



## **Code of Conduct :**

### **Safeguarding Children, Young People and All Vulnerable People**

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

#### **Purpose**

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children, young people and all vulnerable people at St Anne & St Bede'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*" and to be applied to all vulnerable people in the parish.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish council members at St Anne & St Bede's Parish 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 and all vulnerable people, as noted below.

#### **Acceptable Behaviours**

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children and all vulnerable people by:

- adhering to the parish 'Safety Policy for Children and All Vulnerable People' and upholding the parish's 'Statement of Commitment to the safety of children and all vulnerable people' at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children and all vulnerable people 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 and all vulnerable people , particularly if they are telling you that they or another child or vulnerable person have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child or vulnerable person
- 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 and all vulnerable people 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 and all vulnerable people (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 abuse of children or all vulnerable people 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 safety concerns for children or all vulnerable people to the Parish Priest or the Parish Professional Standards Coordinator. Where the concern relates to the Parish Priest report the matter to the Parish Professional Standards Coordinator and/or the Vicar General.
- if an allegation of abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the victims are safe.

## Unacceptable behaviours

Staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish council members must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed abuse of children or all vulnerable people
- develop any 'special' relationships with children and all vulnerable people that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children or all vulnerable people)
- exhibit behaviours with children and all vulnerable people which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children and all vulnerable people at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors or being alone with a child or all vulnerable people with no good and reasonable cause)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or all vulnerable people or do things of a personal nature that a child or vulnerable person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating a child or all vulnerable people; 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 with children or all vulnerable people (for example, personal details or adult social activities) where a reasonable person would consider it inappropriate
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children or all vulnerable people
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children or all vulnerable people
- discriminate against any child or vulnerable person because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child/vulnerable person 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 or Professional Standards Co-ordinator'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 /all vulnerable people or their family who is/are not family or socially related (unless necessary e.g. by providing families with information required through your role in the Parish)
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account to conduct parish communications
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or personal email addresses with a child/all vulnerable people or their family who is/are not family or socially related
- photograph or video a child or all vulnerable people without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children or all vulnerable people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume drugs on parish premises or at parish events.

**Declaration: I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood St Anne and St Bede's Code of Conduct as provided above and available on the Parish Website and I agree to all of the terms.**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**