



# NATIONAL CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

Safeguarding children  
and adults at risk

EDITION 2 | 2022



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD

*A safe Church for everyone*

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd acknowledges the lifelong trauma of abuse victims, survivors and their families, the failure of the Catholic Church to protect, believe and respond justly to children and adults at risk, and the consequent breaches of community trust.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd is committed to fostering a culture of safety and care for children and adults at risk.

The Catholic Church in Australia has confirmed the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards as the formally approved safeguarding standards for use by the Catholic Church in Australia.



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Available at [www.acsltd.org.au](http://www.acsltd.org.au)

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*Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd respectfully acknowledges all Traditional Owners of the land and waters of Australia. We pay respect to their Elders, past and present, and young leaders of today and the future. ACSL commits itself to the ongoing work of reconciliation with our Aboriginal families and communities.*



# CONTENTS

<b>National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Edition 2 Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>How the Standards Work Together</b>	<b>6</b>

---

 <b>Standard 1</b>	<b>10</b>	 <b>Standard 6</b>	<b>24</b>
Committed leadership, governance and culture		Effective complaints management	
 <b>Standard 2</b>	<b>14</b>	 <b>Standard 7</b>	<b>28</b>
Children and adults are safe, informed and participate		Ongoing education and training	
 <b>Standard 3</b>	<b>16</b>	 <b>Standard 8</b>	<b>32</b>
Partnering with families, carers and communities		Safe physical and online environments	
 <b>Standard 4</b>	<b>18</b>	 <b>Standard 9</b>	<b>34</b>
Equity is promoted and diversity is respected		Continuous improvement	
 <b>Standard 5</b>	<b>20</b>	 <b>Standard 10</b>	<b>36</b>
Robust human resource management		Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults	

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<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	<b>39</b>
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Catholic Diocese of Darwin  
and Catholic Education Darwin*





# NCSS EDITION 2 INTRODUCTION

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (the Standards) have been developed to operationalise the commitment by all Catholic Church entities to ensure the safety of all who encounter the Church, with a focus on children and adults at risk. Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) provides services to assist Church entities to implement the Standards and build their safeguarding capacity, to audit compliance and to publicly report the results.

The first edition of the Standards was released by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL) in 2018 and formally adopted in May 2019. The Standards were developed, tested and refined in consultation with Church Authorities, the Catholic community, and survivors, their families, and advocates in a broad consultation process.

The Standards have been carefully checked against state legislation, the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the National Principles adopted by the federal and state governments, and overseas experience. The Standards, therefore, represent best safeguarding practice for Church Authorities to apply in parishes, schools, welfare services and other ministries and services.

The Standards hold the Catholic Church to the highest degree of accountability, transparency, integrity and professionalism, in light of its mission and the pastoral responsibilities of the Church to address the failures uncovered through the Royal Commission. In some areas they exceed current regulatory and legislative requirements, in response to specific Royal Commission recommendations to the Catholic Church. In other areas, they outline expectations where there is currently no regulation.

The Standards now incorporate the concept of safeguarding adults, in keeping with the findings of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and initial learnings from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

The Standards, with the Australian Catholic Church's codes of conduct and universal Church law work in harmony with civil legislation. Our safeguarding commitment extends to every child and adult who interacts with the Catholic community. It particularly extends to the most vulnerable and to those who have most reason to doubt they will be safe.

The Standards are intended to be responsive rather than definitive. They will be subject to continuous review and improvement. Three years on from their development, they have now been reviewed and revised. ACSL undertook widespread consultation about the ease of implementation, their practical application and learnings from the significant audits that have been undertaken in that time.

The Standards demonstrate that Catholic leadership in Australia has acknowledged past failures in leadership and is committed to fostering a Church culture within which everyone is as safe as they can possibly be. It is the responsibility of each Church Authority to ensure that those who work (paid or unpaid) with children and/or 'adults at risk' within their jurisdictions apply these Standards in their own ministries and/or services.

By dedicating ourselves to learn, to improve on our practice and to meet these new standards, we will remain vigilant in protecting our children and adults who engage with the Catholic Church in Australia.

**The Hon. Michael Lavarch AO**  
*ACSL Board Chair*

# HOW THE STANDARDS WORK TOGETHER

The 10 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards are interrelated and interdependent. They work together to ensure every entity, ministry, and organisation across the Catholic Church in Australia places the safety of children and adults at risk at the core of how they plan, think and act.

In Edition 1, the 10 Standards were grouped into four areas according to common safeguarding principles. Edition 2 builds on this foundation by establishing core capabilities and linking key competencies for each area. The four capability groupings and how they work together holistically are represented below:



## THE FOUR NCSS CAPABILITY AREAS ARE:



### **Leadership, monitoring & improvement**

Standards 1, 9



### **Engaging with children, adults, families and communities**

Standards 2, 3, 4



### **Right people, right role, right knowledge**

Standards 5, 7



### **Systems, policies and procedures**

Standards 6, 8, 10

The capability areas identify the core safeguarding elements in each set of Standards. The core competencies describe what is required of an entity to meet the objectives of each Standard.


As you read through the NCSS Edition 2 document, you will see that the individual Standards reflect the colours of the capability areas to which they belong. You will

also see the capability area icons and core competencies included in the introduction to each Standard. Ongoing support, resources and guides developed by ACSL will be based on the four capability areas and will aim to strengthen the awareness, knowledge, skills and capacity of Church entities to safeguard children and adults at risk.



### Leadership, monitoring & improvement

 Standard 1

 Standard 9

## **Standards 1 and 9 focus on leadership, monitoring and improvement.**

These Standards are about making sure that a safeguarding culture is embedded in every aspect of Church life – in dioceses, parishes, religious congregations, ministries, schools, social, health and community services.


They ask our Church leadership and governance structures to be transparent and accountable, to set clear expectations, regularly monitor and review policies and practices, make improvements, and take actions to provide a safe environment for all people, especially children and adults at risk.



### Engaging with children, adults, families and communities

 Standard 2

 Standard 3

 Standard 4

## **Standards 2, 3, 4 are about engaging with children, adults, families and communities.**

Every person has the right to be protected from harm, to be listened to, to be taken seriously, and to have a say in matters that affect them. We know that some children and some adults experience greater vulnerability than others. Organisations that understand these needs and respect and uphold the dignity of all people, provide safer environments in which everyone can thrive.

Empowering children and adults to have a say in decisions that affect them is an integral part of every safe organisation. Connecting with families, carers and communities is also important, so that everyone can understand how and why decisions are made, where to go for information and help, and how to raise concerns. Recognising people's diverse needs and circumstances is essential to building a safeguarding culture where ministries and services are provided in culturally safe and inclusive ways, facilitating self-determination.



