



Catholic Diocese of Ballarat's Workplace Health and Safety Policy

Our Shared Commitment to Safety, Care and Wellbeing

1. Our Vision

We are a community of communities from the Murray to the sea. Inspired by the Gospel and nourished by the Eucharist, we follow the example of Jesus and seek to care for all people with dignity and compassion.

We are committed to a safe and respectful workplace, supportive of the wellbeing of all; every person who works for, volunteers with, or is affected by the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat is protected from harm.

For the purposes of this document the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat, refers to clergy, employees, leaders and managers, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors, religious, parishioners and representatives of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat (workforce participants).

2. Our Commitment

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat is committed to providing a workplace and work environment that is safe and without risks to physical and psychological health, so far as is reasonably practicable.

We actively foster a culture of care, stewardship and wellbeing.

We recognise our legal obligations under the OHS Act 2004, OHS Regulations 2017, and OHS Health and Safety (Psychological Health) Regulations 2025.

This Workplace Health and Safety Policy sets out the core principles that guide how we prevent harm, manage risk, support people, foster wellbeing and strengthen safe systems of work across the Diocese.

It reflects our legal obligations, organisational values and our shared responsibility to keep people safe.

3. Who This Policy Applies To

This Policy applies to all workforce participants including clergy, employees, leaders and managers, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors, religious, parishioners and representatives of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat.

It applies to Diocesan workplaces, including parish workplaces, at work-related activities and events, during travel undertaken for work, and in any place where Diocesan work is carried out or where the work of the Diocese may affect the health and safety of others.

It excludes unauthorised individuals, independent business owners, people not engaged in work activities, visitors and customers.

Everyone covered by this Policy is responsible for complying with it.



4. Our Safety Framework

This Policy sets out the Diocese's core workplace health and safety principles. These principles provide the foundation for our suite of OHS procedures, practices and systems of work.

Principles

4.1 Safety is fundamental to our mission and leadership

We recognise that workplace health and safety is not an optional extra. It is a core leadership responsibility and a fundamental part of how we carry out our work and ministry.

We prioritise safe, respectful and responsible behaviour, promote a supportive culture where safety, care and accountability are visible and consistent.

Where there may be a risk to health or safety, we will prioritise safety, apply appropriate controls, and take reasonable steps to ensure no one is exposed to ongoing risk while matters are being addressed.

4.2 We identify hazards and manage risks proactively

We are committed to identifying hazards early, assessing risks carefully, and taking reasonably practicable steps to eliminate risks wherever possible. Where risks cannot be eliminated, we will reduce them using effective controls and clear systems of work.

We encourage early, safe reporting of hazards, injuries, incidents, near misses and health and safety concerns.

[Link to Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Risk Control Procedure](#)

4.3 We consult and listen

We value the knowledge, experience and insight of workers, volunteers and others who understand the work as it is actually done.

We are committed to meaningful consultation on health and safety matters, including when identifying hazards, assessing risks, deciding on controls, changing systems of work, and reviewing incidents or concerns.

We encourage people to raise concerns early and we will take those concerns seriously.

[Links to Staff Consultation and Communication Procedure](#)
[Health & Safety Consultative Zone Committee](#)

4.4 We provide safe systems of work, information, training and supervision

We are committed to planning, organising and carrying out work in ways that support health and safety.



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We will provide safe systems of work, appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision, and clear expectations about working safely.

We will support workers, volunteers and leaders to understand hazards, use controls properly, report concerns, and carry out their duties safely and responsibly.

Behaviour or decisions that undermine safety, wellbeing or accountability are inconsistent with this Policy.

[Link to Catholic Diocese of Ballarat OHS Training and Resources](#)

4.5 We care for physical and psychological health and safety

A psychologically safe workplace is as important as a physically safe one. We recognise that psychosocial hazards can cause real harm and must be identified, assessed and controlled in a serious and systematic way.

This includes risks arising from unreasonable behaviour, poor work design, excessive workload, conflict, occupational violence, low support, remote or isolated work, and unsafe organisational practices.

We are committed to respectful, supportive and psychologically safe workplaces where people can speak up, contribute and seek support without fear.

[Links to Workplace Behaviour and Psychological Safety Policy](#)

4.6 We report, respond to and learn from hazards, incidents and concerns

We are committed to early reporting of hazards, near misses, injuries, illnesses, incidents and safety concerns.

We will respond promptly, assess risks, investigate where appropriate, and take action to prevent recurrence in a timely and proportionate way. Where there is immediate risk, safety must come first and urgent action must be taken.

[Link to Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure](#)

Reports may be raised through local leaders, designated health and safety nominees, return to work contacts, or other available reporting pathways.

Persons affected by a work-related injury, illness or safety concern will be supported, and no person will be disadvantaged for raising a concern in good faith.

We will treat reports as opportunities to strengthen our systems of work, improve our controls, and care for people who may have been affected.



The Diocese have an obligation to ensure OHS issues raised are resolved in an efficient, timely and suitable manner to enable a safe and healthy work environment. The Issues Resolution Procedure enables the resolution of work health, safety, or welfare (OHS) issues that may arise within the Diocese.

