

St Michael's Parish

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Central to the mission of St Michael's Parish is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at St Michael's Parish against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement child protection legislation and the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's "Code of Conduct for Caring for Children, *May our children flourish*".

All clergy, employees, volunteers, parishioners and contractors engaged in worship, ministry and related activities at St Michael's Parish ("Parish Personnel") are expected to actively contribute to a parish culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms the Gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice. They are required to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

This Code of Conduct is not intended to cover those activities where the child is under the direct care and supervision of a parent or guardian, for example, when children are attending a social gathering after Mass with a parent or guardian.

It is expected that all persons who participate in (or could reasonably be expected to participate in) parish activities involving children will read this Code of Conduct, seek further information regarding anything that is not understood, and comply with it.

2. Acceptable behaviours

Parish Personnel are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the parish Child Safety Policy and upholding the parish's Statement of Commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm
- treating everyone in the parish community with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe pastoral environment)
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)



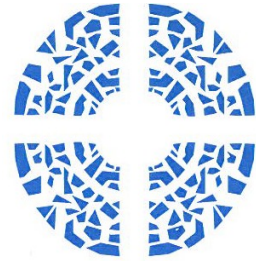
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, by ensuring reasonable care is taken to cater for any additional needs being faced)
- ensuring as far as practicable that an adult is not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the police
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)
- reporting any child safety concerns to the parish priest or the Vicar General if the concern relates to the parish priest (or child safety officer if the parish has appointed someone to this role)
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.

Protocols for specific ministries at St Michael's Parish are contained in Appendix 1.

3. Unacceptable behaviours

Parish Personnel must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors or being alone with a child with no good cause)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating a child; corporal punishment is never acceptable. Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort or in an emergency
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal details or social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family who is/are not socially related outside of the pastoral duties reasonably associated with the role description of the person's position in the parish without the parish priest'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 a child or their family who is/are not family or socially related outside of the pastoral duties reasonably associated with the role description of the person's position in the parish (e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters, distributing rosters)



- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child or their family who is/are not family or socially related outside of the pastoral duties reasonably associated with the role description of the person's position in the parish
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume illicit drugs on parish premises or at parish events.

4. Child Protection Reporting Protocol

1) Principles

St Michael's Parish aims to deal with all reports under this Code of Conduct fairly and appropriately, and to act on the following principles:

- a) Promoting a positive experience of the Church and creating a strong community of faith;
- b) Preventing misconduct where this is possible;
- c) Ensuring fair process for persons against whom allegations are made; and
- d) Dealing effectively with any allegations which are substantiated, including responding compassionately to anyone who has been affected.

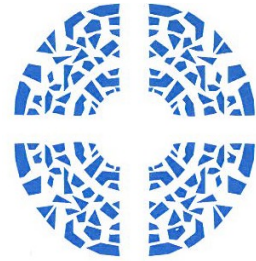
2) Flowchart

A flow chart setting out how and to whom to make reports may be found at Appendix 2.

3) What should you report?

You may come across possible breaches of the St Michael's Parish Code of Conduct, or matters that cause you concern, in any number of ways. These might include:

- a) A disclosure made to you by a child;
- b) Observing events that cause you to form an objectively reasonable belief that a child is being harmed or abused, or is at risk of being harmed or abused (whether by a family member or by another person); or
- c) Being present and witnessing an event or incident.
- d) Alternatively, an incident may occur during an activity you are responsible for, such as:
 - a. A child being lost;
 - b. A child being injured; or
 - c. A medical emergency.



4) Always report these matters

Regardless of the way in which an issue arises, you should always report circumstances that cause you concern and you should certainly always report:

- a) Any breach of the St Michael's Code of Conduct;
- b) Any incident in which a child is seriously harmed or goes missing;
- c) Any emergency situation including a medical emergency;
- d) Any hazard or risk of harm to a child that is not being adequately addressed;
- e) Any allegation of sexual misconduct;*
- f) Any disclosure by a child, or an objectively reasonable belief you have formed, that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse of any kind;*
- g) Any allegation of violence inflicted by an adult upon a child;*
- h) Any allegation in which an adult has been under the influence of drugs (illicit or misused medication) or alcohol while responsible for children;
- i) Any incident in which a child has been seriously harmed or injured (either physically or psychologically) or is at risk of harm or injury;*
- j) Any allegation of conduct which is or might be unlawful;* and
- k) Any conduct which would or might give rise to a mandatory requirement to report under the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYF Act) or the Crimes Act 1958.

*** These matters should be immediately reported to Victoria Police.**

For further information regarding the mandatory reporting requirements under CYF Act, please see www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cyafa2005252/. For further information regarding the mandatory reporting requirements under the Victorian Crimes Act 1958, please see www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/ca195882/s327.html; or contact the Office of Professional Conduct and Ethics on 9926 5677 or after hours on 0407 694 900.

If you are not sure whether to report a matter, please contact the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Office of Professional Conduct and Ethics on 03 9926 5677 or after hours on 0407 694 900.

5) Who may make a report?