### Right people, right role, right knowledge

 Standard 5

 Standard 7

## **Standards 5 and 7 are all about our people – ensuring that we have the right people in the right roles, with the right knowledge.**

This is realised through best practice human resource management covering the recruitment process, professional development and ongoing support and supervision of Church personnel. Providing appropriate and regular training to personnel so they are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to put policies and procedures into practice, helps protect children and adults at risk from abuse.



### Systems, policies and procedures

 Standard 6

 Standard 8

 Standard 10

## **Standards 6, 8 and 10 work together to ensure that the systems, policies and procedures, designed to keep children and adults at risk safe, work in practice.**

This includes implementing an effective complaints management system, maintaining best practice records management, ensuring concerns are responded to promptly and sensitively, supporting victims and respondents, and managing and communicating risks across ministries. Creating and maintaining safe physical and online environments for children and adults at risk occurs when personnel are proactive in recognising and mitigating safeguarding risks. Putting in place policies and procedures that place the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk at the centre of our thinking is a focus of these three Standards.





Reception

Image supplied by CatholicCare NT



# STANDARD 1

## COMMITTED LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE

***The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture.***

Standard 1 focuses on how leadership influences a positive safeguarding culture. Strong leadership includes an accountable and transparent governance structure within an entity. This Standard includes the expectation of zero tolerance to abuse and that all people (children and adults) are provided a safe environment, free from abuse and discrimination. It also recognises that specific groups of people are at increased risk of experiencing abuse and require heightened awareness of the situations that make them vulnerable. Standard 1 ensures that an entity's personnel are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

### KEY COMPETENCIES



The entity:

- Builds a safeguarding culture
- Has zero tolerance to abuse
- Has transparent and accountable governance
- Provides a safe environment
- Sets clear behavioural expectations
- Performs high-level risk management
- Informs personnel of their responsibilities

*Image supplied by the  
Australian Catholic  
Bishops Conference*



## Criterion 1.1

**There is a public commitment to safeguarding that takes a zero tolerance approach to abuse.**

### Indicators

- 1.1.1 The Safeguarding Policy is approved and endorsed by the Church Authority and/or relevant leadership body and is publicly available.
- 1.1.2 The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, is widely displayed and made publicly available.

## Criterion 1.2

**A culture of safeguarding children and adults is championed and modelled at all levels of the entity from the top down and bottom up.**

### Indicators

- 1.2.1 A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority and leaders by:
  - promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone;
  - emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and,
  - actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management.
- 1.2.2 A Safeguarding Committee is appointed at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices, policies and procedures.
- 1.2.3 A Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) is appointed with clearly defined safeguarding roles and responsibilities.
- 1.2.4 Personnel understand that good safeguarding practices are everyone's responsibility and are empowered to contribute to the organisation's safeguarding practices.

## Criterion 1.3

**Governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy across the entity's activities.**

### Indicators

- 1.3.1 Governance arrangements are transparent and include safeguarding roles and responsibilities to ensure that accountability for the safeguarding of children and adults is clear.
- 1.3.2 Where the Church Authority's governance includes activities in countries other than Australia, these Standards are applied wherever possible, considering cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.

## Criterion 1.4

**The entity's Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural standards towards children and adults.**

### Indicators

- 1.4.1 The Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour.
- 1.4.2 The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and made available to all personnel, children, adults, families, and carers.
- 1.4.3 The Code of Conduct considers the needs of all children and adults at risk, paying particular attention to:
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
  - individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are 'at risk';
  - individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds;
  - children in out of home care, or those who are homeless; and,
  - children and adults of diverse sexuality.

- 1.4.4 The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.

### Criterion 1.5

**The entity's risk management plan focuses on preventing, identifying, and mitigating safeguarding risks to children and adults.**

#### Indicators

- 1.5.1 The Risk Management Plan considers the needs of children and adults with diminished capacity, and how and when adults at risk make informed choices (dignity of risk).
- 1.5.2 The Risk Management Plan incorporates procedures to assess, evaluate, review, and oversee safeguarding of children and adults at risk within its ministry and/or service.
- 1.5.3 There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report, and review risks.

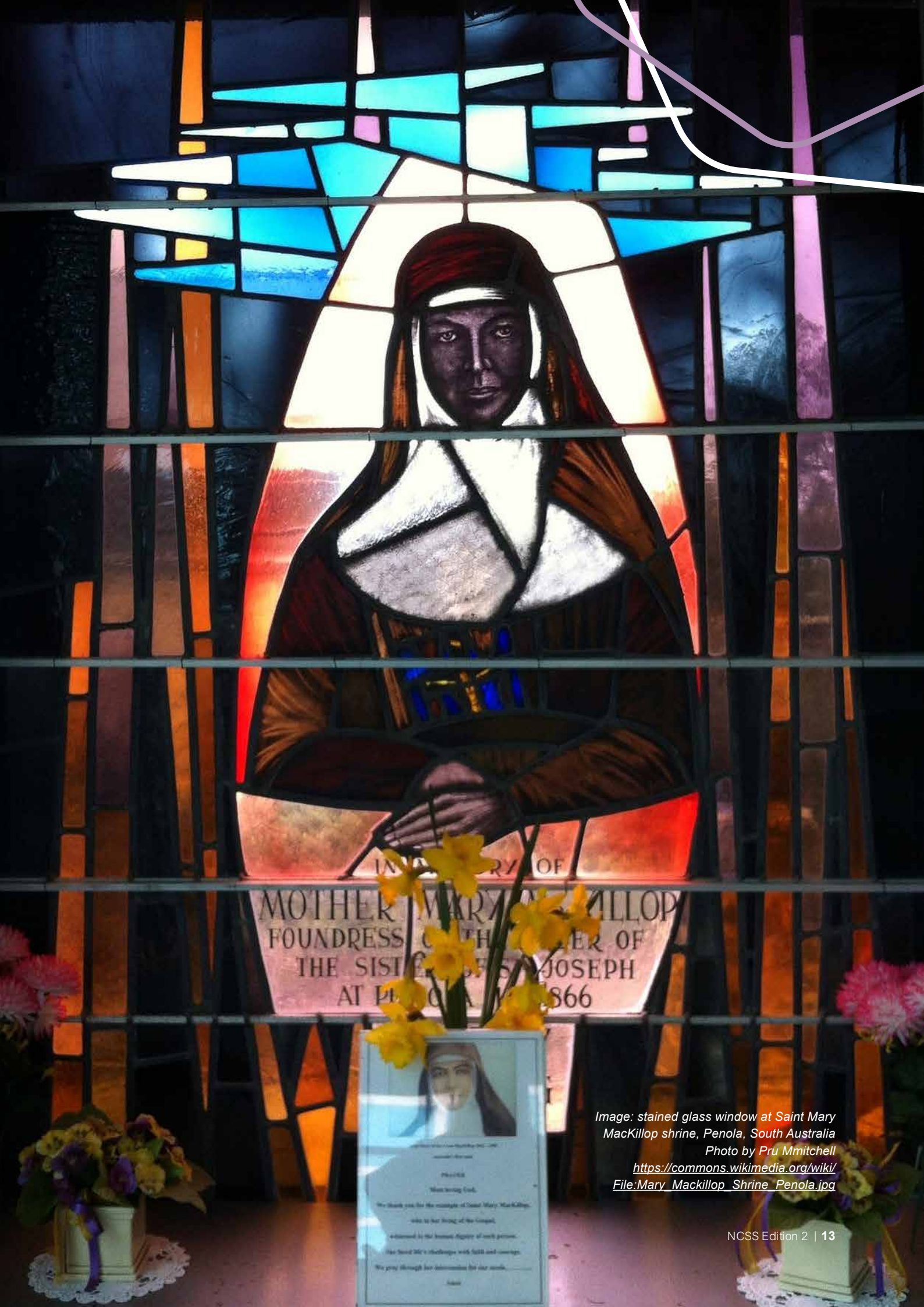
### Criterion 1.6

**Personnel understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping for safeguarding and professional standards.**

