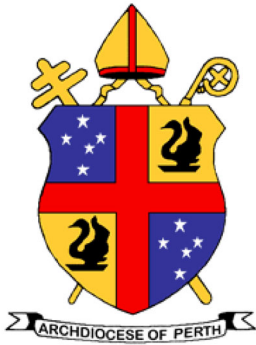




Catholic Archdiocese  
of Perth

# GUIDELINES



## **GUIDELINE:** Safeguarding – Engaging with Children

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Approved: 26-04-2024

Effective: 26-04-2024

Policy Category: Governance

Sub-category: Safety of Children and Adults at Risk



*Our guidelines provide additional guidance on best practice relating to policy and procedure*

## DOCUMENT INFORMATION

<b>Name of Guideline:</b>	Safeguarding – Engaging with Children
<b>Governing Policy</b>	Safeguarding
<b>Description:</b>	Guideline to ensure children are protected from harm, listened to, taken seriously, and empowered to have a say in matters that affect them.
<b>Guideline supports:</b>	All members of the Church Community
<b>Guideline Status:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Guideline, or <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of Existing Guideline
<b>Related Policy Category:</b>	Governance
<b>Related Policy Sub-category:</b>	Safety of Children and Adults at Risk
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Senior Operations Officer
<b>Governing Authority:</b>	N/A
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Director, Safeguarding
<b>Approval Date:</b>	26-04-2024
<b>Date of Guideline review<sup>1</sup>:</b>	01-05-2026

<b>Assistance:</b>	Questions related to the <i>Guideline: Safeguarding Engaging with Children</i> can be directed to Director of Safeguarding by email to: <a href="mailto:director.safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au">director.safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au</a>
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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, this Guideline will still apply beyond the review date.



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### **1. PURPOSE**

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- 1.1. The purpose of the Engaging with Children guideline is to provide a safe environment for children in the Church Community within the Archdiocese.
- 1.2. The guideline aims to inform children and their parents and carers about their right to feel safe and be safe. It also aims to empower them to be heard and participate in decisions that affect them.
- 1.3. Acknowledging and providing access to abuse prevention and knowing how to raise a concern fulfils the Archdiocese's responsibility of respect for all children and inclusion without barriers.

### **2. SCOPE**

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- 2.1. This guideline applies to:
  - a) Clergy, Religious Brothers and Sisters, Seminarians, Employees, Church Workers, Volunteers, Board Members; and
  - b) Contractors and Third-Party Users of Church Property, where appropriate as determined by an Executive Director, Director, Senior Manager or Parish Priest.

### **3. PRINCIPLES**

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- 3.1. 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).
- 3.2. 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).
- 3.3. The Archdiocese acknowledges the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which recognises the inherent dignity of all members of the human family, especially children.
- 3.4. The Archdiocese is guided by the belief that empowering children engaged in the church community acknowledges that children:
  - Know their own world best
  - Have a unique perspective on a range of issues



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- Have relevant and valuable knowledge to share
- Need to be heard, as listening to children facilitates inclusion, dignity, and respect.

### **4. STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE**

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Archdiocesan Agencies, Offices, Organisations, Ministries and Parishes can encourage a 'strength-based' approach to engaging with children in compliance with legislative requirements and Archdiocesan policy.

Practices when engaging with children (under 18 years old) include, but are not limited to:

#### **4.1. Conduct**

- Comply with the Archdiocese Code of Conduct
- Always consider what is in the best interest of the child
- Maintain professional boundaries and ethical conduct
- Avoid over-familiarity or actions that may be perceived as grooming
- Be mindful of power imbalance when engaging with children
- Use appropriate language (no swearing or offensive language)
- Never provide or permit alcohol (excluding sacramental wine administered during Mass), tobacco or other drugs to a child
- Do not engage with children outside of the children's event or activity unless in the presence of their parent or carer
- If a child altar server requires assistance to robe or de-robe, they are to seek assistance from their parent or carer
- Respond to and report all concerns, suspicions, and allegations of abuse
- Display in areas where children's activities or events are held a child-friendly children's code of behaviour

#### **4.2. Supervision**

- There should be no situations where adults engaging in children's activities are alone with a child. Use a 2:1 ratio (2 adults to 1 child or 2 children to 1 adult)
- For group activities or events, it is recommended that two supervisors are present. Where this is not possible, invite a parent/carers of a child in the activity to stay
- Do not leave a child unattended while in your care
- If a child needs to leave the event or activity early ensure a parent or carer collects them





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- If a child needs to use the bathroom and it is not within the proximity of the event or activity, ensure they are escorted by an adult or a 'buddy' system is used. The adult or buddy is to wait outside the bathroom area
- Endeavour to be in a space within clear view (clear glass) or within earshot of others or leave the door of the room open with a clear line of sight of another adult when engaging with children
- The sacrament of reconciliation with a child should be conducted in an open or visible space where possible or within clear line of sight of another adult

### **4.3. Communication and Records**

- Obtain parent/carer consent to engage with children in church activities when the parent or carer is not present (see Annexure 1 – Parent/Carer Consent Form)
- Keep an attendance record or Sign In/Sign Out record of activities when engaging with children
- Seek feedback from children on safeguarding practices
- Do not contact (in person, online or via online social networks) a child outside of the set event or activity unless in the presence of another supervisor in a group setting or in the presence of the parent/carer
- Keep accurate records of communication as part of church records
- Do not take or share images of children without parent/carer consent
- Report all concerns, suspicions, and allegations of abuse ensuring legislative compliance such as Mandatory Reporting if applicable

### **4.4. Transportation**

- No transporting a child alone who is engaged in church activities
- If transporting a child in an emergency situation is the only option
  - Obtain parent/carer consent
  - Use a 2:1 ratio
  - Record the trip start and finish time and take the most direct route
  - Seat the child/ren in the rear of the vehicle

### **4.5. Trips Away**

- Obtain parent/carer consent
- Conduct a full Risk Assessment
- Designate a safeguarding officer
- Ensure all screening protocols and legislative requirements are followed – all overnight stay church events involving children, requires all adults attending to hold a valid WA WWCC.



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## 5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

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- Policy: Safeguarding
- Safeguarding Guidelines
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2)
- Integrity in Our Common Mission (November 2023), Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd
- Code of Conduct
- Parent/Carer Consent Form

## 6. DEFINITIONS | GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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

## 7. REVISIONS MADE TO THIS GUIDELINE

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Date of Approval	Editorial <sup>2</sup> , Minor or Major Amendment	Approved By	Description
26-04-2024	N/A	+AB	New Guideline

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

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to the Policy Framework for definitions of Editorial, Minor and Major amendments.