Any person may make a report. If an allegation involves sexual or other abuse of a child you should not investigate the matter yourself, or raise it with parents/guardians or the alleged abuser directly. You should report the matter using the procedures set out in paragraphs 9-13 of this section.

6) How can a report be made?

- a) If you would like any guidance about how to report a breach of this Code of Conduct or a matter of concern, please contact the Office of Professional Conduct and Ethics on 03 9926 5677 or after hours on 0407 694 900. The process for reporting and dealing with any concerns or breaches of this Code of Conduct will vary depending on the type of conduct and who is responsible for the conduct.
- b) A Confidential Incident Recording Form may be used to record details of any incident or matter of concern. A sample form for this purpose may be found at



www.cam.org.au/Professional-Standards/Sample-Forms.aspx

- c) Nothing in the St Michael's Code of Conduct restricts the right of any person to report any matter to the police or other authorities.

7) To report sexual and other abuse

- a) Conduct that is or may be illegal should be reported to Victoria Police.
- b) Sexual misconduct by clergy, seminarians, religious brothers, religious sisters or lay persons working and volunteering within St Michael's Parish ("Church personnel") should also be reported to the Independent Commissioner, whose office has been established by the Archbishop of Melbourne to enquire into and advise him with respect to allegations of sexual misconduct by any priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, and religious and lay persons working and volunteering within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.
- c) The Role of the Independent Commissioner and the procedures that will be followed upon the receipt by him of a complaint can be located at www.cam.org.au/Professional-Standards/Melbourne-Response.aspx
- d) Nothing in this Code of Conduct is intended in any way to affect the role of the Independent Commissioner or the ability of any person to make or refer a complaint to the Independent Commissioner.
- e) The Independent Commissioner may be contacted at 03 9225 7979.

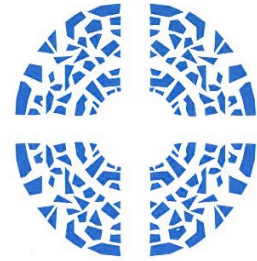
8) To report all other matters

- a) All matters other than those within the purview of Victoria Police, DHHS or the Independent Commissioner should be reported as follows:
 - a. **Any matter that arises within a parish** should be reported in the first instance to your parish priest (unless the matter involves the parish priest, in which case it should be reported in accordance with paragraph 14b). The parish priest will listen to the allegations and decide what action to take in accordance with the procedures below at paragraph 4. (9). If, after a reasonable time has elapsed, you are not satisfied with the parish priest's response to your report you may then refer the matter to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Melbourne 03 9926 5677 or vicar.general@cam.org.au
 - b. **Any report that relates to a parish priest** should be reported in the first instance to the Vicar General on 03 9926 5677 or vicar.general@cam.org.au.
 - c. Reports will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures at paragraph 4 (9).
 - d. **Any medical emergency, a missing child, or any other emergency situation** should be reported in the first instance to the appropriate authorities (such as police, re or ambulance by dialling 000). As soon as possible thereafter, the child's parent/guardian should be notified and a report should be made (at the latest within 24 hours) to the HR Office on 03 9926 5677 or human.resources@cam.org.au

9) What happens when a report is made?

When a report is made in accordance with paragraph 4(8), the person receiving the report shall:

- a) Listen carefully to the report and ensure it is fully understood;
- b) Consider whether it is appropriate or necessary to advise others within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne or to inform relevant authorities;



- c) Determine what action will be taken (if any);
- d) Document all action taken; and
- e) Maintain the confidentiality of all parties (including the person making the report, and any person to whom the report relates) at all times to the extent this is possible. In some cases, it may be necessary to inform relevant authorities or others within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne or the person to whom the report relates. Depending on the nature of the allegation it may be necessary to:

- (i) Inform the police, if the behaviour is or might be criminal;

- (ii) Consider whether a mandatory report must be made to the DHHS under the CYF Act;

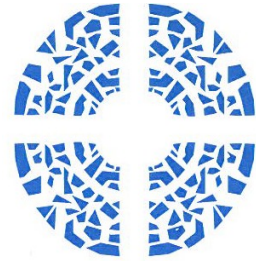
- (iii) Make or refer a report to the Independent Commissioner.

10) Dealing with disclosures by children or a reasonable belief that abuse is or may be occurring in a setting to which this protocol applies

- a) If:
 - a. A child makes a disclosure to you that sexual, physical or psychological abuse is occurring, or
 - b. You form an objectively reasonable belief that a child is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed,

you should immediately report the matter to Victoria Police who will advise you on the next steps to take.

- b) Be aware that the child may be feeling ashamed, guilty and scared, and may be worried about the consequences of telling someone about the abuse. Stay calm and listen carefully to the child. Tell them you believe them and that they did the right thing by telling you. Do not make promises you cannot keep such as promising that you will not tell anyone else.
- c) To assist the child, it may be necessary to provide some psychological support and/or counselling or to ensure that such counselling is available to the child.



APPENDIX 1 – Ministry Child Safety Protocols

Requirements or obligations which arise under these ministry protocols are in addition to any obligations arising under the St Michael's Code of Conduct.