#### Indicators

- 1.6.1 Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures are documented and communicated to personnel.
- 1.6.2 Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures align with best practice.





IN MEMORY OF  
MOTHER MARY MACKILLOP  
FOUNDRESS OF THE ORDER OF  
THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH  
AT PENOLA 1866



Image: stained glass window at Saint Mary MacKillop shrine, Penola, South Australia  
Photo by Pru Mmitchell  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mary\\_Mackillop\\_Shrine\\_Penola.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mary_Mackillop_Shrine_Penola.jpg)



# STANDARD 2

## CHILDREN AND ADULTS ARE SAFE, INFORMED AND PARTICIPATE

*Children and adults are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.*

Standard 2 embeds the rights of children and adults through empowerment and participation. It outlines the importance of providing them with information and opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives. This Standard also emphasises the responsibility to provide access to information about being safe from abuse and where they can seek help if they feel unsafe.

### KEY COMPETENCIES



The entity:

- Informs children and adults of their rights and the organisation's processes
- Empowers children and adults to participate
- Uses the insights of children and adults in safeguarding approaches
- Promotes access to appropriate supports

Image supplied by Marymead



### Criterion 2.1

**Children and adults at risk engaged in an entity's ministry and/or services are informed about their rights, including safety, decision making, participation and how a complaint will be managed.**

#### Indicators

- 2.1.1 Age-appropriate strategies are used to engage with children, seek their views about what makes them feel safe; and enable them to participate in decisions that affect them.
- 2.1.2 Adults at risk (or carers where appropriate) are engaged to provide their views about decisions which affect them, what makes them feel safe and to contribute to safeguarding approaches.
- 2.1.3 The organisation makes children and adults at risk aware of their rights, including their right to be safe from abuse, and who to contact if they are concerned about their safety or the safety of others.

### Criterion 2.2

**The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, helping children feel safe and less isolated.**

#### Indicator

- 2.2.1 Children are provided with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful peer relationships.

### Criterion 2.3

**The importance of relationships and social connections for adults at risk is recognised and encouraged, helping them to feel safe and less isolated.**

#### Indicator

- 2.3.1 Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.

### Criterion 2.4

**Where relevant to the setting or context, children and families are offered access to abuse prevention programs and related information that is age appropriate.**

#### Indicator

- 2.4.1 Children and families are provided with information, access and/or referral to abuse prevention programs, appropriate to the child's age, development, ability, and level of understanding.

# STANDARD 3

## PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES, CARERS AND COMMUNITIES

***Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults.***

Standard 3 highlights that safeguarding occurs in a range of settings. Families and carers are often best placed to advise about the needs (and capabilities) of those they care for. This Standard promotes the importance of an inclusive approach to safeguarding that considers families, carers and legal guardians of adults who have diminished capacity, or cognitive impairment. The knowledge of families, carers and communities can inform organisations about practices and environments that are safe for children and adults at risk.

### KEY COMPETENCIES



The entity:

- Empowers parents and carers to participate
- Informs parents, carers and the community of safeguarding approaches and governance operations
- Raises awareness of the dignity and rights of all children and adults

*Image supplied by  
the Maronite Catholic  
Eparchy of Australia*



### Criterion 3.1

**Parents, carers and/or guardians participate in decisions affecting their child, or adults with diminished capacity.**

#### Indicator

- 3.1.1 The entity encourages parents, carers and/or guardians to take an active role in monitoring the safety of those engaged in the ministry and/or service.

### Criterion 3.2

**Families, carers and communities are engaged with and are provided information about the entity's approach to safeguarding.**

#### Indicators

- 3.2.1 Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.
- 3.2.2 Safeguarding information is provided and widely available, including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s).

### Criterion 3.3

**Families, carers and communities are informed about the entity's operations and governance; and have an opportunity to have a say in the safeguarding policies and practices.**

#### Indicators

- 3.3.1 Processes are in place to engage families, carers and communities about their views on safeguarding policies and practices.
- 3.3.2 Families, carers and communities are aware of the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services directly to children and adults at risk.

### Criterion 3.4

**The entity raises community awareness of the dignity and rights of all children and adults.**

#### Indicator

- 3.4.1 The entity promotes and/or participates in activities which raise awareness of abuse prevention and the rights and dignity of children and adults at risk.



# STANDARD 4

## EQUITY IS PROMOTED AND DIVERSITY IS RESPECTED

### *Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.*

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the inherent dignity of the human person, underpin the focus of Standard 4. This is reinforced by an emphasis on inclusion and empowerment. By acknowledging people's diverse needs and circumstances the entity can safeguard them more effectively. Standard 4 builds a safeguarding culture where ministries and services are provided in culturally safe and inclusive ways, facilitating self-determination.

### KEY COMPETENCIES



The entity:

- Recognises diversity and provides appropriate supports in inclusive ways
- Incorporates Catholic Social Teaching principles in safeguarding activities
- Provides ministries and services in culturally safe and inclusive ways





### Criterion 4.1

The diverse circumstances and backgrounds of children and adults at risk are acknowledged and accommodated by providing appropriate support.

#### Indicators

- 4.1.1 The Safeguarding Policy and procedures demonstrate an understanding, and awareness of the diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse.
- 4.1.2 The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures address barriers that may prevent a disclosure of abuse being made; and that hinder personnel from recognising and responding appropriately.

### Criterion 4.2

Children and adults have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that promote inclusion, are culturally safe, and accessible.

#### Indicators

- 4.2.1 Information about complaints processes and support are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.

### Criterion 4.3

The diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those living with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and adults who are unable to live at home, and those of diverse sexuality, are acknowledged.

#### Indicator

- 4.3.1 The Safeguarding Policy and procedures empower children and adults by reflecting attitudes and behaviours that respect their inherent dignity, are inclusive and are responsive to diverse needs.

