

SACRED HEART PARISH CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT 2017

Central to the mission of Sacred Heart 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.

PURPOSE

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at Sacred Heart Parish 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 council members at Sacred Heart 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-safety principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

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

- Adhering to the parish Child Safe 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, or the safety of another child
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and or linguistically diverse backgrounds and have a zero tolerance towards discrimination
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability, 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 Vic 1958

- Reporting any child safety concerns to the Child Safety Officer, or the Parish Priest, (or the Vicar General if the concern relates to the parish priest).
- If any allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child or children are safe.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

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

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (e.g. offering gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- Exhibit behaviours with children that may be construed as unnecessarily physical (e.g. inappropriate sitting on laps)
- Put children at risk of abuse, e.g. by locking doors, or being alone with a child with no good reason
- 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
- Manager disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating a child; corporal punishment is never acceptable. Physical restraint should only be used as last resort or in an emergency.
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- 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, venerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- Have contact outside of pastoral duties associated with the person's position in the parish, with a child or their family who is not socially related
- Have any online contact (including social media, email, messaging, etc) with a child or their family who is/are not family or socially related, unless necessary. E.g. by providing families with newsletters
- Use any personal communication channels/devices, such as personal email account to conduct parish communications
- 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
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardian
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Consume drugs on parish premises or at parish events

Signature: _____

Date: _____