



CHURCH
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CODE OF CONDUCT

Code of Conduct for the Care, Protection and Safety of Children, Young People, Vulnerable Adults, Parishioners and all who visit St. Agatha's Parish - Cranbourne.

Introduction

Central to the mission of St. Agatha's Parish is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of all people, including and especially children, young people and vulnerable adults, and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding all parishioners, visitors to our parish and especially children, young people and vulnerable adults at **St. Agatha's Parish** against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement child protection legislation and the Catholic Diocese of Sale "Code of Conduct for the Care, Protection and Safety of Children and Vulnerable Adults, *Promoting Child Safe Parishes*".

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish council members at **St. Agatha's Parish** are expected to actively contribute to a parish culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms the Gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice. They are required to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

Glossary

Child – A child is any young person below the age of 18

Vulnerable Adult – A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of eighteen "who by reason of life circumstances, disability, age or illness, is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or is or may be unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the parish Child Safe Policy and upholding the parish's Statement of Commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm
- treating everyone in the parish community with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe pastoral environment)
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of adults and children with a disability (for example, by ensuring reasonable care is taken to cater for any additional needs being faced)
- ensuring as far as practicable that an adult is not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the police
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)
- reporting any child safety concerns to the parish priest or the Vicar General if the concern relates to the parish priest (or child safety officer if the parish has appointed someone to this role)
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.

Unacceptable behaviours

Staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish council members must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors or being alone with a child with no good cause)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes

- manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating a child; corporal punishment is never acceptable. Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort or in an emergency
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal details or social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family who is/are not socially related outside of the pastoral duties reasonably associated with the role description of the person's position in the parish **without the parish priest's or child safety officer's** (if the parish has appointed someone to this role) knowledge and/or consent (other than accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street)
- have any private online contact (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) with a child or their family who is/are not family or socially related (unless necessary e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters)
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account to conduct parish communications
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child or their family who is/are not family or socially related
- photograph or video a child without the official consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume illegal drugs on parish premises or at parish events.

I, _____, confirm that I have read the above Code of Conduct for the Care, Protection and Safety of Children, Young People, Vulnerable Adults and Parishioners. I am aware that St. Agatha's Parish expects me to uphold at all times the standards of behaviour described in the Code of Conduct above. I also understand that any breach of this code may affect my engagement with St. Agatha's Catholic Church-Cranbourne.

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Date of approval by Parish Pastoral Council:	October 2016
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