# STANDARD 5

## ROBUST HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

***People working with children and adults are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice.***

Standard 5 addresses the essential Human Resource (HR) practices that underpin a strong safeguarding culture. It aims to provide consistency between current employment relations and best practice HR processes, to ensure that Church personnel are equipped to provide their ministry/service at the highest standard. A focus on safe recruitment, professional development, ongoing support and supervision of Church personnel enhance risk mitigation.

### KEY COMPETENCIES



The entity:

- Implements safe recruitment, professional development and ongoing support and supervision of Church personnel
- Ensures all personnel are aware of safeguarding policies and procedures
- Ensures ministry and formation processes (including selection) address safeguarding needs
- Has robust processes in place to address the safeguarding needs of clergy and religious from countries other than Australia

*Image supplied by Marymead*



### Criterion 5.1

**A strong commitment to safeguarding underpins an entity's recruitment.**

#### Indicators

- 5.1.1 The commitment to safeguarding and zero tolerance approach to abuse are explicit in advertising, screening, and recruitment for personnel.
- 5.1.2 Recruitment and screening procedures and processes are fully documented.
- 5.1.3 Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children and/or adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.

### Criterion 5.2

**Personnel have current clearances (for example working with children checks) and/or equivalent background checks relevant to their role.**

#### Indicators

- 5.2.1 All personnel are required to have a background check and clearance (as relevant to their role).
- 5.2.2 As required by legislation, personnel must have a current working with children check (or working with vulnerable people check) and/or NDIS Worker Screening Check prior to working with children or adults at risk.
- 5.2.3 Records of all checks are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation, for all personnel.

### Criterion 5.3

**Personnel complete appropriate induction and are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, including reporting obligations.**

#### Indicators

- 5.3.1 All personnel participate in a safeguarding induction program, which occurs as soon as possible after commencement.
- 5.3.2 Church Authorities and their leadership team undertake the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders.

### Criterion 5.4

**Ongoing supervision and people management includes an emphasis on safeguarding responsibilities.**

#### Indicator

- 5.4.1 Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.

**NOTE:** Criteria 5.5 - 5.8 apply to Church Authorities and related entities with seminarians, clergy, lay ministers and those in formation with, or members of, religious institutes.

## Criterion 5.5

**Before and during seminary and religious formation, candidates are appropriately screened and supported, including processes for ongoing formation, support and supervision of clergy and religious.**

### Indicators

- 5.5.1 The Church Authority seeks professional support in screening candidates for seminary/ formation programs and before ordination/profession of vows. This includes a responsibility to enquire if an applicant or candidate has previously withdrawn or been exited from another seminary or formation program.
- 5.5.2 Seminary and initial formation programs have robust screening processes for candidates, including external psychological and psychosexual assessments.
- 5.5.3 Ongoing integrated formation for clergy and religious addresses both the canonical and civil safeguarding requirements. For priests, this would include supporting their fidelity to the Church's teaching regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the inviolability of the Sacramental Seal.
- 5.5.4 All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/ pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.
- 5.5.5 All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals.
- 5.5.6 All newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least five years post ordination or final profession.

## Criterion 5.6

**The curriculum for seminary and formation programs for clergy and religious includes safeguarding knowledge and skills development of candidates to understand and lead initiatives for safeguarding children and adults.**

## Indicators

- 5.6.1 Seminary and initial formation programs build candidates' knowledge and skills in a range of areas to support safeguarding children and adults.
- 5.6.2 Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.
- 5.6.3 Seminary and initial formation programs identify how to avoid abuse of power and the development and/or reinforcement of clericalist attitudes and behaviours.

## Criterion 5.7

**The movement and credentialling of those in ministry is appropriately managed.**

### Indicator

- 5.7.1 A system to assess the safeguarding credentials (good standing) and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy, religious and lay ministers between different seminaries, formation programs and other Church entities is in place.

## Criterion 5.8

**Where clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are recruited to ministry, programs are in place to support their cultural awareness, screening, induction, professional supervision, and development.**

### Indicators

- 5.8.1 Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia recruited to ministry are screened and verification information is sought from the international Church Authority.
- 5.8.2 Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia participate in a safeguarding induction program which is documented and occurs as soon as possible after commencement of ministry.
- 5.8.3 Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are supported with a suitable mentor for at least the first two years of their time in Australia.





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# STANDARD 6

## EFFECTIVE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

***Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities, and personnel.***

Standard 6 addresses the importance of transparent complaints management processes. These should be formally documented in policies and procedures that are made publicly available. An effective complaints management system outlines roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints and obligations to act and report. Personnel should demonstrate their understanding of their legal and moral responsibilities to report complaints. Bishops and leaders of Clerical Institutes have an additional responsibility to support priests in their fidelity to the inviolability of the Sacramental Seal. This Standard includes the responsibility of supporting anyone who brings forward a complaint and to manage anyone who is subject of a complaint. Any complaints response procedure used by Church Authorities should comply with the requirements of this standard.

### KEY COMPETENCIES



The entity:

- Implements an effective complaints management system
- Ensures personnel understand their legal and organisational responsibilities
- Appropriately supports anyone who brings forward a complaint
- Appropriately manages anyone who is subject of a complaint



## Criterion 6.1

The entity's Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.

### Indicators

- 6.1.1 Policies and procedures address mandatory reporting obligations.
- 6.1.2 There are clear procedures that provide step-by-step guidance on the response and action to be taken for different types of complaints, including:
  - breaches of Codes of Conduct;
  - disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child;
  - an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and
  - an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult.
- 6.1.3 The Complaints Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflicts of interest are managed.
- 6.1.4 The Complaints Handling Policy acknowledges that power imbalances may exist between the complainant and respondent and has strategies in place to address this.
- 6.1.5 The Complaints Handling Policy spells out who has responsibilities in relation to handling complaints and when procedures are enacted.
- 6.1.6 Abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referrals are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years.

## Criterion 6.2

The Complaint Handling Policy is understood by children, adults, families, carers, and personnel, and focuses on the rights of children and adults at risk.

### Indicator

- 6.2.1 The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures demonstrate how the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk are prioritised.

## Criterion 6.3

Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

### Indicators

- 6.3.1 The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned, and operates in conjunction, with the Code of Conduct, HR, and other policies.
- 6.3.2 The Complaints Handling Policy commits to an initial risk assessment if a complaint of abuse is received, to identify and minimise any risk to children and adults. Ongoing risk assessments are conducted throughout investigation processes.
- 6.3.3 Complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.
- 6.3.4 Trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced or is alleging abuse.
- 6.3.5 Sharing information relating to complaints adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant legislation.
- 6.3.6 The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures empower and support personnel to raise, in good faith, concerns and allegations about unacceptable behaviour towards children and adults by other personnel.

