



## Code of Conduct for Working with Children (UNDER REVIEW)

### **Introduction**

The Archdiocese, together with our community, is responsible for creating a safe and nurturing environment for Children.

This Code of Conduct seeks to raise awareness amongst persons working with Children in the Archdiocese about their obligations under Child protection legislation and to assist them to create a Child-safe environment for Children to engage with the Catholic Church.

Child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church has caused deep concern within the Archdiocese, the entire Church and the broader community. This Code of Conduct provides persons working with Children in the Archdiocese with a better understanding of how to carry out the important pastoral work of the Catholic Church in a professional, supportive and nurturing way that both protects Children from harm and contributes to their development.

The Code of Conduct applies to, and must be signed by, all Clergy, Religious Appointees, Employees, Volunteers and contractors, who have, or are expected to have, contact with Children. Catechists who are SRE Teachers in NSW public schools are required to sign this Code of Conduct in conjunction with receiving an SRE-specific appendix and mandatory induction training from the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine to meet NSW Department of Education requirements.

### **Compliance with Child protection legislation and the Policy**

1. At any time prior or during my appointment to a Child-related role at the Archdiocese, I will provide the person employing, engaging or otherwise appointing me with any information that is relevant to determining whether I am suitable to work with Children, including undergoing a Working With Children Check where necessary (and a National Criminal History Check, if required by the Archdiocese).
2. I will maintain appropriate boundaries with Children at all times and remain professional in my actions towards Children.
3. I will take the steps outlined in the Policy if I suspect that:
  - a. a Child is at risk of a Child Abuse Offence being committed against them;
  - b. a person has engaged in any Reportable Conduct with a Child;
  - c. a person has engaged in any inappropriate conduct with a Child;
  - d. a Child has suffered or is suffering Neglect or Child Abuse including any physical abuse, Sexual Act, Sexual Assault, Sexual Touching or Grooming; and/or
  - e. a Child is otherwise at Risk of Significant Harm, either in the Archdiocese environment, at home or elsewhere.

4. I will report these matters to Parish Priests, Agency Heads, the Safeguarding Office and, where appropriate, to the relevant State authorities (with assistance from the Safeguarding Office).
5. I acknowledge that I have a personal legal obligation to report all Reportable Crimes of which I become aware, and any information that I may have in relation to those offences, to NSW Police. As a matter of practice, I will notify my Parish Priest or Agency Head who will notify the Safeguarding Office. The Safeguarding Office will assist me to report to the NSW Police and will provide a copy of the police report so that I can ensure my personal legal obligation to report has been discharged.
6. I will comply with any investigations into Safeguarding Complaints.
7. I will immediately notify my supervisor if I am charged with any criminal offence.

***Care, respect and compassion***

8. I will always treat Children with care, respect and compassion, even if they behave in a way that I find to be difficult or challenging.
9. I will respect each Child's differences and value their ideas and opinions, regardless of their race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
10. I will take into account the needs of all Children, paying particular attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, Children with disability, Children from culturally and linguistically diverse background, and Children with particular vulnerabilities, such as Children who cannot live at home for whatever reason.
11. I will ask Children's opinions and views on matters affecting their safety and wellbeing and ensure that they feel they are being listened to and taken seriously.
12. I will always use appropriate, respectful language, and not speak to Children in a sarcastic, derogatory or offensive manner, acknowledging I hold a position of authority and use of this language could negatively affect the wellbeing and development of the Children I work with.
13. I will always treat Children in an equal and consistent way, and avoid favouritism, "special relationships" with certain Children and/or singling out particular Children.
14. I will never provide gifts to one Child over another Child and I will only provide gifts to Children generally only where those gifts are appropriate given the age and circumstances of those Children, eg gifts that are inexpensive and inoffensive.
15. I will not engage in any activity with a Child that is likely to cause them physical, emotional or psychological harm.
16. I will not invite unaccompanied Children to my home, or invite them to engage in activities or events that are not associated with the Archdiocese or its parishes or agencies.

