

CHILD/VULNERABLE ADULT

SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Safeguarding Children/Vulnerable Adults

Code of Conduct

St Mary's Parish, Colac

12 December 2019

Central to the mission of St Mary's Parish, Colac is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children/vulnerable adults 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/vulnerable adults at St Mary's Parish, Colac against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement child protection legislation and the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat's "Code of Conduct for Caring for Children".

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish leadership team members at St Mary's Parish, Colac 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/vulnerable adult-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children/vulnerable adults, as noted below.

Acceptable behaviours

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

- adhering to the parish Policy & Procedure for safe Guarding Children and Vulnerable Adults and upholding the parish's Statement of Commitment to child/vulnerable adult safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children/vulnerable adults 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/vulnerable adults, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child/vulnerable adult have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child/vulnerable adult
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children/vulnerable adults (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child/vulnerable adult's self-identification)

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children/vulnerable adult 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/vulnerable adults 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/vulnerable adult
- reporting any allegations of child/vulnerable adult 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/vulnerable adult safety concerns to the parish priest or the Vicar General if the concern relates to the parish priest (or child/vulnerable adult safety officer)
- if an allegation of child/vulnerable adult abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child/vulnerable adult are safe.

Unacceptable behaviours

Staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish leadership team members must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child/vulnerable adult abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children/vulnerable adult that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children/vulnerable adult)
- exhibit behaviours with children/vulnerable adults which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children/vulnerable adult at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors or being alone with a child/vulnerable adult with no good cause)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children/vulnerable adults or do things of a personal nature that a child/vulnerable adult can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating a child/vulnerable adult; 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/vulnerable adults (for example, personal details or social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children/vulnerable adults
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children/vulnerable adults
- discriminate against any child/vulnerable adult because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child/vulnerable adult 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 or child/vulnerable adult safety 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 a child/vulnerable adult 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/device such as a personal email account to conduct parish communications

- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child/vulnerable adult or their family who is/are not family or socially related
- photograph or video a child/vulnerable adult without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children/vulnerable adults while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume drugs on parish premises or at parish events.