**NOTE:** Indicators 6.3.7 and 6.3.8 apply to clergy and religious.

- 6.3.7 Where a complaint related to the sexual abuse of a child or adult against clergy or religious is substantiated under a civil standard, the Church Authority undertakes a risk management process to determine the appropriate action, in keeping with Church protocols.
- 6.3.8 Where a cleric or religious is convicted of a canonical offence relating to sexual abuse, the respondent is to be prohibited from the exercise of ministry until such time as the process for imposing a penalty is completed by the relevant dicastery.

#### Criterion 6.4

**The Complaints Handling Policy includes the process of reporting complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, requiring cooperation with any statutory or contractual processes.**

##### Indicator

- 6.4.1 The Complaints Handling Policy requires that:
- concerns and complaints of child abuse occurring within an entity be reported to the appropriate statutory authority/ies;
  - concerns and/or complaints of serious offences against adults be reported to statutory authorities; and
  - personnel cooperate with law enforcement procedures and directives.

#### Criterion 6.5

**The Church Authority ensures mechanisms are in place to support complainants of child and adult sexual abuse.**

##### Indicator

- 6.5.1 Appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants.

#### Criterion 6.6

**The Church Authority ensures respondents facing allegations are supported and monitored.**

##### Indicators

- 6.6.1 Appropriately trained personnel are engaged in consultation with the respondent to counsel and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent.
- 6.6.2 Arrangements are in place to monitor, supervise and support a respondent, where there is a complaint, until (and if) the Church Authority no longer has this responsibility.



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by CatholicCare  
Wollongong



# STANDARD 7

## ONGOING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

***Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and adults safe through information, ongoing education and training.***

Standard 7 emphasises the importance of all personnel being aware of the entity's safeguarding policies and procedures. It requires relevant personnel to receive training on the nature and indicators of child abuse, particularly organisational abuse, and how to create safe environments. It encourages the continuing development of practical skills in protecting children and adults at risk and responding to disclosures.

### KEY COMPETENCIES



The entity:

- Recognises the training and support needs associated with particular roles
- Provides appropriate safeguarding training activities
- Provides training and information on how to build culturally safe environments

*Image supplied by the  
Catholic Diocese of Darwin  
and Catholic Education  
Darwin*





## Criterion 7.1

**Personnel are trained and supported to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures.**

### Indicators

- 7.1.1 Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 7.1.2 The entity's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must cover:
  - Code of Conduct;
  - Safeguarding risk management;
  - Safeguarding Policy and procedures;
  - Complaints Handling Policy and procedures;
  - Reporting obligations; and
  - e-safety training.
- 7.1.3 Records are maintained to ensure all personnel attend induction training and participate in refresher safeguarding training at least every three years.
- 7.1.4 All personnel with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive ongoing support and professional development relevant to their role.

## Criterion 7.2

**Personnel are supported to recognise the nature and indicators of child abuse, including harmful behaviours by a child towards another child.**

### Indicator

- 7.2.1 Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place children at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:
  - understand the nature and impact of child abuse;
  - understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse;
  - identify risk factors, such as grooming behaviours; and
  - understand, identify, and respond to abusive behaviours by a child towards another child.

## Criterion 7.3

**Personnel are supported to recognise the factors that contribute to adult abuse, with a focus on adults at risk.**

### Indicator

- 7.3.1 Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:
  - understand the nature and impact of adult abuse;
  - understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse;
  - identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation;
  - recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including how power imbalances can be exploited; and
  - understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse.

## Criterion 7.4

**Personnel have the information and skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.**

### Indicators

- 7.4.1 Education and training programs equip relevant personnel to appropriately respond to and support anyone bringing forward concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.
- 7.4.2 Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.
- 7.4.3 Personnel receive training on reporting obligations under Commonwealth, State/Territory legislative and canon law, which includes:
  - reporting suspected criminal behaviour to police;
  - mandatory reporting to child protection authorities;
  - Reportable Conduct Scheme;
  - reporting to other regulatory authorities or government departments; and,
  - Canonical reporting requirements.

## Criterion 7.5

**Personnel receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and adults.**

### Indicators

- 7.5.1 Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- 7.5.2 Training is provided to relevant personnel to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds and how to create safe environments for people from these groups.

*Image supplied by the Catholic  
Diocese of Darwin and Catholic  
Education Darwin*





# STANDARD 8

## SAFE PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS

***Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed.***

Standard 8 focuses on the responsibility of organisations to minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur in both physical and online environments. It requires both the organisation and its personnel to be proactive in recognising and mitigating safeguarding risks. The core aspects of this responsibility are the Code of Conduct, the Safeguarding Policy, and the Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy, which outline appropriate supervision, oversight and behaviour towards children and adults at risk. This includes considerations of managing risks associated with third parties or contractors and use of facilities by others.

### KEY COMPETENCIES



The entity:

- Empowers personnel to be proactive in recognising and mitigating safeguarding risks
- Appropriately manages physical and online risks
- Consistently applies safeguarding practices across the entity

*Image supplied by the  
Australian Catholic  
Bishops Conference*





## Criterion 8.1

**The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy addresses both physical and online risks, without compromising the individual's right to privacy or wellbeing.**

### Indicators

- 8.1.1 Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services, including risks arising from:
- one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child;
  - ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction, and mentoring;
  - potential physical contact between the penitent and the confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated;
  - one-to-one interactions with adults at risk;
  - child-to-child interactions;
  - adult-to-child interactions;
  - adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration of power imbalances); and
  - the nature of physical spaces.
- Where possible, these interactions are to be conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.
- 8.1.2 The entity's policies require the safe use of online applications for children and adults to learn, communicate and seek help.
- 8.1.3 Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults.

## Criterion 8.2

**The online environment is used in accordance with the entity's Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy.**

### Indicators

- 8.2.1 Personnel access and use online environments in line with the Code of Conduct, Privacy Act and relevant communication protocols.
- 8.2.2 The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary procedures, or other relevant policies and reported to the leadership.

## Criterion 8.3

**Risk management plans address the range of settings, activities, and physical environments in which ministry and/or services occur.**

### Indicator

- 8.3.1 A process is in place to assess and manage risk if the organisation becomes aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their ministry and/or service.

## Criterion 8.4

**Where facilities and services are contracted to and from third parties, contractual arrangements specify safeguarding considerations.**

### Indicator

- 8.4.1 If a third party provides services or uses the organisations facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices in place.

# STANDARD 9

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

***Entities regularly review and improve implementation of their systems for keeping children and adults safe.***

Standard 9 acknowledges emerging risks to safety and that continuous review and improvement is a core component of all safeguarding approaches, regardless of the type of ministries or services provided. This Standard includes the need to regularly review policies and procedures, testing how they are understood and are implemented by personnel, and analysing incidents and complaints to identify systemic issues that may arise relating to safeguarding practices. External review mechanisms strengthen the organisation's safeguarding capabilities, support continuous improvement, and enable the sharing of learnings/good practice.