Altar Servers Ministry Child Safety Protocol

1. Two adults are required to be in the Sacristy at all times when altar servers are present.
2. Parents/Guardians of altar servers are requested to accompany their son/daughter to the Sacristy before Mass and remain until two adults are present – the Celebrant, the Lector or the Eucharistic Ministers.

Choir and Musicians Ministry Protocol

1. Children's choir or musicians' rehearsals are conducted in the Church in the transept near the organ which is visible from the altar and the body of the Church.
2. During children's choir or musicians' rehearsals there must be at least one adult present conducting the rehearsal and another adult in calling range at all times.

Children's Liturgy Ministry Protocol

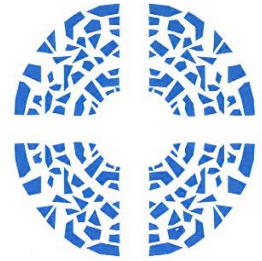
1. The Children's Liturgy is conducted in a glass panelled room in the Church loft, visible from the altar and the front of the Church.
2. During the Children's Liturgy program there must be at least one adult present conducting the program and another adult in calling range at all times.
3. The children's parents/guardians must remain in the Church throughout the program.

Afterschool Sacramental Program Ministry Protocol

1. Parent/guardians of children enrolled in the afterschool sacramental program will be required to provide emergency contact details, relevant medical details of the child and an indication of consent in relation to use of photographs of the child.
2. Two adults including the parish catechist must be present at all times during the afterschool sacramental class.
3. Parents/guardians of children enrolled in afterschool sacramental program will be requested to nominate at least one class where they are available to assist with the supervision of the sacramental class.

Reconciliation Protocol

1. Where the sacrament of Reconciliation is conducted with a child, the celebrant and the child must be visible at all times and an adult other than the celebrant must also be present in reasonable proximity to the celebrant and the child.

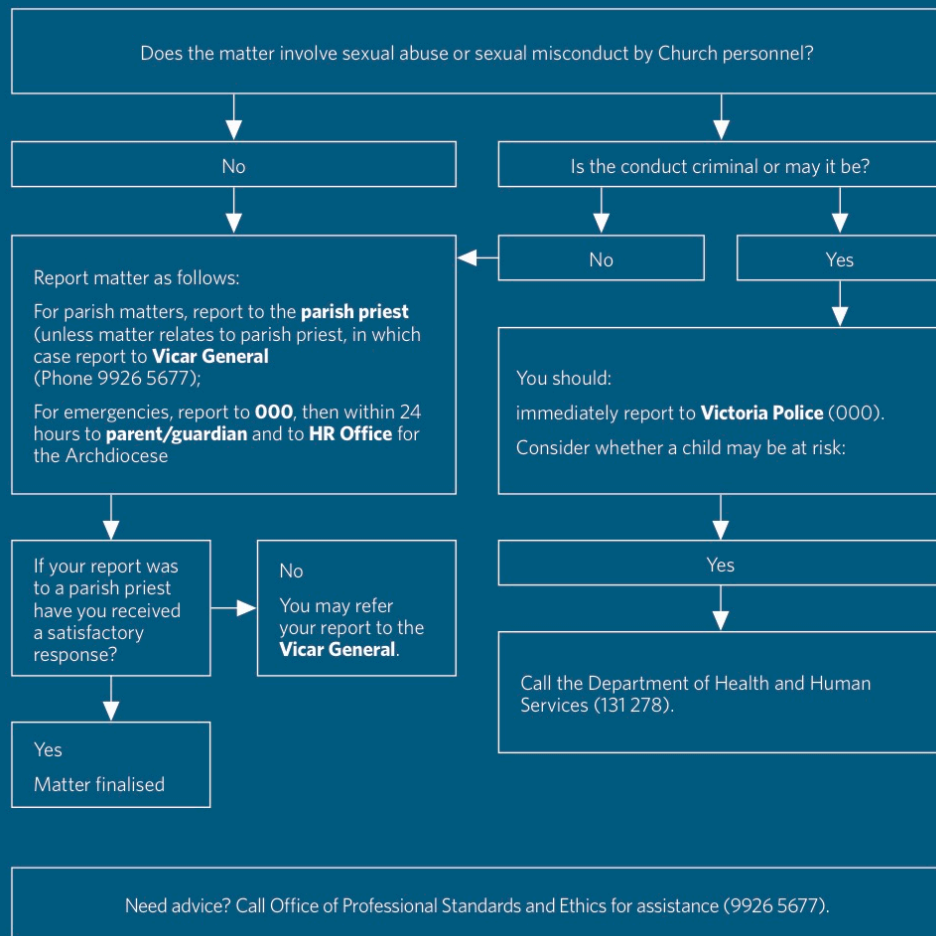


May our children flourish

ENSURING THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF CHILDREN IN OUR CARE



If you **see something** that concerns you, **say something**



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

* "May our children flourish - Code of Conduct for Caring for Children" is available from the Parish Office or www.cam.org.au.