SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Antidiscrimination and Racism Policy

This document should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy (SWCYP Policy).

CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

The Archdiocese is committed to the safety, wellbeing and human dignity of children, young people and adults.

Introduction

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne seeks to provide all children and young people with an inclusive, welcoming and culturally safe environment where they are respected, their individual needs are considered, and children in particular are safe and feel safe.

The Archdiocese has zero tolerance for child abuse, racism and discrimination and is committed to protecting children and young people from harm.

If any person believes a child or young person is at immediate risk of child abuse or harm, telephone 000.

Commitment to the safety of children and young people

In adopting and publishing this policy, the Archdiocese makes a public statement of its commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

The Archdiocesan commitment to the safety of children and young people is contained within the SWCYP Policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- safeguard children and young people from abuse, racism, discrimination and harm so that children are safe and feel safe in all Archdiocesan environments
- remove or mitigate risks of harm to children and young people
- provide guidance to Church personnel to support their understanding of the diverse circumstances and needs of children and young people, especially vulnerable children
- set clear standards for all Church personnel about their behaviour towards and in the presence of children and young people
- create a culturally safe environment that encourages genuine engagement and empowerment of children and young people
- provide a clear statement to Church personnel forbidding child abuse and harm, including racism and discrimination
- ensure that racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated within Archdiocesan environments
- encourage Church personnel to respect and value Aboriginal cultures, and to recognise the importance of this to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young persons
- encourage Church personnel to respect and value children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to recognise the importance of this to their ongoing wellbeing
- comply with all relevant legislation, including the *Victorian Child Safe Standards*.

For a full list of definitions used throughout this policy, please refer to the back of the *Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy*.

Scope

This policy applies to all Church personnel engaged by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, in conjunction with the Archdiocesan safeguarding documents.

The application of this policy extends to all Archdiocesan environments and all interactions with children and young people, including but not limited to:

- physical and face-to-face contact
- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication, including online messenger services, social media, or online seminars, ministry, prayer groups or liturgies.

Principles

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne is committed to providing children and young people with a safe environment that encourages diversity and inclusion, and that represents the community in which we serve.

Diversity encompasses differences in children and young people's culture, experiences, age, education, race, national origin, ethnicity, disability, religious beliefs, sexuality and any other real and perceived differences.

An inclusive and safe culture is one where all children and young people feel valued and respected, and where children and young people feel welcome to contribute and participate.

Racism

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne acknowledges that racism is the process by which systems, policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for children and young people, their families and communities, based on race. Racism prevents children and young people from experiencing justice, dignity and equity because of their racial identity.

Racism may present itself in conduct including harassment, abuse, humiliation, violence or intimidating behaviour.

Discrimination

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne acknowledges that discrimination may be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination occurs when children and young people are treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal circumstances. Indirect discrimination occurs when a rule or policy applies to everyone but has the effect of disadvantaging some children and young people because of a diverse characteristic they have.

Discrimination may be based on a child or young person's age, disability, race, colour, ethnicity, gender and sexuality.

The Archdiocese seeks to provide an environment where all children and young people are welcomed and feel safe regardless of their diverse characteristics.

We aim to achieve a diverse and safe culture through a number of key areas.

Culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne respects and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and seeks to provide a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are respected and valued. We do this by:

- ensuring that all Church personnel are aware of their obligations to provide a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, including under the SWCYP Policy and Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct
- consulting on a regular basis with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, parents, carers, families and their communities to understand cultural safety and welcome feedback
- providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families
- ensuring Church personnel encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights, and provide them with support to do so
- providing child safety training that includes training on cultural safety and supports Church personnel to understand, respect and value Aboriginal culture and understand the importance of this to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- providing an online environment that is culturally safe and welcoming for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- making a clear statement that racism will not be tolerated, and that strategies will be embedded to identify and respond to racism, so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel safe and empowered to participate
- honouring days of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, including celebrating Sunday Mass during National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week.

Respecting the diversity of children and young people

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne seeks to understand the diverse circumstances and needs of all the children and young people we serve. We are committed to providing an environment of child safety by recognising and respecting the diverse needs of all children and young people and supporting them to be active participants in the life of the Archdiocese.

The Archdiocese pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with a disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home and those who are of diverse sexuality. We also recognise that children are more vulnerable if they have experienced harm or trauma in the past.

