciplinary action may also, be taken with respect to the Diocesan Complaints Handling Policy and Code of Conduct.

There may be situations where reports need to be made to the police, to Department of Communities & Justice, and to the Office of the Children's Guardian. Given these various possibilities, it is advised to always seek the advice of the Safeguarding Office.

Self Care

Self-care

For some the content of training may be confronting. If you are concerned for your possible response to the material of this training, speak with your Parish or Agency head to discuss potential alternatives. If during the presentation the content causes you distress, raises concerns or triggers for you, please feel free to remove yourself from this space and take a moment. If you would like to speak directly to someone from the Safeguarding Office please call (02) 66 219 444 or email safeguarding@lismore.catholic.org.au

You can also contact the Diocese Employee Assistance Program a confidential counselling for work-related or personal concerns available to all staff.

Access EAP – 1800 81 87 28 / (02) 82 479 191 or visit accesseap.com.

Support Services



NSW Victims Access Line

1800 633 063

NSW Victims Support Scheme

Counselling, financial support and a recognition payment to victims of a violent crime in NSW

www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au



Free counselling services to help young people with mental health, physical health (including sexual health) alcohol and other drug services.

headspace.org.au



1800 737 732

www.1800respect.org.au/



24-hour phone and online counselling for young people aged 5-25.

1800 551 800

www.kidshelpline.com.au



Information and support for children and young people about issues associated with mental health conditions.

1300 224 636

www.youthbeyondblue.com



Information and support for mental health.

1300 224 636

www.beyondblue.org.au



24-hour crisis support: [13 11 14](tel:131114)
www.lifeline.org.au



Counselling, healing, and culturally appropriate support for Indigenous Australians.
[1800 624 332](tel:1800624332) (not available to mobiles)
or [02 9421 4700](tel:0294214700)
www.linkupNSW.org.au



Counselling and support for those affected by institutional child sexual abuse;
[1300 473 528](tel:1300473528)
www.interrelate.org.au



Telephone and online counselling for all forms of childhood abuse.
[1800 991 099](tel:1800991099)
www.childwise.org.au



www.esafety.gov.au/



24/7 phone and online counselling to people affected by suicide : [1300 659 467](tel:1300659467)
www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au



Telephone and online support.
[1300 789 978](tel:1300789978)
www.mensline.org.au



For adult survivors of child abuse.
[1300 657 380](tel:1300657380)
blueknot.org.au



Groups and workshops for male survivors of childhood sexual abuse and their families
[1800 472 676](tel:1800472676)
www.samsn.org.au



Advice and support to those affected by sexual assault.
[1800 272 831](tel:1800272831)
www.bravehearts.org.au



Thank You

Your continued proactive support embeds a culture of safety and care that espouses honesty, engagement and conversation.

Our Diocese supports environments where children, young people and adults at risk know their community is alert to areas of risk and harm and are capable of applying appropriate actions of prevention; are confident to voice their concerns at all times and have trust that their concerns will be listened to respectfully and taken seriously.

Safeguarding Office

Phone 02 66 21 9444

Website www.lismorediocese.org

Email safeguarding@lismore.catholic.org.au

Address

10 Orion Street
Lismore NSW 2480
