

SAFEGUARDING IN FOCUS

Commission for Children and Young People Audit Update

The PSU is engaged with the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP or the Commission) to provide preliminary information to assist in the planning of their audit approach in relation to the parishes within the Archdiocese. We will be sure to update you as soon as possible, when we receive further information. In the meantime, we felt it might be helpful to provide an overview of the focus of audits.

Audits are designed to assess the implementation of the Victorian Child Safe Standards. The Standards are designed to promote the safety of children and young people within parishes “by generating organisational cultures where everyone takes responsibility for protecting children and young people, children and young people are valued and listened to when they raise concerns, and abusive or harmful behaviour is acted on and not tolerated”¹. CCYP’s approach is holistic focussing on the implementation of policies, procedures and processes, as well as assessing the culture of an organisation.

You are probably aware of the myriad of the policies and procedures that need to be in place through our website, network meetings and training, and contact with our Safeguarding Officers, which the Commission will want to see in place. In addition, the Commission is likely to engage in conversations with parish clergy, employees, volunteers and parishioners to gauge whether there is culture of safeguarding in place.

But what defines a culture of safeguarding and what is the Commission likely to look for? A safeguarding culture is represented by underlying beliefs, assumptions, values and ways of interacting that contribute to creating safe environments for children and young people.

The list of questions below is not exhaustive, rather they are points for your consideration.

- Does your Parish publicly commit to child safety?
- How does the leadership of your Parish champion child safety?
- How does the Parish ensure that everyone within the Parish knows that “child safety is everyone’s responsibility”?
- Are child safe policies and processes in place and well communicated in the Parish?
- Does child safety permeate the way in which programs for children and young people are conducted?
- How does your Parish engage children, young people and their families and communicate that child safety is paramount and incorporate their feedback?
- How does your Parish support persons to come forward when they have a concern and convey that their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon?

We look forward to providing you with additional information when it becomes available and in the meantime, we encourage you to continue to work with your regional Safeguarding Officer to progress the work in your Parish.

Volunteer Management Working Group Update

We are pleased to report that we received a positive response to our Parish Volunteer Management Survey with over 115 responses from parishes. Our group will be analysing and summarising this information and shortly organising focus groups to further explore the themes that support the retention, recruitment and formation of parish volunteers.

We also recently published a survey for parish volunteers to enable us to gather their feedback – to highlight what we are doing well within our parishes to support volunteers and how we could improve our volunteers’ engagement with their Parish and to help them fulfil their mission to serve, love and help others led by the Spirit of Jesus.

Your parish will have received an email on the 11 March promoting this survey. We encourage as many volunteers as possible to complete this survey to help the Archdiocese to develop a framework that will better support, nurture and value our volunteers.

This confidential survey may take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

We value your participation in this survey and kindly ask that all responses are submitted by COB on 16 April 2021. You may wish to complete the survey by selecting the [link](#) or by scanning the QR code on your mobile device.

Please share these details with volunteers within your parish!

FAREWELL LINDA

The PSU would like to take this opportunity to farewell Linda Franco, Senior Policy Advisor. Linda left the Archdiocese at the end of March after 3 years in her role to embark on a new adventure with the Country Fire Authority, as their Child Safety Manager. Linda did a magnificent job of leading the safeguarding team and pioneering many important safeguarding initiatives. She was much loved by all who had the pleasure of working with her. The PSU staff in particular will miss her wisdom, guidance, generosity of spirit and her wonderful sense of humour. Best wishes to Linda in her new safeguarding position and thank you for all your amazing transformational work in the Archdiocese.

Dr Katherine Levi, Director PSU



NETWORK MEETINGS

Click [here](#) to register.

