

SAFEGUARDING - CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

Working together for a safe Church

October 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Church is committed to a safeguarding culture in which concerns are raised and responded to in a timely manner with professionalism and compassion.

It is our responsibility to ensure we respond to complaints in accordance with agreed procedures that are clear and easily accessible.

The Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand has adopted the "Guidelines for the prevention of and response to sexual abuse in the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand" (National Safeguarding Guidelines). This policy is part of a national strategy to implement the National Safeguarding Guidelines.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to clergy, religious, employees and volunteers within each of the six dioceses of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand who work with or provide ministry to children (aged 0-18 years) and vulnerable adults. This includes people working within parishes and any organisation or agency which has been accepted as a Catholic entity by a New Zealand bishop ("Church Personnel").

3. PRINCIPLES

The Catholic Church believes that every person has a value and dignity which derives directly from their creation in the image and likeness of God. This implies a duty to value all people and therefore to protect them from harm.

To achieve this we are committed to:

- The right of children and vulnerable adults to be protected from harm
- Providing an environment where complainants feel valued, heard and understood.
- Holding all Church Personnel to account to safely embrace appropriate boundaries, behaviours and practices.
- Responding to complaints promptly and with compassion.
- Modelling the principle of natural justice to ensure fairness and transparency.

4. GUIDELINES

The Catholic Church values complaints as opportunities to model accountability and transparency. Complaints also provide a way to monitor and review our practices.

We will:

- Have a procedure in place which details how people can raise child and/or vulnerable adult protection concerns
- Have a procedure in place which details how people can make a general complaint or raise a concern
- Have procedures in place which detail how to respond to complaints of sexual abuse by Church Personnel
- Advertise the Complaint Procedures widely within parishes, organisations and agencies
- Respond and manage all concerns and complaints in a timely and professional manner
- Designate a person in each Diocese or organisation to be the first point of contact for anyone who wishes to make a complaint
- Require all Church Personnel to attend training and education on how to respond to complaints or disclosures of harm in accordance with Complaints Procedures
- Have monitoring and auditing structures in place to ensure compliance with this policy

5. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Recruitment & Training Policy
- Safeguarding Culture Standards
- Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers

5. APPROVAL

The Archdiocese of Wellington has adopted this Concerns and Complaints Policy, but has extended its coverage to include safety for everyone from all forms of abuse, with special attention to be paid to those groups who are especially vulnerable, such as children and adults who fall within the Crimes Act definition of vulnerability.

This Policy was signed and executed by the Archbishop of Wellington, Cardinal John Dew, on 28 March 2019.