

PARISH OF ST. GERARD and ST. ANNE

WARRANTYTE/PARK ORCHARDS

Child Safety Code of Conduct



Safeguarding Children and Young People

Central to the mission of the Parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at the Parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. The Code complements child protection legislation and the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's "Code of Conduct for Caring for Children, *May our children flourish*".

All clergy, employees, volunteers, parishioners and contractors engaged in worship, ministry and related activities at the parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne ("Parish Personnel") are expected to actively contribute to a parish culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms the Gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice. They are required to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

This Code of Conduct is not intended to cover those activities where the child is under the direct care and supervision of a parent or guardian, for example, when children are attending a social gathering after Mass with a parent or guardian.

All persons who participate in (or could reasonably be expected to participate in) parish activities involving children are required to read this Code of Conduct, seek further information regarding anything that is not understood, and comply with it.



2. Acceptable Behaviours

Parish Personnel are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- Adhering to the parish **Child Safety Policy¹** and upholding the parish's **Statement of Commitment** to child safety at all times.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm.
- Treating everyone in the parish community with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe pastoral environment).
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification).
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination)
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, by ensuring reasonable care is taken to cater for any additional needs being faced).
- Ensuring as far as practicable that an adult is not alone with a child
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the police.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.).
- Reporting any child safety concerns to the parish priest, or the Vicar General if the concern relates to the parish priest (**or child safety officer if the parish has appointed someone to this role**).
- Ensuring as quickly as possible that the child or children is or are safe if an allegation of child abuse is made.

¹ The Child Safety Policy and Statement of Commitment are held at the Parish Office and on the website of the parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne



3. Unacceptable behaviours

Parish Personnel must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children).
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps).
- Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors or being alone with a child with no good cause).
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children, or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating a child:
 - Corporal punishment is never acceptable.
 - Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort or in an emergency.
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal details or social activities).
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
- Discriminate against any child because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- Have contact with a child or their family who is not socially related outside of the pastoral duties reasonably associated with the role description of your position in the parish (other than accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street)
- Have any online contact (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) with a child or their family who is not socially related outside of the pastoral duties reasonably associated with the role description of your position in the parish.
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child or their family who is not socially related without notifying the Parish Priest.
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Consume illicit drugs on parish premises or at parish events.



4. Child Protection Reporting Protocol

1) Principles

The parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne aims to deal with all reports under this Code of Conduct fairly and appropriately, and to act on the following principles:

We will

- a) Create a strong community of faith and so promote a positive experience of the Church;
- b) Prevent misconduct where this is possible;
- c) Ensure fair process for persons against whom allegations are made; and
- d) Deal effectively with any allegations which are substantiated, including responding compassionately to anyone who has been affected.

2) Flowchart

A flow chart setting out how, and to whom to make reports is at Appendix 2.

3) What should you report?

You may come across possible breaches of the Code of Conduct of the parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne or matters that cause you concern in any number of ways. These might include:

- a) A disclosure made to you by a child;
- b) Being present and witnessing an event or incident;
- c) Observing events that cause you to form an objectively reasonable belief that a child:
 - 1) is being harmed or abused, or
 - 2) is at risk of being harmed or abused (whether by a family member or by another person); or
- d) An incident that occurs during an activity you are responsible for, such as:
 - 1) A child being lost;
 - 2) A child being injured; or
 - 3) A child experiencing a medical emergency.



4) Always report these matters

Regardless of the way in which an issue arises, you should always report circumstances that cause you concern and you should certainly always report:

- a. Any breach of the parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne's Code of Conduct;
- b. Any incident in which a child is seriously harmed or goes missing;
- c. Any emergency situation including a medical emergency;
- d. Any hazard or risk of harm to a child that is not being adequately addressed;
- e. Any allegation of sexual misconduct;*
- f. Any disclosure by a child, or an objectively reasonable belief you have formed, that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse of any kind;*
- g. Any allegation of violence inflicted by an adult upon a child;*
- h. Any allegation in which an adult has been under the influence of drugs (illicit or misused medication) or alcohol while responsible for children;
- i. Any incident in which a child has been seriously harmed or injured (either physically or psychologically) or is at risk of harm or injury;*
- j. Any allegation of conduct which is or might be unlawful;* and
- k. Any conduct which would or might give rise to a mandatory requirement to report under the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYF Act) or the Crimes Act 1958.

*** These matters must be immediately reported to Victoria Police.**

For further information regarding the mandatory reporting requirements under CYF Act, please see www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cyafa2005252/.

For further information regarding the mandatory reporting requirements under the Victorian Crimes Act 1958, please see www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/ca195882/s327.html or contact the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Office of Professional Conduct and Ethics on 9926 5677 or after hours on 0407 694 900.

If you are not sure whether to report a matter, please contact the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Office of Professional Conduct and Ethics on 03 9926 5677 or after hours on 0407 694 900.



5) Who may make a report?

Any person may make a report. If an allegation involves sexual or other abuse of a child, you **should not** investigate the matter yourself or raise it with parents/guardians or the alleged abuser directly. You **should** report the matter using the procedures set out in the following paragraphs.

6) How can you make a report?

If you would like further guidance about how to report a breach of this Code of Conduct or a matter of concern, please contact the Archdiocese's Office of Professional Conduct and Ethics on 03 9926 5677 or after hours on 0407 694 900.

