



SAFEGUARDING AND MINISTERIAL INTEGRITY OFFICE

January 2023 Quarterly Newsletter

Welcome to the Safeguarding Office's Quarterly Newsletter

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Safeguarding News

POSITION VACANT!

Safeguarding Training Officer full-time or 4 days

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney is seeking a Training Office to join the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity office. The Training Officer assists with developing and delivering best practice safeguarding and child protection training, targeting a diverse and multi-faceted audience in parishes and agencies of the Archdiocese. This is a permanent, full-time opportunity, with the potential for the role to be worked over four days for the right candidate. To apply for this position go to <https://catholicjobsonline.com.au/> The closing date for applications is 17 February 2023.

Are you verifying Working With Children Checks (WWCC)?

The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) has brought to our attention that some of our Parishes and Chaplaincy Communities are not actually verifying their workers WWCC. **Verifying a WWCC is a legal requirement and there is a fine for not verifying.**

What is a Verification?

It is important that when a worker provides you with their WWCC number you verify this on the OCG website via the Portal specific to your Parish or Chaplaincy. This informs the OCG that the person is working or volunteering for your organisation and if for any reason there is a problem the OCG can contact you and let you know there is an issue with their WWCC.

The below link takes you to a short 2-minute video that provides you with information from the OCG website about verifying a WWCC. <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/resources/working-children-check-wwcc-manage-and-verify>

The month of January is dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus, which is celebrated on January 3. "In the Name of Jesus let every knee bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth and let every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." (Phil 2:10)

Safeguarding News Cont.

Is a WWCC the same as a Police Check?

The main difference between a WWCC and a police check is that the Working with Children Check is an ongoing assessment.

Once an application for the WWCC has been approved, that approval will last for five years. However, throughout that period, the information will be monitored. A police check on the other hand, is considered a point in time check. It is proof of a criminal history check, up to the point of application, and it is not monitored or reviewed until a new application is submitted

Is your Parish or Chaplaincy "Registered" to verify WWCC's through the OCG Portal?

All Parishes and Chaplaincies must register with the OCG via an online form by entering your organisation's name, address, ABN and contact information. It is important that you:

- Enter a business email address that you will use to log into the Portal;
- Ensure your username and password is stored and available in a secure place;
- Avoid using a personal email address for your organisation.

Further information can be found on the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney Safeguarding Website or by clicking [here](#). You can also contact the Safeguarding Office for any further advice or support.

ACSL's 10 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, Edition 2

On Wednesday 7 December, Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) formally launched the second edition of the 10 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) covering adults at risk as well as children.

In 2023 the Safeguarding Office will update its Policy and Protocols to reflect these changes. Please be on the look out for information regarding these updates.



Commitment Statement

The emotional, physical and spiritual safety, well-being and dignity of Children is an integral part of the teachings and values of the Catholic Church. The Archdiocese is wholly committed to ensuring the safety, well-being and dignity of all Children, and acknowledges its important legal, moral and spiritual responsibility to create a safe and nurturing environment for those Children.

Safeguarding News Cont.

Information on Complaints, Professional Standards and Reportable Conduct matters managed in 2022.

In 2022, the Safeguarding Office managed 71 professional standards allegations, 18 of which were notifiable to the Office of the Children's Guardian as Reportable Conduct and 25 complaints.

Of the 71 professional standards allegations, eight clergy and four lay were asked to stand aside whilst the allegations were investigated. Some of the allegations included criminal proceedings which meant the Archdiocese is unable to take any action including informing the Respondent until permission from the police has been granted.

Please be assured that if an allegation or complaint is made about you, we aim to let you know as quickly as possible. However, in some cases, we cannot do this until the police have advised us that we can do this.

Professional Standards and Complaints breakdown for 2022

	Clergy	Lay	Total
Professional Standards Matters Received	59	12	71
Reportable Conduct Scheme Matters <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18 of the Professional Standards matters reported to the Office of the Children's Guardian under the <u>Reportable Conduct Scheme</u>	12	6	
Complaints Received:	18	7	25
Grand Total of matters managed in 2022			96

Definitions:

Professional Standards refers to any allegation, report, or notification of a Reportable Crime/allegation including serious breaches of the Code of Conduct for Working with Children and Integrity in Ministry and Integrity in Service of the Church.

Complaints refers to any concerns and/or reports of inappropriate conduct with a Child that may be in breach the Code of Conduct for Working with Children, Integrity in Ministry and Integrity in Service of the Church.

Reportable Conduct is conduct that must be notified to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney is implementing the 10 Child Safe Standards and 10 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.



Office of the Children's Guardian



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD

What happens when an allegation is made about a member of Clergy?

In 2022 the Safeguarding Office has dealt with 18 Reportable Conduct matters, 12 of these matters involved a member of Clergy. Of these 12 matters only 8 clergy were stood aside from their role pending a investigation.

What happens when an allegation is made about about a member of Clergy?