Northern Region Network Meetings

Tue, 4 May: 11.00am-12.00pm
Wed, 5 May: 7.00pm-8.00pm
Thu, 6 May: 11.00am-12.00pm

Western Region Network Meetings

Tues, 4 May: 7.00pm-8.00pm
Wed, 5 May: 2.30pm-3.30pm
Thu, 6 May: 2.30pm-3.30pm

Southern Region Network Meetings

Tue, 4 May: 11.00am-12.00pm
Wed, 5 May: 11.00am-12.00pm
Thu, 6 May: 7.00pm-8.00pm

Eastern Region Network Meetings

Tue, 4 May: 7.00pm-8.00pm
Wed, 5 May: 11.00am-12.00pm
Thu, 6 May: 11.00am-12.00pm

¹ Regulatory approach (June 2019) Commission for Children and Young People

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

These questions were raised during our February network meeting and we thought it would be good to take this opportunity to share our answers.

1. What is a 'volunteer?'

'Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.' (Volunteering Victoria, 2015). In our parishes, volunteering, is an intentional process of giving oneself in the service of parish in relationship with Jesus. Volunteering spans a range of diverse functions and activities with parishes from reading at Mass, to home visiting, running children and youth ministries or providing hospitality during parish events.

2. What are the safeguarding requirements for volunteers within the parishes?

Safeguarding requirements within parishes are intended to inform and equip volunteers within parishes to conduct activities in a manner that promotes the safety of children, young people and other adults.

- Reading the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct and signing a Code of Conduct Declaration annually – documents available in the [Safe Personnel](#) section of the website.
- A current and valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) that is 'linked' to the parish – see [Information Sheet](#).

Working with Children Check (WWCC) Useful Links:

- Applying for a Working with Children Check (WWCC). Volunteers must ensure they list the parish as an organisation they will be volunteering in. [Link](#)
- Those volunteers who may already have a WWCC card, but need to update WWCC details and in particular 'link' themselves to the parish. [Link](#)
- If there are any teachers volunteering in the parish they will also need to link their Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) cards to the parish. [Link](#)

It is important to ensure that all WWCC cards are current and valid and that they are 'linked' to the parish. In your communication to volunteers, it may be helpful to provide them with the parish details i.e. Name of organisation, address of organisation and phone number of organisation. They will be asked for this information when they are attempting to complete their WWCC registration and be 'linked' to the parish.

- Participation and completion of Safeguarding Essentials online training module (30 minutes) on an annual basis (to be launched in 2021). This training can be undertaken individually or as a group. At the completion of the training,

participants will receive a certificate of completion. The parish will also receive notification that the module has been completed successfully.

3. Do volunteers also require a Police Check?

While all volunteers in Archdiocesan parishes entities are required to undertake a WWCC, **not** all volunteers are required to undertake a Police Record Check. Police Record Checks are required for those applying for or volunteering in specific roles and/or conducting activities that are considered to pose a high risk to children and young people e.g. overnight stays – see [Information Sheet](#).

4. Have Parish Priests been briefed about the safeguarding requirements that need to be implemented within parishes?

Yes, after the launch of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy in July 2019, Parish Priests were asked by Archbishop Comensoli to attend a mandatory information session (10 sessions were conducted specifically for clergy). During these sessions, the PSU outlined the requirements of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and the Victorian Child Safe Standards. At this time, the PSU also flagged the appointment of Safeguarding Officers for each region, to further support parish implementation and act as a resource for Safeguarding Committees. There is no doubt that the requirements of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards are comprehensive and rigorous, but we endeavour to support implementation in a number of ways, through in person or Zoom meetings with our Safeguarding Officers, information sheets, templates, website information, training and network meetings, so please reach out to the PSU team.

5. Volunteers supervising other volunteers – how does that work?

Nominating a program coordinator to assist Parish Priests to coordinate and oversee the various pastoral activities that are conducted to support the parish and the community. Much of the work within parishes could not be accomplished without these dedicated program coordinators that oversee the induction, training, rostering and support of other volunteers within the parish. Under the pastoral leadership of the Parish Priest these program coordinators are best placed to guide work within these programs and the work of volunteers to ensure that programs meet the pastoral needs of the community. Role descriptions provide clarity by defining the coordination and supervisory aspects of the program coordinators role.

6. What does supervision look like in a parish context? This is usually carried out informally, does this need to become a formal process? What documentation do the parishes need to keep of this?