4.7 We care for injured workers and support safe return to work

We are committed to assisting injured workers to return to work through care, respect and practical support.

We will take reasonably practicable steps to support early, safe and sustainable return to work. This includes consultation with the worker, consideration of suitable duties consistent with medical advice, protection of confidentiality, and a workplace culture where return to work is supported as a normal and positive part of recovery.

[Link to Return to Work Procedure](#)

4.8 We review and improve systems of work

We are committed to continuous improvement in workplace health and safety. We will monitor our performance, review our hierarchy of controls, learn from experience, and improve our policies, procedures and systems of work over time.

We will review risk controls when circumstances change, when incidents or concerns arise, when new information becomes available, or when consultation indicates that current measures are not working effectively.

We will assign responsibilities clearly and expect leaders, workers and others to meet their duties.

5. OHS Policy – Roles and Responsibilities¹

Keeping our workplace safe is a shared responsibility. All workforce participants are expected to demonstrate a positive, proactive attitude and performance with respect to the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others.

Leaders and managers have a critical role in providing and maintaining a workplace that is safe and without risks to physical or psychological health. This includes taking active and timely steps to prevent harm, identify hazards, support consultation, respond appropriately to concerns, and strengthen safe systems of work.

As a responsible workplace, the Diocese is committed to:

- Utilising OHS resources from the Diocese of Ballarat and WorkSafe Victoria

¹ The Diocese acknowledges reference to the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's Occupational Health and Safety Policy, 28 March 2025.



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- Taking reasonable steps to ensure that all workforce participants are aware of and adhere to this policy, and all OHS obligations as set out in the relevant legislation, standards and procedures
- Providing adequate resources for implementing this policy
- Consulting with employees on safety and seeking input and advice to ensure risks are managed and actions are enacted
- Providing and maintaining safe equipment, safe systems of work, and a safe working environment without risks to physical and psychosocial health and wellbeing
- Managing and monitoring arrangements for the safe use, handling, storing and transport of equipment and substances
- Providing information and resources, including protective clothing and equipment, to ensure the safe performance of work
- Providing adequate facilities for the welfare of all employees, contractors and volunteers (such as drinking water, toilets, eating areas and first aid)
- Providing information, training and supervision for all workforce participants enabling them to work in a safe and healthy manner.

Leaders and Managers must:

- demonstrate OHS leadership at all levels through visible, proactive and committed practices and behaviours;
- systematically identify hazards, assess potential impacts, develop measures and implement appropriate controls to eliminate or minimise risk;
- actively monitor and evaluate health, safety and wellbeing management to ensure the provision and maintenance of a workplace that is safe and without risks to health, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- keep records relating to health and safety incidents and near misses; and provide information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure everyone understands their OHS responsibilities.

All workforce participants must:

- follow workplace health and safety policies and procedures
- perform all work duties in a manner which ensures their own health, safety and wellbeing and for the health and safety of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions
- complete the health, safety and wellbeing training and follow the instructions and advice provided
- use protective clothing and equipment as instructed, if required
- act in accordance with incident reporting and investigation procedures, and report all incidents, injuries and hazards to local management or local health and safety nominee
- not misuse, damage, refuse to use, or interfere with anything provided in the interest of workplace health, safety and wellbeing

Other parties are responsible for:

- Fulfilling their duties under OHS legislation and acting in a safe manner

Consequences for Breach of Policy



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Failure by clergy, leaders or managers to take reasonable steps in accordance with these responsibilities may result in corrective or disciplinary action and may constitute a breach of this Policy.

6. Review Processes

This Workplace Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure it remains relevant, clear and aligned with our values, operational needs and legal requirements.

In addition to scheduled review, this Policy and related safety procedures, controls and systems of work are subject to trigger-based review where incidents occur, hazards or concerns are identified, controls are found to be ineffective, organisational changes take place, or new information or legal requirements emerge.

Reviews will occur in consultation with workers and, where applicable, health and safety nominees.

7. Relevant Documents

This Workplace Health and Safety Policy is supported by the following companion procedures and related Diocesan documents:

- Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Workplace Health and Safety Policy (one page)
- Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Workplace Health and Safety Policy – Principle Based
- Safeguarding Policy and Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedures
- Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Risk Control Procedure
- Safety Site Checklist
- Diocesan Consultation and Communication Procedure
- Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure
- Return to Work Procedure
- Contractor and Sub-contractor Safety Procedure
- Workplace Behaviour and Psychological Safety Policy
- Any related local forms, templates, registers, training and induction records, and emergency management or incident response materials used by the Diocese.

8. Acknowledgement and Acceptance

I acknowledge that I have received, read and understood the Workplace Health and Safety Principle-based Policy.

I agree to comply with the principles, responsibilities and expectations set out in this document and understand that I am expected to contribute to a culture of safety, care, consultation and accountability across the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat.



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I acknowledge that I may represent a collection of representatives and all members of that collective have been made aware of this policy and I can sign on their behalf.

Name: _____

Position / Role: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Parish: _____

Zone (if applicable): _____

Parish Priest (if applicable): _____