



Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide

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## Diocesan Offices and Parish Teams

# Procedure for Mandatory Notification Responsibilities

Approved by:  
Moderator of the Curia

Date: April 2019

Procedure Number: 1

Review Date: April 2020



# Procedure for Mandatory Notification Responsibilities

## *Commitment Statement – Safeguarding our Children and Young people*

*Created in the image of God, children and young people are our most precious and sacred citizens with a voice that must be heard, respected and valued. Accordingly, we, the people of God in the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide are committed to the care, wellbeing and protection of our children and young people.*

*We support the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child as the foundation for child protection and believe that all children and young people have the right to be safe, happy and healthy. We are committed to being an inclusive, culturally diverse and resilient church where God’s children can flourish.*

*Our Church strives to enable and empower children and young people to be part of the Kingdom of God as a safe and secure home. We are committed to a shared responsibility, a culture of safety which is underpinned by robust, responsive and effective policy and procedures.*

*As we are reminded by Pope Francis, a future in which children are secure is a future where “every child is held in God’s infinite tenderness and God is present in each of their lives”.*

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure a clear and consistent approach for responding to allegations or concerns of abuse, or risk of abuse, against a child or young person across the Archdiocese of Adelaide. This procedure provides guidance and best practice principles for safeguarding children and young people who have the right to be healthy, happy and safe.

The Archdiocese of Adelaide recognises the dignity of all children and young people before God and the significant role the Catholic Church community plays in promoting environments that nurture the wellbeing of children, young people and their families.

## 2. Principles

- When child abuse or neglect is suspected the individual concerned for the safety of the child or young person will follow this procedure to ensure mandatory notification responsibilities are fulfilled;
- The rights of the child will be paramount and will be at the centre of the organisations response;
- All Archdiocesan clergy, religious, employees and volunteers have a responsibility to create and maintain the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and to protect them from harm.

## 3. Scope

These procedures applies to Archdiocesan clergy, religious, employees and volunteers.

## 4. Mandatory Notification Obligations

The procedure set out in this document is in accordance with the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 which determines that a minister of religion or a person who is an employee of, or volunteer in, an organisation formed for religious or spiritual purposes are required to notify the Department of Child Protection if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected.

Under this section of the Act a notification is mandated and must be accompanied by a statement of the observation, information and opinions on which the suspicion is based.

### 4.1 Abuse and/or neglect of a child according to the Act means:

- (a) Sexual abuse of the child; or
- (b) Physical or emotional abuse of the child, or neglect of the child, to the extent that:
  - I. the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological injury detrimental to the child's wellbeing; or
  - II. the child's physical or psychological wellbeing is in jeopardy.

## 4.2 General Definitions of abuse and neglect<sup>1</sup>

*In South Australia, child abuse and neglect is categorised in four ways:*

### **Physical Abuse**

The child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering serious physical trauma or inflicted injury due to the actions of his/her caregiver.

### **Emotional Abuse**

The child's social emotional, or cognitive development is impaired or seriously at risk as a direct result of persistent caregiver behaviour or attitude towards the child, whereby the child's self-esteem and social competence are undermined or eroded over time.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is characterised by serious, ongoing failure to provide for children's basic needs to the extent that the child is not receiving the care and supervision necessary to protect him/her from harm, has suffered serious physical injury or illness, or there is risk of serious harm to the child's well-being and development.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Any sexual activity or behaviour a child is subjected to. Sexual abuse occurs when someone is in a position of power over children uses that power to involve the child/ren in sexual activity.

## 4.3 Definition of a Child

A **child** means a person under 18 years of age.

## 5. Responding to Allegations or Concerns of Child Abuse

Disclosure by a child or young person:

- A disclosure occurs when a child or young person tells you or lets you know in some other way that he/she has been or is being abused.