We ensure the diverse needs of children and young people are considered and respected by:

- communicating with children, young people, parents, carers and families to understand the unique identities and needs of children and young people
- creating opportunities for children and young people to participate by making reasonable adjustments to activities, services and events
- ensuring vulnerable children are empowered in relation to their rights by providing the safeguarding documents in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand
- responding swiftly to concerns in relation to discrimination, racism, child abuse and harm to ensure that children and young people feel safe
- providing guidance material for all Church personnel, including:
  - 'Promoting the Safety of Children and Young People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds' information sheet
  - 'Promoting the Safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People' information sheet
  - 'Promoting the safety of children and young people of diverse sexuality' information sheet.

Preventing racism and discrimination against children and young people

We commit to providing an environment that is free from racism and discrimination, and we endeavour to:

- take positive action to eliminate discrimination, racism and victimisation in all Archdiocesan environments
- make adjustments to enable children and young people and/or their families to participate in the life of the Church
- promote a culture of support, equality and diversity at all levels of the Archdiocese
- provide equal opportunities for all children, young people and their families to be involved and to participate in activities and liturgies
- treat seriously all reported incidents of discrimination and racism and respond in accordance with the SCYP Reporting Procedure
- ensure that all Church personnel are aware of their obligation to report all concerns of child abuse and harm according to the SCYP Reporting Procedure, including incidents of racism and discrimination.

Responsibility of Church personnel

The safety of children and young people is everyone's responsibility.

All Church personnel:

- have a moral, legal and ethical responsibility to care for children and young people and to promote their wellbeing, paying particular attention to the diverse needs of vulnerable children
- must ensure that they understand their obligations under this policy
- must provide an environment of cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, and invite children, young people, families and communities to provide feedback
- must provide an environment free from racism and discrimination
- must identify when other children or adults subject a child or young person to racism or discrimination and act swiftly to ensure the safety of the child or young person
- must report any incidents of racism or discrimination swiftly and in accordance with the SCYP Reporting Procedure
- must make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that children and young people are able to participate in activities, services and the life of the Church
- must provide a positive and inclusive environment for all children and young people, including vulnerable children.

Breach

A breach of this policy will be treated seriously and will be dealt with according to the SWCYP Policy and SCYP Reporting Procedure.

Church personnel should report any breach of this policy or other safeguarding documents to the parish priest, head of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne agency or entity, or the Safeguarding Unit as soon as possible after becoming aware of the breach. Should Church personnel determine not to report a breach in accordance with this policy, they must ensure that all external reporting obligations are reported and complied with.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and after every critical child safety and wellbeing incident.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne welcomes feedback from children, young people, parents, carers, families and the community on how it can improve this policy, the safeguarding documents, risk management and the Archdiocesan environment to protect children and young people.

Relevant legislation

- *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
  - Child Safe Standards
  - Reportable Conduct Scheme
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
  - Mandatory Reporting
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
  - Sexual offences
  - Grooming offence
  - Failure to disclose offence
  - Failure to respond offence
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
  - Privacy Principles and obligations
- *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic)
  - Working with Children Checks and related offences

Supporting policies, information sheets and guidance documents

- CCYP publications and information sheets regarding the Child Safe Standards
- CCYP publications and information sheets regarding the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's commitment to the safety of children and young people
- Working with Children Check Protocol
- Privacy Compliance Advice
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct and Declaration
- Integrity in Our Common Mission
- National Police Record Check Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Digital Communications Policy
- Workplace Bullying Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Record Keeping Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Reporting Procedure
- 'Empowering children and young people' information sheet
- 'Criminal history record check (police record check)' information sheet
- Safe Programs—Practice and Behavioural Guidelines
- 'Promoting the safety of children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds' information sheet
- 'Promoting the safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people' information sheet
- 'Promoting the safety of children and young people of diverse sexuality' information sheet
- 'Safeguarding risk management process' information sheet
- 'Photography and video of children and young people' information sheet
- 'Electronic communication including social media' information sheet

Policy administration schedule

Policy owner	Director, Safeguarding Unit
Who the policy applies to	All Church personnel within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
Approval authority	Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
Approval/reviewed date	October 2023
Version number	Version 1.0
Modifications made this version	Not applicable
Next review date by policy owner	2025 A review of this policy will be conducted every two years and may be subject to amendment prior to the review date as a result of: • relevant feedback from stakeholders, including children, young people, parents, carers and the community • legislative changes • a review of critical incidents • a commitment to promote continuous improvement.

Version control

Version number	Purpose/change	Date
1.0	Initial version—approved by Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne	October 2023