1. As soon as the Safeguarding Office receives an allegation against a member of Clergy, an immediate Initial Risk Assessment is conducted to identify and mitigate any immediate risk.
2. Depending on the type of allegation it may need to be reported to statutory authorities such as the NSW Police and the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.
3. Dependent upon the involvement of statutory bodies, the Safeguarding Office will contact the member of clergy to notify them that they are the Respondent. The member of clergy will be asked to attend a meeting and encouraged to bring a Support Person. A Support Person is someone who will assist the member of clergy emotionally during this time and will attend meetings with them.
4. At this first meeting, details of the Safeguarding Complaint will be provided to the member of clergy. A Safety and Support Plan may be agreed upon, and a Contact Person identified for the member of clergy to keep them informed of the progress of the investigation. In some, but not all, cases it may be necessary for the member of clergy to stand aside from their normal role and responsibilities. Standing aside is not an admission of guilt, and does not pre-empt the outcome of the investigation. This is a precautionary measure which can be appropriate for a variety of reasons – including, the seriousness of the allegations, the risk assessment, the welfare of the respondent, the independence of the investigation, the risk of scandal should the allegations become known, the public or official position of the respondent, etc. When this precautionary measure is taken , other steps are also be taken to preserve the good reputation of the member of clergy while the process is being carried out.
5. An investigator will be appointed to investigate the allegation. The member of clergy will be informed of this investigators appointment and that they will contact them and others as part of the investigation process shortly.
6. Once the investigation is completed, the investigator will make a finding based on the balance of probabilities and will provide a report to the Vicar General.
7. Once the Vicar General has reviewed the investigation report the Safeguarding Office will contact the member of clergy and provide them with the opportunity to make a further submission in response to the proposed finding and reasons.
8. Depending on the findings of the investigation and the member of clergy's position within the Archdiocese, the outcome of the investigation will be considered along with the most appropriate action, this could include returning to their position or some other position or further reporting to statutory authorities.
9. The member of clergy has the the option to a review through the Independent Safeguarding Advisory Panel.

Continuous Improvement and Meeting Standards

Safeguarding Support Officers: Parish/Chaplaincy email v's personal email

When you are appointed as a Parish Safeguarding Support Officer (PSSO) or a Chaplaincy Safeguarding Support Office (CSSO) you are often tasked with sending out communication to various volunteers for a variety of reasons such as training and Working With Children's Checks.

When communicating via email to the volunteers in your community, you **need** to be using a Parish and/or Chaplaincy email address and not your personal address for example StJohnsSafeguardingSupportOfficer@gmail.com. It is important for a Parish or Chaplaincy email to be used when communicating with volunteers to ensure privacy and continued access to the information.

Please speak with your Parish Priest or Chaplain about obtaining a email address for your PSSO or CSSO role and ensure all communication is managed on professional email accounts and not personal.

Friendly Reminders

Child-Related Activity Register submissions

Just a friendly reminder that your Child-Related Activity Register will be due back for auditing in January 2023. Can you please send your register clearly labelled with the name of your Parish or Chaplaincy community to ministry@sydneycatholic.org, please contact the Safeguarding Office if you have any concerns or questions.

Visiting Clergy Register submissions

Just a friendly reminder that your Visiting Clergy Register will be due back for auditing in January 2023. Can you please send your Visiting Clergy Register clearly labelled with the name of your Parish or Chaplaincy community to ministry@sydneycatholic.org.

2023 Safeguarding Training timetable

The 2023 Safeguarding Training timetable is now available on the Safeguarding website. Please click [here](#) to see 2023 Safeguarding Training dates.

We request that all Priests of our Parishes display the Safeguarding notice below in all future parish bulletins.

A message from the Archdiocese of Sydney:

Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know, have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at **(02) 9390 5810** or safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org.

You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

Sharing Knowledge

“Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible”
– St Francis of Assisi



Sharing Knowledge Resource 4.

Working With Children's Check Administration Guidance

It is important that every WWCC you have for workers and volunteers is verified by you on the Office of the Children's Guardian employer Portal. You need to ensure that details and contact information are correct and up to date. Below the Safeguarding Office has put together a WWCC Administration Guidance checklist for Parishes and Chaplaincies to use.

Question	Yes	No	Further information
Has the Parish and/or Chaplaincy established an employer Portal by registering online with the Office of the Children's Guardian?			If you answered No click here to find out how to create an employer portal.
Has the Parish and/or Chaplaincy had to open a “new” employer Portal as they have been unable to access the original employer Portal? This could have be as a result of not being able to find the login details to access the existing Portal.			If you answered Yes please call the Office of the Children's Guardian on (02) 8219 3777 and ask them to provide a Verification History Report and to deactivate the old account. You will need to reverify all the Workers WWCC's from the old account that are still active in your Parish or Chaplaincy.
Is the nominated contact person for your portal the current Parish Priest?			If you answered No please click here to update.
Is the Parish and or Chaplaincy using Parish specified email addresses rather than personal email addresses for the contact persons? This means that if the Parish Priest moves to another parish or the contact person leaves the parish, your parish can still access the Portal and be contacted by the Office of the Children's Guardian.			If you answered No please click here to update contact details to a generic Parish email address that can be accessed regardless if Parish Priest or contact person changes roles. For example <i>parishpriest@stcatherines.org</i> or <i>secretary@stcatherines.org</i> or <i>PSSO@stcatherines.org</i>
Has the Parish and/or Chaplaincy recorded the login details to access the employer Portal for future reference? Does the Parish Priest, the Safeguarding Support Officer and Secretary know where this information is held?			If you answered No please record this information and keep it in a secure location known to the Parish Priest, the Safeguarding Support Officer and the Secretary.
Has your Parish and/or Chaplaincy been contacted by the Office of the Children's Guardian in relation to WWCC's at any time?			If you answered Yes please email the Safeguarding Office and provide information regarding the correspondence and why the Office of the Children's Guardian contacted you.