Other means of becoming aware of or suspecting child abuse include:

- Through observation, such as physical indicators, play or behaviours which give reason to believe a child or young person is being abused and/or neglected;
- Another individuals behaviour or actions presents a risk of significant harm to a child or young person;
- Someone reliable, such as a relative, friend, neighbour or sibling of the child or young person discloses abuse.

Every allegation or concern for abuse must be treated seriously. The immediate safety and wellbeing and of the child or young person is paramount.

## 5.1 Listen

When a child or young person is disclosing details of abuse it is important to know how to respond.

- Listen with care and support the child or young person;
- Take time, allow the child or young person to talk in their own way;
- Take what is said seriously and be reassuring, it was right to tell;
- If a child is making a disclosure, do not investigate or ask leading questions;
- Remain calm and neutral, without judgement;
- Do not make promises of confidentiality;
- Let the child or young person, know what will happened next and whose job it is to help.

## 5.2 Record

It is important to record all disclosures or observations, signs, indicators of abuse and neglect as soon as possible using the Safeguarding Record Form. Write down what the child, young person or other person has disclosed using their own words. Wherever possible the record should include child or young person's details, known information about the family and or perpetrator. The document should be accurate, objective, dated, signed and confidential.

All information must be stored appropriately and only accessible to those responsible/accountable for safeguarding children and young people. A copy of the Safeguarding Record Form must be provided to the Child Protection Unit. Please refer to the Safeguarding Record Form, Appendix B.

## 5.3 Report

### Familial Abuse

Where there is suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has been abused or neglected, or at risk of abuse and neglect within their family, a mandated notification must be made to the Child Abuse report Line 13 14 78. Mandated notifiers have a legal and moral responsibility to report suspicions of abuse and neglect.

Where the child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, immediate action must be taken to ensure the child or young person's safety whilst investigations by the Department for Child Protection are undertaken.

In reporting an allegation or concern of abuse, the child or young person's right to dignity, confidentiality and privacy must be given the utmost consideration.

All details of any known investigations must be documented, dated and signed.

### Extra Familial Abuse

Extra-familial abuse is abuse by someone outside the child's or young person's immediate family. It may be abuse or risk of abuse by an extended family member (someone the child does not live with) or by someone else involved with the child or young person such as a family friend, someone from an organisation the child or young person is involved with, or a stranger. While most abuse occurs within the family, significant cases of sexual abuse are perpetrated by someone outside of the family, but who is otherwise known to the child or young person.

The Department for Child Protection is not primarily responsible for responding to extra-familial abuse as it is a criminal offence. If there is suspicion that child abuse has occurred through a child or other person disclosing abuse or through observations a notification to the SA Police is required.

If the known or suspected abuse involves Archdiocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers it must be reported to the Church Authority and or Child Protection Unit who will implement relevant procedures and safety plans. This **does not** absolve responsibility to inform SA Police however will ensure all allegations of child abuse are responded to as matter of priority to ensure the wellbeing and safety of children and young people.

Refer to the 'Procedure for Managing Allegations or Concerns of Current Child Abuse against an Archdiocesan clergy, religious, employee or volunteer' which can be found on the Archdiocese of Adelaide website or obtained by contacting the Child Protection Unit.

The Child Protection Unit is responsible for all matters relating to safeguarding children and young people and can be contacted in any circumstances for guidance and advice. This includes situations where there is concern for a child or young person that does not require a notification, where you may not have enough detail to make a notification, or where you are unsure whether a notification should be made.

#### **5.4 Debriefing**

It is recognised that making a notification relating to child abuse can be a difficult and stressful experience for individuals therefore it is important to seek support from Child Safe Contact Person/Parish Priest or Child Protection Unit. Every effort will be made to provide ongoing pastoral care if required.

#### **5.5 Ongoing Response**

It is the responsibility of the Department for Child Protection and or SA Police to undertake child protection investigations and to plan for and provide intervention.

As guided by statutory authorities and where appropriate, offer support to the child or young person and family as much as practical and possible.

