GUIDELINE: Safeguarding – Risk Assessment

Approved: [insert date]
Policy Category: Governance
Sub-category: Safety of Children and Adults at Risk

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Name of Guideline:	Safeguarding – Risk Assessment
Governing Policy	Safeguarding
Description:	Guideline to ensure risk management strategies identify, assess and take steps to minimise harm to children and adults engaging in activities and services within the Archdiocese.
Guideline supports:	All members of the Church Community
Guideline Status:	☒ New Guideline, or ☐ Revision of Existing Guideline
Related Policy Category:	Governance
Related Policy Sub-category:	Safety of Children and Adults at Risk
Approval Authority:	Senior Operations Officer
Governing Authority:	N/A
Responsible Officer:	Director, Safeguarding
Approval Date:	
Date of Guideline review[1]:	1 July 2026

Assistance:	Questions related to the *Guideline: Safeguarding Risk Assessment* can be directed to Director of Safeguarding by email to: director.safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, this Guideline will still apply beyond the review date.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of the Risk Assessment guideline is to ensure risk management strategies identify, assess and take steps to minimise abuse in the Church Community within the Archdiocese.

1.2. The guideline gives consideration to best practice guidance and response to potential safeguarding risks when planning events and activities involving children and adults at risk.

2. SCOPE

2.1. This guideline applies to:
    2.1.1. Clergy, Religious Brothers and Sisters, Seminarians, Employees, Church Workers, Volunteers; and
    2.1.2. Contractors and Third-Party Users of Church Property, where necessary.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1. The Archdiocese is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all, especially its children and adults at risk.

3.2. The guiding and essential belief that is at the heart and foundation of the social teaching of the Church is the sacredness and dignity of the human person as created in the image and likeness of God (Gn 1:27).

3.3. Safeguarding the rights and integrity of the most vulnerable in society is guided by the Gospel command of Jesus to love our neighbour (Mark 12:31), to promote the common good and to lead all to the fullness of human life (John 10:10).

3.4. The Archdiocese's commitment to risk management that encompasses clear structure, the inclusion of all stakeholders and an understanding of the need to adapt, leads to consistent and desirable risk management outcomes.

4. STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

When planning an activity, Archdiocesan Agencies, Offices, Organisations, Ministries and Parishes should complete a risk assessment prior to commencement to identify any perceived safeguarding risks, the likelihood of them occurring and the consequences if they did occur.

A Safeguarding Risk Assessment Checklist can be used in the planning stage of an event or activity. It is not necessary to repeat this process for ongoing events or activities unless there are changes to the scope of the event or activity.

It is recommended that all Checklists be reviewed annually

The Checklist is to be completed by key stakeholders - a representative from those organising and involved with the activity or event (E.G. Parish Priest, Directors, Managers, worker, parent/carer, child, or adult at risk).

The completed checklist is to be stored at the respective parish, agency, or office.

4.1 Activities
Risk management may include but is not limited to, the following activities:
- Children's Sacrament or Liturgy Classes
- Bible Studies/Prayer Group
- Youth Group Events
- After Mass Morning Tea
- Choir Rehearsal
- Home Visits
- Busy Bee
- Off-site activities
- Overnight stays/events
- Client/Participant activities or events
- Fete/Book Fair
- Festival

4.2 Safeguarding Risks
May include but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse
    - Hitting, slapping, pushing, spitting, pinching, kicking
    - Physical punishment
    - Inappropriate use of restraint
    - Involuntary isolation or confinement
- Emotional abuse
    - Verbal attacks or threats
    - Bullying
    - Shaming
    - Name-calling
    - Intentional isolation
    - Intimidation through power imbalance
    - Cultural, racial or diversity discrimination
    - Spiritual abuse
- Sexual abuse
    - Grooming
    - Inappropriate touching
    - Sexual abuse/assault
    - Exposing or involving a child in sexual activity
    - Crossing professional boundaries
- Neglect
    - Not receiving adequate food, shelter, medical treatment, supervision, or care
- Online abuse
    - Grooming online – sending obscene images/content, singling a child or adult at risk out as a 'special relationship'
    - Bullying – abusive texts or emails
    - Sending inappropriate images or videos
- Accidental harm
    - Lack of supervision
    - Poor physical environment
    - Lack of trained personnel

4.3 Areas of Risk

May include but are not limited to:

- Personnel
    - Screening (WWCC, NPC, Personal Safeguarding Declaration)

- o Code of Conduct expectations including power imbalance
- o Leadership application
- o Policy and Guidelines adhered including safeguarding reporting
- o Trained workers (paid or voluntary)
- o Safeguarding Inductions complete
- o Safeguarding Officer appointed
- o Respond to disclosures of concerns and/or abuse
- o Record keeping and privacy policies
- Participants
  - o Consent forms including social media and photography
  - o Participation includes informed consent of children and adults at risk, especially those with a disability
  - o Registration process includes identification of possible vulnerabilities E.G. Disability, CALD, Medical, and Mental Health.
  - o Needs of children and adults with diminished capacity are considered
  - o Medical or emergency contacts
  - o Adequate supervision
  - o Code of Conduct expectations
- Physical Environment
  - o Clear line of sight for children's activities
  - o Venue configuration and accessibility are considered
  - o Risk Checklist completed
  - o Transportation guidelines and provisions for licenses
  - o Permits if required
- Online Environment and Communication
  - o Consent forms
  - o Social media and electronic communication guidelines
  - o Code of Conduct expectations

In the event the Checklist highlights High-Level Risks, it is suggested a:
- Full risk assessment be undertaken in consultation with your insurance company and/or the Archdiocesan Risk Manager
- Safety management plan be implemented
- Safeguarding briefing occurs prior to an event
- Incident response plan and reporting protocols be developed.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2)
- Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Risk Assessment Checklist

5. DEFINITIONS | GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For the purposes of this Guideline the definitions contained in the Governing Policy apply.

7. REVISIONS MADE TO THIS GUIDELINE

Date of approval	Approved by:	Description:

These Guidelines are scheduled for review every three (3) years or more frequently, if appropriate.