### KEY COMPETENCIES

The entity:

- Implements an effective safeguarding action plan
- Implements continuous quality improvement for systems and processes
- Develops, implements and reviews appropriate safeguarding policies and practices
- Analyses incidents
- Reports on findings

*Image supplied by  
CatholicCare NT*



### Criterion 9.1

**The entity's safeguarding practices for the protection of children and adults at risk are regularly reviewed.**

#### Indicators

- 9.1.1 The Safeguarding Implementation Plan outlines how safeguarding practices are monitored and reviewed, and how this information is reported.
- 9.1.2 The Church Authority monitors the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and co-ordinates annual local self-assessment checks.
- 9.1.3 The Safeguarding Policy is subject to review at least every three years and outcomes of this review are documented.

### Criterion 9.2

**Concerns and complaints are analysed to identify causes and systematic failures in safeguarding practices.**

#### Indicator

- 9.2.1 All individual incidents or complaints relating to safeguarding practices and/or failures are considered by the leadership to identify systemic issues or patterns and support continuous improvement.

### Criterion 9.3

**The Church Authority reports on the findings of its safeguarding reviews.**

#### Indicators

- 9.3.1 The findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices are reported to stakeholders.
- 9.3.2 The findings of audits or reviews undertaken or validated by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd are made publicly available.

# STANDARD 10



## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SUPPORT THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS

*Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.*

Standard 10 ensures that the safeguarding policies and procedures are well documented and managed. This ensures consistent application of safeguarding practices across the entity. These policies and procedures should be publicly available, in formats that are easily understood. They should be developed and reviewed in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders. Safeguarding policies and procedures should not be static but be 'living' documents. The Standards work together to emphasise the importance of adopting multiple strategies to address safeguarding and avoid an over-reliance on any one Standard.

### KEY COMPETENCIES



The entity:

- Develops and reviews safeguarding policies and procedures
- Makes policies and procedures accessible
- Ensures consultation informs development and review of policies and procedures
- Implements policies and procedures

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CatholicCare Wollongong





### Criterion 10.1

**Policies and procedures address the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.**

#### Indicator

- 10.1.1 All relevant policies and procedures reference appropriate safeguarding approaches, requirements, and responsibilities.

### Criterion 10.2

**Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand.**

#### Indicator

- 10.2.1 The policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding are readily available and accessible to all personnel.

### Criterion 10.3

**Best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development and review of policies and procedures.**

#### Indicators

- 10.3.1 There are processes in place to monitor how safeguarding policies and procedures are being implemented.
- 10.3.2 There is a process in place to develop and review safeguarding policies and procedures.

### Criterion 10.4

**Church leaders champion and model best practice implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.**

#### Indicator

- 10.4.1 The Church Authority and leaders promote the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and enact all policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding.

### Criterion 10.5

**Personnel understand and implement policies and procedures.**

#### Indicator

- 10.5.1 Personnel are encouraged to reflect on their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback.



*Image supplied by  
Servite College*

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The definitions of terms used in the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards consider Australian state, territory and federal laws and relevant regulations, canon law, information from the Holy See, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse published by the United Nations in 2017.

The glossary does not have any legal force and is meant only to serve as a reference tool for the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and related terms. All terms and definitions are to be read in the context of these Standards alone.

## Abuse

when used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term covering both child and adult abuse.

## Abuse of Power

means the abuse of position, function or duty to take advantage of another. This can take many forms and include situations where a person has power over another person by virtue of their relationship (e.g. employer and employee, teacher and student, coach and athlete, parent or guardian and child, clergy/religious and parishioner) and uses that power to their advantage.

## Accessible language

means information is provided in multiple formats for individuals with different levels of English literacy and proficiency, modes of communication, languages, and cognitive abilities.

## Adult

means any person 18 years or older. When used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term referring to all adults, including adults at risk.

## Adult abuse

means the improper treatment of a person that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm. Abuse can come in many forms, such as: physical or verbal maltreatment, neglect, injury, assault, violation, rape, unjust practices, crimes, exploitation, or other types of aggression. There are several categories of abuse of adults, such as:

- Sexual abuse\*
- Physical abuse\*
- Emotional/psychological abuse\*
- Neglect\*
- Elder abuse\*
- Financial abuse\*
- Exploitation\*

Within the context of the Catholic Church and faith-based entities, it is also important to recognise spiritual abuse\* as an additional subtype of abuse.

\*See separate definitions in glossary

### Adult at risk

means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people:

- who are elderly
- with a disability
- who suffer from mental illness
- who have diminished capacity
- who have cognitive impairment
- who have suffered previous abuse
- who are experiencing transient risks
- who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance
- who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- who are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- who are of diverse sexuality
- who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse.

### Allegation

means a complaint, still to be verified, claiming, or asserting that someone has committed an act of abuse against a child or adult. The term is used interchangeably and in combination with “complaint”.

### Audit

means a mechanism to assess how a Church Authority, ministry or entity governed by a Church Authority, is implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

### Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

means the assembly of Bishops of Australia exercising together certain pastoral offices for the Catholics of Australia.

### Bishop

means a diocesan bishop or archbishop, the ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of the Eastern Churches.

### Canon law

means the revised code of canon law promulgated by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in 1983 and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches as promulgated in 1990 and any other universal or legislation promulgated by the competent ecclesiastical authority.

### Canonical Offence

means canonical crimes<sup>1</sup> of sexual abuse committed by clerics and religious are:

1. forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts;
2. performing sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person<sup>2</sup>;
3. the production, exhibition, possession or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions.

<sup>1</sup> The canonical crimes/delicts/offences committed by clerics or religious as stated in Art. 1 §1 a) of Vos Estis Lux Mundi.

<sup>2</sup> Definition of vulnerable person as stated in Art. 1 §2 b) of Vos Estis Lux Mundi: “means: any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence”. This definition is captured by the term ‘Adult at risk’ within the NCSS.

### Catholic Religious Australia

CRA is the conference of major superiors comprising leaders of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life within the Catholic Church in Australia.

### Certification

means the act of giving official authority or approval and certification of the implementation of the NCSS and permission to use the ACSL Certification symbol.

### Child/ren

means individuals under 18 years of age.



### Child abuse

There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Definition sourced from the Australian Institute of Family Studies:

<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect>

Child abuse refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission. Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes:

- physical abuse
- emotional/psychological abuse
- neglect
- sexual abuse
- exposure to family violence

### Church Authority

means:

- a. a diocesan bishop or archbishop, an ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of an eparchy of an Eastern Church.
- b. the competent authority, howsoever titled, exercising the ministry of governance for religious institutes in Australia in accordance with their Constitutions; or
- c. for Ministerial Public Juridic Persons the competent authority in accordance with the statutes.
- d. for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organisation in accordance with its rules.