### **6. Responsibilities of the Mandated Notifier and Supporting Roles**

#### **6.1 Notifier**

- To listen, respond, and record, using the 'Safeguarding Record Form', and report any allegations or concerns of child abuse to the appropriate statutory authority (SA Police or the Department of Child Protection);
- It is not the individuals' responsibility to investigate or prove but to notify on suspicion on reasonable grounds;

- If pastoral support is required, inform the Parish Priest about the allegation and or concern and steps taken to safeguard the child or young person;
- Contact the Child Protection Unit for specialist advice and support.

## 6.2 Child Safe Contact Person/Parish Priest (if not the notifier)

- Ensure the ‘Safeguarding Record Form’ is completed;
- Support the notifier to contact the Child Protection Unit to determine if any other support or services should be provided to the family or child or young person, and to determine if there are any other required immediate actions.

## 6.3 The Child Protection Unit

- To provide immediate and ongoing specialist support and advice to the notifier and the Child Safe Contact Person and/or Parish Priest;
- To lead any case management meetings and coordinate support services as necessary (complementary to any involvement by statutory authorities);
- To consider the cultural needs of the child or family concerned, if from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background, and ensure appropriate cultural advice is sought;
- Inform the Church Authority if the notification is in relation to an allegation or concern of abuse by Archdiocesan clergy, religious, employee or volunteer in accordance with the procedure for Managing Allegations or Concerns of Current Child Abuse against an Archdiocesan clergy, religious, employee or volunteer.

## 7. Supporting Documents

Managing Allegations or Concern of Current Child Abuse against an Archdiocesan Clergy, Religious, Employee or Volunteer

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Safe Environments for All framework

Information Sharing Guidelines

## 8. Appendices

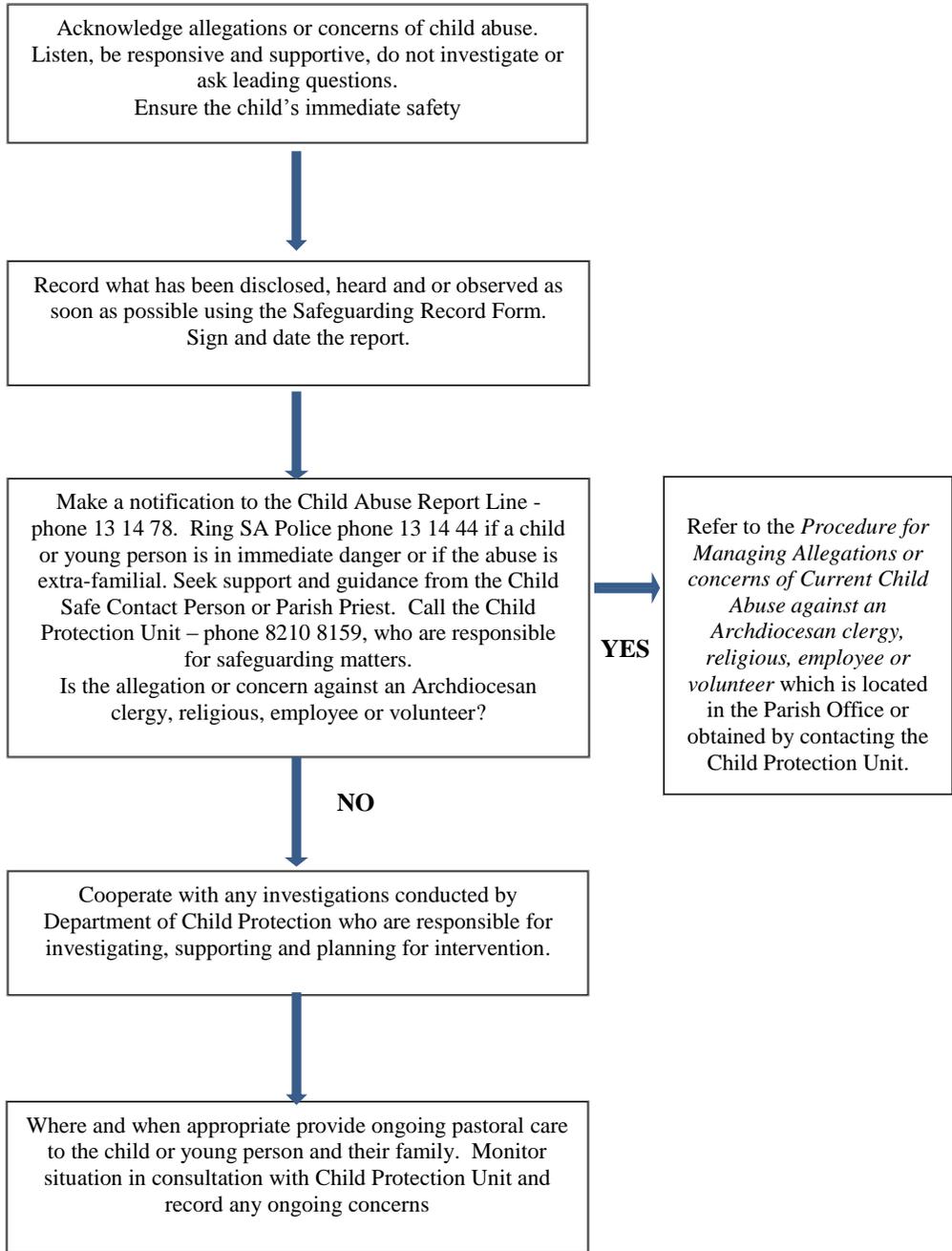
Appendix A – Procedure for Mandatory Notification Responsibilities Flowchart

