

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults



Code of Conduct

September 2020

Central to the mission at The Catholic Parish of Sacred Heart and St Columba is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children, young people and vulnerable adults and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults at the Catholic Parish of Sacred Heart and St Columba against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement child protection legislation and the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's "Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework".

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish council members at the Catholic Parish of Sacred Heart and St Columba 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, young people and vulnerable adults as noted below.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults by:

- adhering to the parish Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults policy and upholding the parish's Statement of Commitment to child and vulnerable adult safety at all times.
- adhering to the Victorian Mandatory Reporting Laws at all times.
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults 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, young people and vulnerable adults, 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 or vulnerable adult.
- ensuring any child / person who reports child sex abuse is believed and supported throughout the required follow up processes.
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and vulnerable adults (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's self-identification).
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children, young people and vulnerable adults 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, young people and vulnerable adults 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, young person or vulnerable adult.
- reporting any allegations of child, young person or vulnerable adult abuse to the police.
- reporting any 'reasonable belief' that a child, young person or vulnerable adult has experienced abuse, is experiencing abuse or is at risk of experiencing abuse without question.
- understanding that any person (e.g. child, young person, parent, priest, employee, volunteer, parishioner) can make a report in relation to child-safety related misconduct and/or child abuse.

- understanding that a person, acting in good faith and in the interests of another's welfare, who makes a report, is not held legally liable for making the report if the report is not upheld.
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.).
- understanding that any abuse allegations divulged to you from an abused person are required to be reported to the authorities.
- reporting any child, young person or vulnerable adult safety concerns to the Vicar General if the concern relates to the parish priest.
- if an allegation of child, young person or vulnerable adult abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child, young person or vulnerable adult is safe and properly supported.

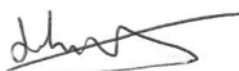
Unacceptable behaviours

Staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish council members must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child, young person or vulnerable adult abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children, young people and vulnerable adults that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children).
- exhibit behaviours with children, young people and vulnerable adults which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children, young people and vulnerable adults 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, young people and vulnerable adults or do things of a personal nature that a child, young person or vulnerable adult can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating a child, young person or vulnerable adult; 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, young people and vulnerable adults (for example, personal details or social activities).
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- discriminate against any child, young person or vulnerable adult because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- have contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult or their family who is/are not socially related outside of the pastoral duties reasonably associated with the role description of the person's position in the parish without the parish priest's or safeguarding committee member's knowledge and/or consent (other than accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street).
- have any online contact (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) with a child, young person or vulnerable adult or their family who is/are not family or socially related (unless necessary e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters).
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account to conduct parish communications with a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child, young person or vulnerable adult or their family who is/are not family or socially related.
- photograph or video a child, young person or vulnerable adult without the consent of the parent or guardians.
- work with children, young people and vulnerable adults while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- consume drugs on parish premises or at parish events.

I, Fr John Petrulis, confirm I have read and understood the above Code of Conduct.

Signed:



Date: 8 September 2020