

Safeguarding Code of Conduct for Parishes 2021

St Thomas the Apostle Parish, Clyde North

ALL CHURCH PERSONNEL

Central to the mission of St Thomas the Apostle Parish is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity of children, young people and adults at risk¹, providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. All Church personnel are expected to actively contribute to a culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms the Gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice.

Purpose - This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk at St Thomas the Apostle Parish against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It sets out principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour for ministry in the parish.

Acceptable behaviours - All Church Personnel (clergy, volunteers, staff, contractors) are expected to:

- adhere to the Parish Safeguarding Policy, possess a current WWCC and uphold the Parish's Statement of Commitment to the safety of children, young people and adults at risk
- undertake annual and refresher training (online and face to face) in safeguarding
- take all reasonable steps to protect children and adults at risk from abuse and harm
- treat everyone in the Parish community with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe pastoral environment)
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of those who:
 - are from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-identification)
 - have a disability.

Interactions with children, young people or adults at risk - Church personnel must:

- obtain written consent of a parent or legal guardian (who has provided the contact details) before contacting them for Parish purposes only
- ensure as far as practicable that you are not alone with them and that public visibility is maintained whenever possible
- listen and respond to their views or concerns, particularly if they are worried about their safety or the safety of another person.

Reporting – Church personnel must:

- immediately report any incidents, disclosures, allegations, suspicions and concerns, as per the Diocesan Complaints Handling and Reporting Policy. Adhere to 'Five Critical Actions for Church Personnel' which is accessible from any member of the parish office or PSO.

Unacceptable behaviours - All Church Personnel (clergy, volunteers, staff, contractors) must **not**:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed abuse of a child, young person or adult at risk
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate language
- consume drugs on parish premises or at parish events.

Interactions with children, young persons or adults at risk – Church personnel must **not**:

- photograph or video them without the consent of their parent or legal guardians.
- develop any 'special' relationships with them that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children).

¹ These are adults with diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse which include being elderly, having a disability, having mental illness, having cognitive impairment, having diminished capacity, being culturally and linguistically diverse, experiencing transient risks such as bereavement or relationship breakdown or having an impairment that makes it difficult for that person to protect themselves from abuse or exploitation.

- exhibit behaviours which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps).
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with them. This includes doing things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with them or their family who is/are not family or socially related
- have physical contact with them or their family who is/are not socially related outside of the pastoral duties without the Parish Priest's or Parish Safeguarding Officer's knowledge and/or consent (other than accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street).
- have any online contact (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) with them or their family who is/are not family or socially related (unless necessary e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters).
- use any personal communication channels (private mobile phone, email account) to conduct parish communications with them without explicit permission from the Parish Priest.
- visit adults at risk on behalf of the parish without first obtaining the consent of the Parish priest and recording the visits at the Parish office. Permission of the adult at risk should be sought for the visit. If the adult at risk has cognitive impairment, it is important that a legal guardian is contacted for consent before visits are conducted.
- undertake financial transactions on behalf of adults at risk without the consent of their appointed financial power of attorney. Similarly, medical appointments should not be made without the consent of their legal guardian. [Should the adult at risk being visited have an immediate medical episode, then contacting '000' is required].
- in any circumstance put them at risk by the locking of doors of any room they enter nor should an adult be alone with them in any room without good cause.
- manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating them. The use of corporal punishment is never acceptable. Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort.
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in their presence.
- discriminate against them because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- work with them while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

I have read, understood and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ___/___/20___