Appendix B - Safeguarding Record Form

## 9. Review

This policy will be reviewed one year after initial endorsement by the Executive of the Curia by the Child Protection Unit and monitored by the Child Protection Council.

# PROCEDURE FOR MANDATORY NOTIFICATION RESPONSIBILITIES FLOWCHART





## Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide

*Safe Environments For All: A Church where God's children can flourish,  
where all are welcomed, valued and respected*

### Safeguarding Record Form

**When to use this form:** Any time you have a concern about a child or young person in your parish or Church community. You can use this form even if you have not made a notification to Department for Child Protection. Keep in mind that information that may not seem relevant now could be relevant in the future if your or someone else has further concerns. Once completed, a copy of this form should be provided to the Child Protection Unit as well as filed confidentially in your Parish.

Date:    /    /

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Role: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide the following information if known.**

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity/culture: \_\_\_\_\_

Next of Kin: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's family: Couple, with other children     Single parent, other children   
Couple, single child     Single parent, single child

Known family supports: (extended family/ friends/ and organisations)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has the family of the child been informed of the concern? Yes  No

**Please provide the following information if known.**

Name of the alleged or suspected person responsible for harm/risk: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Role within parish (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship with the child:    Family member     Known to family   
   Friend      Unknown to family

Record of Concern:

Please describe details of the concern.

*What occurred? Who was involved? What was said? What are your observations in respect to the child's; behaviour, mood and appearance? Please be as accurate as you can. Use further pages if required.*

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Date of report to the Child Abuse Report Line (if report has been made):    /    /

Name of Child Abuse Report Line worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you notified anyone else within the parish of the concern and what plans for support or response have been discussed?

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A copy of this form has been provided to the Child Protection Unit: [childprotection@adelaide.catholic.org.au](mailto:childprotection@adelaide.catholic.org.au)

Yes

Details of consultation

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***Ensure that all copies of the Safeguarding Record Form are stored securely in order to keep the information and details confidential.***

***Please contact the Child Protection Unit if you require any advice, guidance and or support on ph. 8210 8159***