The process for reporting and dealing with any concerns or breaches of this Code of Conduct will vary depending on the type of conduct, and who is responsible for the conduct.

A Confidential Incident Recording Form may be used to record details of any incident or matter of concern. A sample form may be found at www.cam.org.au/Professional-Standards/Sample-Forms.aspx

Nothing in the parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne's Code of Conduct restricts the right of any person to report any matter to the police or other authorities.

7) To report sexual and other abuse

Conduct that is or may be illegal must be reported to Victoria Police.

Sexual misconduct by clergy, seminarians, religious brothers, religious sisters or lay persons working and volunteering within the parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne ("Church personnel") must also be reported to the Independent Commissioner, whose office has been established by the Archbishop of Melbourne to enquire into and advise him with respect to allegations of sexual misconduct by any priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, and religious and lay persons working and volunteering within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

The Role of the Independent Commissioner and the procedures that will be followed upon the receipt of a complaint is located at:

www.cam.org.au/Professional-Standards/Melbourne-Response.aspx

Nothing in this Code of Conduct is intended in any way to affect the role of the Independent Commissioner or the ability of any person to make or refer a complaint to the Independent Commissioner. The Independent Commissioner may be contacted at 03 9225 7979.



8) To report all other matters

All matters other than those within the purview of Victoria Police, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or the Independent Commissioner must be reported as set-out below:

a. Matters that arise within the parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne

Any matter that arises within the parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne must be reported in the first instance to the parish priest (unless the matter involves the parish priest, in which case it must be reported in accordance with paragraph 8b). The parish priest is to listen to the allegations and decide what action to take in accordance with the procedures detailed at paragraph 9)

If, after a reasonable time has elapsed, you are not satisfied with the parish priest's response to your report, you may then refer the matter to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Melbourne 03 9926 5677 or vicar.general@cam.org.au

b. Matters that relate to the Parish Priest

Any matter that relates to a parish priest must be reported in the first instance to the Vicar General on 03 9926 5677 or vicar.general@cam.org.au. Reports will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures at paragraph {9).

c. Medical Emergency, a Missing Child, or any other Emergency Situation

Any medical emergency, a missing child, or any other emergency situation must be reported in the first instance to the appropriate authorities (such as police, or ambulance by dialling 000). As soon as possible thereafter, the child's parent/guardian must be notified and a report must be made (at the latest within 24 hours) to the **HR Office** on 03 9926 5677 or human.resources@cam.org.au

9) What happens when a report is made?

When a report is made in accordance with paragraph (8), the person receiving the report is to:

- a) Listen carefully to the report and ensure it is fully understood;
- b) Consider whether it is appropriate or necessary to advise others within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, or to inform relevant authorities;
- c) Determine what action will be taken (if any);
- d) Document all action taken; and
- e) Maintain the confidentiality of all parties (including the person making the report, and any person to whom the report relates) at all times to the extent this is possible.



10) How to deal with disclosures by children, or where a reasonable belief exists that abuse is or may be occurring in a setting to which this protocol applies

If a child makes a disclosure to you that sexual, physical or psychological abuse is occurring, or you form an objectively reasonable belief that a child is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, you must:- immediately report the matter to Victoria Police who will advise you on the next steps to take.

Be aware that the child may be feeling ashamed, guilty and scared, and may be worried about the consequences of telling someone about the abuse. Stay calm and listen carefully to the child. Tell them you believe them and that they did the right thing by telling you. Do not make promises you cannot keep such as promising that you will not tell anyone else.

To assist the child, it may be necessary to provide some psychological support and/or Counselling or to ensure that such counselling is available to the child.



APPENDIX 1 – Ministry Child Safety Protocols

Requirements or obligations which arise under these ministry protocols are in addition to any obligations arising under the Code of Conduct for the parish of St. Gerard and St. Anne.

Altar Servers Ministry Child Safety Protocol

- 1) Two adults are required to be in the Sacristy at all times when altar servers are present.
- 2) Parents/Guardians of altar servers are requested to accompany their son/daughter to the Sacristy before Mass and remain until two adults are present – the Celebrant, the Lector or the Eucharistic Ministers.
- 3) Parents/Guardians of altar servers are requested to accompany their son/daughter to the Sacristy after Mass and remain until the child vacates the sacristy.

Children’s Liturgy Ministry Protocol

- 1) The Children’s Liturgy is conducted in the school library which is a room located at the rear of the Church.
- 2) During the Children’s Liturgy program there must be at least one adult present conducting the program and another adult in calling range at all times. A phone must be available to call for help in case of emergency
- 3) The children’s parents/guardians must remain in the Church throughout the program.

Afterschool Sacramental Program Ministry Protocol

1. Parent/guardians of children enrolled in the afterschool sacramental program will be required to provide emergency contact details, relevant medical details of the child and an indication of consent in relation to use of photographs of the child.
2. Two adults including the parish catechist must be present at all times during the afterschool sacramental class.
3. Parents/guardians of children enrolled in afterschool sacramental program are required to sign their children in on arrival at the Parish House and sign them out at the conclusion of the class.

Reconciliation Protocol

1. Where the sacrament of Reconciliation is conducted with a child, the celebrant and the child must be visible at all times and an adult other than the celebrant must also be present in reasonable proximity to the celebrant and the child.

