



# OBLIGATIONS OF ORGANISATIONS OR COMMUNITY GROUPS THAT RUN OR AUSPICE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS WITHIN DIOCESAN, PARISH CONTEXTS

Parishes are an important part of the fabric of local communities, in part because they provide a location for community members to engage in a range of activities run by community organisations, local groups or private providers.

The following sections set out the requirements for programs run by community organisations or groups:

- that involve contact (or likely contact) with children and young people
- that involve no contact with children and young people
- that are run on a one-off basis.

Parishes are required to conduct due diligence on third parties who use/hire their facilities to ensure child safeguarding policies and processes are in place.

## **PROGRAMS INVOLVING CONTACT (OR LIKELY CONTACT) WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Community programs that involve contact (or likely contact) with children and young people and that operate within a diocesan parish that is run and/or auspiced by a community organisation, group or private provider are required to demonstrate that they take seriously their responsibilities to keep children and young people safe from harm.

### **EXAMPLE**

- ABC Tennis Academy has leased the parish tennis courts and clubhouse to run tennis lessons for children, young people and adults.
- A volunteering program run by the North West Volunteers Network (NWVN) operates from a parish hall and provides materials and food aid to families in the community on an outreach basis. Parishioners volunteer as part of the program but the program is auspiced by NWVN.
- A cultural group uses the community centre on a weekly basis to run language, music and dance classes for children and young people.
- St Mary's Basketball Club operate independently of the parish even though they retain the parish name and use the parish's courts. The club is auspiced by a state basketball association.

Community organisations, groups or private providers that have contact (or likely contact) with children and young people are required to:

- be provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Safety Policy to set expectations for the care and safety of children and young people
- demonstrate/confirm that those involved (e.g. employees, volunteers) have a current and valid Working with Children Check
- demonstrate (by providing a copy to the parish) that the agency has a child safety policy consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards
- be briefed about onsite child safety.

## IMPLEMENTATION HINT

These expectations should be stated in an agreement that is authorised by a representative from the parish and a representative from the organisation, group or private provider running and/or auspicing the program or activity (e.g. as part of the hire, lease or usage agreement).

To assist community organisations who run programs within the parish, it is important to provide a tour of the site and/or a site map including site-specific information about keeping children and young people safe.

## EXAMPLE

Sunny Meadows Shire Council runs a playgroup which operates from St Cecilia's Parish Hall, located on the grounds of St Cecilia's Primary School, every Tuesday from 9am to 11am during school hours. To promote the safety of the children attending the playgroup as well as the children attending the primary school, it is important to provide the Shire Council with relevant information to assist in promoting the safety of children and young people on site.

Figure 1 – St Cecilia's Parish and School site map



Relevant information may include:

- emergency and evacuation procedures
- safety equipment (e.g. fire extinguishers, first aid, defibrillator)
- access arrangements in relation to the venue
- parking arrangements including vehicular access to the site (see Figure 1)
- location and access to bathroom facilities
- insurance coverage
- areas are that off-limits (e.g. primary school, playground areas, classrooms, storage areas)

## PROGRAMS WITH NO CONTACT (OR NO LIKELY CONTACT) WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Community organisations, local groups or private providers who run and/or auspice programs where there is no contact (or no likely contact) with children and young people are exempt from complying with the requirements of the Diocesan safeguarding policies and procedures.

Example - The XYZ School of Yoga, which runs yoga classes in the evening for adults, is exempt from complying with this policy because it has no contact or no likely contact with children and young people.



Where arrangements change and the program has contact (or no likely contact) with children and young people, the program must comply with the requirements set out in the section above titled 'Programs involving contact (or likely contact) with children and young people'.

### **USING A DIOCESAN PARISH FACILITY ON A ONE-OFF BASIS**

Where an organisation, group, private provider or members of the general public use and/or hire a parish facility on a one-off basis, they are not required to comply with the requirement of the Diocesan safeguarding policies and procedures.

However, usage or hire agreements need to reflect that hirers are responsible and should take all steps to ensure that children and young people are safe.

Examples of scenarios that are exempt from compliance with this policy are:

- A family has hired the church hall to celebrate a special occasion (e.g. birthday, wedding).
- A youth mental health provider in the community has asked to use the community centre to run an information session for teenagers during Youth Mental Health Week.
- A government electoral organisation uses the facility for one day to run a polling booth.

Where an arrangement becomes ongoing and involves contact (or likely contact) with children and young people, the activity or program is no longer exempt and must comply with the requirements set out in the section above titled 'Programs involving contact (or likely contact) with children and young people'.

### **IMPLEMENTATION HINT**

Given the many and varied programs and activities that are run in Diocese of Ballarat parishes by community organisations, groups or private providers, you may at times be uncertain about the application of the Diocesan safeguarding policies and procedures .

For support and advice, contact the Diocesan Coordinator for Professional Standards on 5337 7121 or at [professionalstandards@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:professionalstandards@ballarat.catholic.org.au)