### Church Protocols

means official procedures or system of rules which govern the affairs of the Catholic Church in Australia, for example, Vos Estis Lux Mundi and the National Response Protocol.

### Civil Standard

A civil standard (of proof) refers to the duty of the person responsible for proving the case. There are different standards of proof in different circumstances:

- the most common standard of proof relates to civil proceedings, which is the balance of probabilities (incorporating the principles from *Briginshaw v Briginshaw*) – which means it is more probable than not that what the person says happened is true (in criminal cases, the standard is proof beyond reasonable doubt).

### Clergy

includes bishops, priests and deacons.

### Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia

means any cleric or member of a religious institute who is specifically recruited or welcomed from overseas by a Church Authority or entity.

### Cleric

a member of the clergy.

### Clericalist/ism

means an attitude toward clergy/religious characterised by an excessive deference and an assumption of their moral superiority. Pope Francis has said that it occurs when “clerics feel they are superior, [and when] they are far from the people.” It can be “fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons”.

### Cognitive impairment

means when a person has trouble remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions that affect their everyday life, because of their condition. Some causes of long-term or permanent cognitive impairment include dementia, stroke, or brain injury. For further information see: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment>

### Complainant

means any person who makes a complaint that may include any allegation, suspicion, concern, or report of a breach of the entity's Code of Conduct. A complaint may also include disclosures made to an institution that may be about, or relate to, abuse in the entity's context.

### Conflicts of interest

means situations (perceived or actual) where a conflict arises between a person's official duties and their private interests, which could influence the performance of those official duties. Such conflict generally involves opposing principles or incompatible wishes or needs and may occur when personnel function in multiple roles.

### Consecrated Life/Institute of Consecrated Life

is an association of faithful in the Catholic Church erected by canon law whose members profess the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience by vows or other sacred bonds (as defined in the Code of Canon Law under canons 573–730). Apart from being a member of an institute, consecrated life may also be lived individually; the Catholic Church recognises, as forms of individual consecrated life that are not members of institutes, namely that of hermits and consecrated virgins.

### Cultural safety

means an environment that is safe for people of all ethnicities and cultural identities: where there is no assault, challenge, or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.

### Dicastery

means a department of the Roman Curia.

### Dignity or Right to Risk

refers to enabling individuals the right (or dignity) to take reasonable risks. It recognises that restricting this right can stifle the individual's growth, self-esteem and the overall quality of life: 'Given that an individual's personal dignity is manifested, in part, by their ability to remain autonomous, and being autonomous engenders risk-taking. Inhibiting an individual's ability to take risks erodes their dignity. Dignity of risk is, therefore, the principle of allowing an individual the dignity afforded by risk-taking, subsequently enhancing their personal growth and quality of life.' (Joseph E Ibrahim and Marie-Claire Davis, 'Impediments to Applying the "Dignity of Risk" Principle in Residential Aged Care Services: "Dignity of Risk" in Residential Aged Care', *Australasian Journal on Ageing* 32, no. 3 (September 2013): 188–93)

### Diminished capacity

means if an adult needs to make a decision and is unable to carry out any part of this process (as listed below), they have impaired decision-making capacity. There are three elements to making a decision:

- understanding the nature and effect of the decision;
- freely and voluntarily deciding; and
- communicating the decision in some way.

### Diocese

means a diocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelature of the Latin Church and an eparchy of an Eastern Church.

### Disability (persons with)

means those who have physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (Article 2, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.)

### Diversity

means a range of people who have various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests.

### **Diverse sexuality**

refers to all the diversities of sex characteristics, sexual orientations, and gender identities, without the need to specify each of the identities, behaviours, or characteristics that form this plurality.

### **Elder abuse**

means a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.

### **Emotional abuse (adults)**

is a common form of abuse that occurs in close relationships. Emotional abuse is defined as abuse that occurs when a person is subjected to behaviours or actions aimed at preventing or controlling their behaviour, with the intent to cause them emotional harm or fear, through manipulation, isolation, or intimidation.

### **Emotional abuse (children)**

Emotional abuse of children refers to a parent or caregiver's inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts towards a child and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurturing and emotional availability. Such acts of commission or omission are likely to damage a child's self-esteem or social competence.

### **Entity**

means a diocese, religious institute, ministerial PJP (including their agencies) or association recognised as Catholic in accord with canon law.

### **Exploitation**

is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person. It is taking advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain.

### **Exposure to family violence**

is generally considered to be a form of psychologically abusive behaviour, where a child is present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse, or psychological maltreatment, or is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member's violent behaviour.

### **Financial abuse**

involves the illegal or improper use or mismanagement of a person's money, property or resources. Stealing, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, forced changes to a will, inappropriate removal of a resident's decision-making powers and misuse of power of attorney are all forms of financial abuse or exploitation.

### **Formation/program**

means a program preparing individuals for ordination or profession of vows and a life-long journey to the invitation of Christ to proclaim and live the Gospel message, within the life of the Church.

### **Good Standing**

A person in good standing is regarded as having complied with all their safeguarding obligations, and is not subject to any form of allegation, disciplinary process, sanction or suspension.

### **Grooming (child)**

refers to a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging a child as a precursor to sexual abuse. It includes establishing a 'special' friendship/relationship with the child. Grooming can include the conditioning of parents and other adults to think that the relationship with the child is 'normal' and positive.

### **Grooming (adult)**

is the predatory act of manoeuvring another individual into a position that makes them more isolated, dependent, likely to trust, and more vulnerable to abusive behaviour.

### **Guardian**

refers to the person(s) who has the legal authority to care for the personal and property interests of another person.

### **Institutional abuse**

means abuse or poor care within an institution or specific care setting. Possible causes of institutional abuse include:

- a “closed” culture within an organisation where transparency is discouraged;
- lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service;
- failure to properly check the backgrounds and interview staff;
- inadequate training;
- lack of safeguarding policies and procedures;
- lack of support of staff by management;
- poor supervision; and
- poor standards of care.

### **Lay/lay person**

means members of the Catholic Church and Church personnel other than bishops, priests, deacons and religious.

### **Leaders**

means personnel who are responsible for important governance decisions within a Church entity and/or who lead and coordinate Church improvement initiatives.

### **Mentor**

means an experienced and trusted advisor or a person who gives a younger or less experienced person help and advice over a period.

### **Ministerial Public Juridic Person (PJP)**

means a legal entity which is constituted a public juridic person in canon law and carries on its mission in the name of the Church, in accordance with its statutes approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority.

### **Ministry**

means any activity within, or conducted by, an entity, that is authorised by formal appointment and designed to carry out the apostolic and charitable works of the Catholic Church.

### **NDIS Worker Screening Check**

The NDIS Worker Screening Check is an assessment of whether a person who works, or seeks to work, with people with disability poses a risk to them. The assessment determines whether a person is cleared or excluded from working in certain roles with people with disability. For further information see: <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/workers/worker-screening/ndis-worker-screening-check>

### **Neglect (adult)**

is the failure of a carer to provide the necessities of life to a person for whom they are caring.