### ***Proper supervision of Children***

17. I will always diligently supervise all Children for whom I am responsible, and will arrange for appropriate additional supervision, including on excursions and overnight camps.
18. I will always ensure that any activities involving Children are underpinned by a risk assessment completed prior to the commencement of the particular activity.
19. I will always ensure that Children are adequately protected from potential dangers such as motor vehicles and outdoor risks such as sun exposure and unsafe bodies of water. I will also ensure that Children in my care are not placed at risk as a consequence of unsupervised or prolonged contact with strangers.
20. I will always be punctual in attending to my appointments with Children and I will always ensure I advise my Parish Priest or Agency Head if I am unable to attend my appointments with Children.
21. I will always take care in planning activities for Children to make sure they are appropriate given the Children's age and other needs.

### ***Disciplining Children***

22. I acknowledge that in appropriate circumstances, discipline is necessary to prevent future misbehaviour by Children, including misbehaviour that places the Child and others at risk.
23. If I am required to discipline a Child, I will only do so in a reasonable manner that is proportionate to their misbehaviour and does not isolate or degrade the Child. I will always explain to the Child why he or she is being disciplined.
24. I will never use corporal punishment to discipline a Child.

### ***Contact with Children***

25. I will avoid situations where I am alone with a Child. If my work requires me to have one-on-one contact with a Child, I will ensure the Child's parent or guardian has given their written consent and that my contact with that Child is as brief and minimal as possible.
26. I will always try to use verbal directions with Children and will not have any physical contact with a Child unless it is necessary:
  - a. as a reasonable restraint to protect the Child, other Children or adults from harm;
  - b. to attract their attention or guide them in a particular direction; or
  - c. to comfort a Child who is distressed.
27. I will not under any circumstances touch or behave with Children that I am supervising in an overly personal, intimate or sexual way.
28. I will not visit or otherwise contact a Child out of hours except with their parent or guardian's written consent.

29. If a Child's parent wishes to engage me to mentor, tutor or care for their Child outside of my work at the Archdiocese, I:
- a. do so in my individual capacity only and not in conjunction with the Archdiocese; and
  - b. will inform the Archdiocese of my appointment. If I am in a paid role (i.e. not a volunteer role), I will also advise the Human Resources Manager and obtain their consent.

***Use of social media and other technology to communicate with Children***

30. I will comply with that part of the Policy relating to the use of social media and other technology, which provides that amongst other things I must:
- a. be respectful, polite and considerate in all communications with Children and communicate in a manner that is consistent with my role and responsibility within or in relation to the Archdiocese;
  - b. not invite or accept invitations from Children I have met through the Archdiocese as "friends" on my personal social media site, or otherwise interact with them on that site;
  - c. not communicate on an individual (one on one) basis via technology or social media (including mobile phone, text messages or email) with any Child unless I have obtained the written consent of that Child's parent or guardian and include the Child's parent or guardian as a participant in the communication; and
  - d. not record or distribute any Intimate Images of a Child or any Cyber Bullying Material targeted at a Child.

***Use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs***

31. I will comply with the that part of the Policy relating to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, which provides that:
- a. I must never give or provide alcohol, tobacco or other drugs to Children, unless I am a member of Clergy or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion providing a Child with sacramental wine during Holy Communion as provided for in the Policy;
  - b. I must never perform work with Children when I am under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs, and will inform my supervisor if I am under the influence of any prescription medication that may adversely affect my capacity to effectively supervise Children and keep them safe; and
  - c. if I am supervising Children in any capacity, including general gatherings, at an overnight camp or excursion where Children are present, I will not consume alcohol or illicit drugs, or smoke tobacco during these events.

***Medication***

32. I will never administer any medication to any Child without their parent or guardian's consent.

**Material involving Children**

33. I will always obtain the permission of a Child's parent or guardian before taking or using the Child's name or image in any report, website or other publication.
34. In a school setting I will always seek the permission of the school before taking or using the Child's name or image in any report, website or other publication.
35. If suitable, I will also gain the permission of the Child to take or use their image in any report, website or other publication.
36. I will not possess, distribute or produce any material that depicts or describes Children in an offensive way.

*Please see the Archdiocese's protocol and fact sheets on 'Behaviours to encourage and avoid', 'Use of technology and social media to communicate with Children' and 'Use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs' for a complete list of obligations.*

**Acknowledgement**

I acknowledge that:

- I have read and will comply with the Policy and this Code of Conduct.
- I understand the behaviours that are expected of me in my interactions with Children.
- I understand the behaviours that will not be tolerated by the Archdiocese, its parishes and agencies, at any time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_