In the context of the parish, supervision of volunteers can be more of an informal process e.g. discussing how the Children's Liturgy program is going, planning activities and discussing any possible challenges or issues that have arisen. Regular "catch ups" individually with program volunteers or as a group e.g. immediately after the activity, weekly or monthly etc. are useful in ensuring that the program is developing and meeting pastoral objectives, and that volunteers are provided with support and formation to flourish in their role. It is advisable to keep a record of the dates/times, those present and a brief summary of the discussion including any significant highlights and/or concerns or issues raised. This information is useful for the Parish Priest to understand how the program is progressing and enables him to have oversight of the program and its activities.

7. Is there a centralised hub or 'share point' for the parishes to share their 'best practice' with each other?

This a great idea and we hope to establish a 'best practice' hub in the Safeguarding section of the website.

8. What is the difference between a Complaints Policy and a Reporting Policy?

As we are aware that some parishes have complaints policies in place to deal with generic matters (e.g. complaints about car parking), we decided that it would be best to differentiate our legal reporting requirements in relation child-safety related misconduct and child abuse specifically in a "reporting" [Information Sheet](#). The Catholic Archdiocese has specific legislative requirements through the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme that involve reporting to the Commission for Children and Young People and/or Police (for criminal offences).



THE RESULTS ARE IN... 102 people representing 72 parishes attended the Network Meetings in February 2021.

Thank you to those who completed the network meeting survey. Here are the results.

93% of people indicated that they found the network meetings to be useful. What was most useful included listening to other parishes, being able to ask questions directly, the opportunity to discuss ideas with other participants, information provided by the PSU and sharing information and experiences with each other.

Areas for improvement included the timing of the network meetings, length of the meetings and maintaining a smaller number of participants for online delivery.

91% of people indicated that they would like to continue to be provided with an overview of each of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. Other topics for future network meetings included the audit process, risk management, good practices and a Q & A session.



**You are so rich in all you have:
in faith, speech and knowledge,
in your eagerness to help and
in your love for us. And so we
want you to be generous also in
this service of love.**

- 2COR 8:7

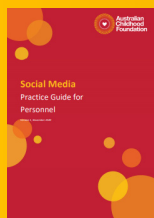
HELPFUL LINKS & TOOLS



Beacon App for Parents *Produced by the Telethon Kids Institute*

Beacon is a [free app](#) designed specifically for parents as a personalised one-stop-shop for reliable information about digital risks and threats facing children online.

Social Media: Practice Guide for Personnel *Produced by the Australian Childhood Foundation*



This [practice guide](#) aims to support those working with children and young people by exploring social media use from policy through to practice.



SAFEGUARDING LENS

Towards a theology of safeguarding

We would like to feature this [short video](#) of Fr Hans Zollner SJ, President of the Centre for Child Protection (Gregorian University, Rome) and a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. He is a world renowned speaker on safeguarding within the Catholic Church. He was recently in Ireland to speak to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church about the theology of safeguarding in preventing abuse as well as responding when abuse does occur.

We hope that this is a useful resource for those who share the safeguarding message within the parish.

RECRUITMENT

Are you someone who feels deeply committed to protecting children and our most vulnerable people?

Have you taken this commitment to the next level and studied Social Work, Social Science or Teaching and as a result have an in depth understanding of the Victorian legislation in relation to protecting children and adults from harm in an organisational and family context?

Our Professional Standards Unit are continuing to build a strong team of professionals whose drive and energy to work parishes will contribute to strengthening the capacity of our clergy, employees and volunteers to create safe environments, free from harm.

Reporting to the Child Safety Manager of the Professional Standards Unit, the Safeguarding Officer is required to provide policy support, guidance and training to parishes, agencies and entities across the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

The role will require significant input in:

- Empowering parish communities to champion the safety of children and vulnerable people
- Supporting the implementation of policies and procedures to promote the safety and protection of children, young people and people experiencing vulnerability, and
- Strengthening compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

If you are interested in this position, please review the [Position Description](#) and/or contact the Professional Standards Unit on 9926 5621.



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PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT

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