### **Neglect (child)**

refers to a failure by a caregiver to provide the basic requirements for meeting the physical and emotional developmental needs of a child. Physically neglectful behaviours include a failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene or medical attention.

### **Offender**

means a person who has admitted abuse or whose responsibility for abuse has been determined by a court of law (criminal or civil), statutory or Church procedure.

### **Organisation**

means a ministry and/or service operating under the governance of a recognised authority (such as a legal entity) and/or a Church Authority.

### **Pastoral care**

means when one person has responsibility for the wellbeing of another or for a faith community. It includes the provision of spiritual advice and support, education, counselling, medical care, and assistance in times of need. All work involving the supervision or education of children and young people is a work of pastoral care.



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**Personnel (Church personnel)**

means a cleric, religious or other person who is employed by the entity or engaged on a contract, subcontract, voluntary or unpaid basis.

**Physical abuse**

is a non-accidental physically aggressive act which results in physical pain or injury, and which may include physical coercion and physical restraint. Physical abuse may be intentional or may be the inadvertent result of physical punishment.

**Priests**

in these standards refers to both bishops and priests.

**Professional/pastoral supervision**

means a professional activity in which personnel are engaged in reflection and learning, under the guidance of a supervisor. Supervision assists personnel in their accountabilities for professional standards, defined competencies for their role and understanding and implementation of organisational policy and procedures. For clerics and religious, professional supervision assists in the maintenance of boundaries of the pastoral relationship and enhances the quality of their ministry.

**Protective behaviours program**

is a type of abuse prevention program and means an age-appropriate structured education program to equip children and young people with the skills and knowledge to enhance their personal safety.

**Reflective practice**

is a professional development technique that involves thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice. It is expected to be a continuous process, whereby an individual explores an experience to identify what happened and what their role in this experience was, including behaviour, thinking, and related emotions. Reflective practice enables potential changes in approaches to similar future events to be identified, with the aim of improved performance.

**Religious institute**

means an entity within the Catholic Church whose members commit themselves through religious vows to lead a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. Societies of apostolic life resemble religious institutes in that their members also live a life in common. They do not take religious vows but live out the apostolic purpose of the group. In these Standards, the term 'religious institutes' is used to include religious institutes, societies of apostolic life and secular institutes.

**Religious**

means a member of an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life.

**Respondent**

means a person against whom a complaint is made.

**Review**

means an internal self-assessment of an entity's implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. A review can also be an assessment that forms part of the process of continuous improvement which occurs when following up recommendations made during an audit.

**Risk-based Audit and Review Framework**

means a framework for assessing the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards that reflects a proportionate response based on the risk profile of the Church Authority.

**Risk Profile**

means an assessment against key safeguarding risk factors.

**Safeguarding Committee**

means a committee established to advise and support the Church Authority on all matters relating to safeguarding, including the development and implementation of a Safeguarding Implementation Plan and coordinating annual self-audits at a local level. Committee members need relevant and varied professional expertise in relation to safeguarding, child protection, organisational culture and structure, policy development, etc. and include lay women and men.

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### **Safeguarding Culture**

means embedding safeguarding into everything an organisation does. In promoting this culture, young people and adults at risk will understand they will be listened to, supported, and know action will be taken on their behalf.

### **Safeguarding Commitment Statement**

means a Commitment Statement describing an entity's commitment to keep children and adults safe from harm. It informs the entity's safeguarding culture.

### **Safeguarding Co-ordinator**

means an individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.

### **Safeguarding Implementation Plan**

means a documented plan which articulates actions to be taken across the entity to ensure safeguarding practices are in place. It includes actions, strategies, responsibilities, delegations, and accountabilities, and tracks review and progress. It is overseen by the Safeguarding Committee.

### **Safeguarding policies and procedures**

means any policies or procedures of the entity that address elements of safeguarding children and adults. For example, but not limited to:

- recruitment;
- risk management;
- complaint handling; and,
- acceptable use of online applications.

### **Seminarian**

a student in a theological formation and education centre preparing for ordination as a priest.

### **Seminary**

means a centre for the formation and education of students preparing for ordination.

### **Sexual abuse (adult)**

Sexual abuse is a form of sexual assault. Sexual abuse includes rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment, and sexual interference. Sexual activity with an adult who is incapacitated by a mental or physical condition (such as dementia) that impairs his or her ability to grant informed consent, is defined as sexual assault/abuse. Sexual assault/abuse includes where by force, threats or abuse of authority an individual commits a canonical offence or forces someone to perform or submit to sexual acts. Sexual assault is a crime.

### **Sexual abuse (child)**

refers to exposing a child to any form of sexual activity. This may or may not involve physical contact. This may take the form of taking sexually explicit photographs or videos of children, forcing children to watch or take part in sexual acts and forcing or coercing children to have sex or engage in sexual acts with other children or adults.

### **Spiritual abuse**

means abuse of a person that invokes a person's religious beliefs and faith to perpetrate harm. Spiritual abuse can occur as a secondary experience of abuse when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of spiritual authority and trust within the Church and can negatively impact a person's spirituality.

### **Substantiated complaint**

means under the civil standard of proof an allegation of abuse for which the investigator finds that sufficient evidence exists to believe that the alleged conduct more likely than not occurred.

### **Third parties**

means any individual, group or legal entity outside the Church entity who contract services and facilities to or from the Church entity.

### Transient Risk

means short-term risk, experienced by people at different stages in their life: e.g. when someone is vulnerable due to:

- grief
- bereavement
- relationship breakdown
- homelessness
- unemployment
- financial hardship

### Trauma-informed and victim-centred support

is a strengths-based framework which is founded on five core principles – safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Trauma-informed services do no harm: they do not re-traumatise or blame victims for their efforts to manage their traumatic reactions, and they embrace a message of hope and optimism that recovery is possible. In trauma-informed services, trauma survivors are seen as unique individuals who have managed their responses to the experiences as best that they could.

### Validation

means an assessment by ACSL of any self-assessment, review or audit, undertaken to achieve ACSL Certification status.

### Working with children check

means generic term used in the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards to denote the statutory screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. There is not yet a single national framework setting out requirements for ‘working with children’ checks. Each State/Territory in Australia has its own system. They are one part of a Church entity’s recruitment, selection, and screening practices.

### Working with Vulnerable People Check

means the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 in the Australian Capital Territory which requires those working with children (and other vulnerable groups) to complete a Working with Vulnerable People Check and be registered before they can commence employment.

Tasmania has a ‘Working with Vulnerable People Check’ which requires all employees and volunteers aged 16 and over working in childcare services or other child-related services to apply for a WWVP check.

To date, only the ACT and Tasmania have this requirement.



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD

*A safe Church for everyone*