SAFEGUARDING POLICY
Working together for a safe Church

October 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding is promoting an environment which respects and acknowledges the dignity of each human being, and where people feel valued and safe. An important aspect of safeguarding is responding to concerns of harm or abuse. Pope Francis has made it clear he expects the Catholic Church on every level to implement whatever steps are necessary to ensure the protection of children and vulnerable adults and to respond to their needs with fairness and mercy.

The Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand has adopted the "Guidelines for the prevention of and response to sexual abuse in the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand" (National Safeguarding Guidelines). This policy is part of a national strategy to implement the National Safeguarding Guidelines.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to clergy, religious, employees and volunteers within each of the six dioceses of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand who work with or provide ministry to children (aged 0-18 years) and vulnerable adults. This includes people working within parishes and any organisation or agency which has been accepted as a Catholic entity by a New Zealand bishop ("Church Personnel").

3. PRINCIPLES

The Catholic Church believes that every person has a value and dignity which derives directly from their creation in the image and likeness of God. This implies a duty to value all people and therefore to protect them from harm. The gospel values of **love, dignity and justice** as demonstrated by Jesus, remind us that the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is an integral part of the life and ministry of the church. We are all called to create a culture which cherishes, nurtures and safeguards children and vulnerable adults.

To achieve this we are committed to:

- The right of children and vulnerable adults to be protected from harm.
- Fostering secure physical, emotional and spiritual cultures within all faith communities.
- All Church Personnel safely embracing appropriate boundaries, behaviours and practices that are consistent in all Dioceses.
- Supporting clergy, religious, employees and volunteers in their work with children and vulnerable adults.
- Modelling the principle of natural justice to ensure fairness and transparency.
- Effective monitoring and auditing structures to ensure the integrity of the Church and its measures for the prevention of and response to abuse.

4. GUIDELINES

The Catholic Church takes child protection and the protection of vulnerable adults seriously. The Church acknowledges its important and ongoing role to ensure everyone within our faith communities are protected from harm.

We will:

- Implement safe recruitment, selection and induction practices for all Church Personnel who work with children and vulnerable adults
- Require all clergy and religious to commit to ***Integrity in Ministry***
- Require all Church personnel (paid or unpaid) to commit to the ***Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers*** which sets out clear expectations regarding behaviour
- Implement procedures to appropriately respond to concerns, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving any child or vulnerable adult. This will include reporting concerns of harm (received outside the seal of confession) against a child or young person under the age of 18 years to the police and/or Oranga Tamariki
- Require Church Personnel to complete safeguarding education and training about creating safe environments for children and vulnerable adults

5. SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS

Who is a Child?

The *Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 Part 1 5(1)* defines a child as an individual up to the age of 18 years of age, who is not married or in a civil union.

Who is a vulnerable adult?

A person unable by reason of detention, age, sickness, mental impairment, or any other cause, to withdraw him or herself from the care or charge of another person (Crimes Act 1961)

Which Church organisations and agencies are covered by this Policy?

Each Diocese will have a list of the organisations and agencies which are covered by the scope of this policy. They meet with the requirements of Canon 216.

What is Harm?

Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect, or by sexual abuse or exploitation. It may be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance, or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

The harm generally involves one or more of four main forms:

- physical abuse;
- emotional/psychological abuse;
- family violence;
- neglect;
- sexual abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any non-accidental act on a child or vulnerable adult that results in physical harm. It includes, but is not limited to, beating, shaking, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, biting, grabbing hard enough to leave a mark, throwing a person, strangulation, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

Emotional/psychological abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the person's emotional development. This can include a pattern of rejecting, degrading, ignoring, corrupting, exploiting or terrorizing a child or vulnerable adult. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to their health or development. It is the persistent failure to provide a person's basic necessities of life such that his/her health and development are affected. Basic needs include: food, housing, health care, adequate clothing, personal hygiene, hygienic living conditions, timely provision of medical treatment, adequate supervision, education.

Family Violence

Family violence covers a broad range of controlling behaviours, commonly of a physical, sexual and/or psychological nature that typically involve fear, intimidation or emotional deprivation. It occurs within a variety of close interpersonal relationships, such as between partners, parents and children, siblings, and in other relationships where significant others are not part of the physical household but are part of the family/whānau and/or are fulfilling the function of family/whānau.

Common forms of violence in families/whānau include:

- spouse/partner abuse (violence among adult partners)
- child abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of children by an adult)
- elder abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of older people aged approximately 65 years and over, by a person with whom they have a relationship of trust)
- parental abuse (violence perpetrated by a child against their parent)
- sibling abuse (violence among siblings).

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities (penetrative and non-penetrative, for example rape, kissing, touching, masturbation) as well an non-contact acts such as involving children in the looking at or production of sexual images, sexual activities and sexual behaviours. Sexual abuse also includes exposing children to texting (electronic sexual messages or pictures) and grooming which is the deliberate action to befriend and establish an emotional connection with a child to lower their inhibitions in order to sexually abuse the child.

Sexual abuse is sexual assault, sexual harassment or any other conduct of a sexual nature that is inconsistent with the integrity of the relationship between Church Personnel and those who are in their pastoral care.

Grooming

Grooming is deliberate actions by which an offender befriends and establishes an emotional connection with a child or vulnerable adult to lower their inhibitions in order to sexually abuse the person. The relationship is usually maintained in secrecy.

Sexting

Sexting refers to the act of sending sexually explicit photographs or messages electronically.

Self-harm

Deliberate and voluntary physical self-injury (that is not life-threatening and is without any conscious suicidal intent), in an attempt to cope with strong feelings such as anger, despair or self-hatred. It may be by direct means including cutting and burning but could also be by engaging in serious risk-taking behaviours such as alcohol/substance abuse, recklessly dangerous physical activities and/or unsafe promiscuity. (NB: Some cases of self harm may be an indication of sexual abuse.)

6. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- National Safeguarding Guidelines
- Safeguarding Culture Standards
- Safe Recruitment & Training Policy
- Concerns & Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers

7. APPROVAL

The Archdiocese of Wellington has adopted this Safeguarding Policy, but has extended its coverage to include safety for everyone from all forms of abuse, with special attention to be paid to those groups who are especially vulnerable, such as children and adults who fall within the Crimes Act definition of vulnerability.

This Policy was signed and executed by the Archbishop of Wellington, Cardinal John Dew, on 28 March 2019.