

Code of Conduct for the Care, Protection and Safety of Children, Young People, Vulnerable Adults, Parishioners and all who visit St. Agatha’s Catholic Church - 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 Safeguarding Policy and upholding the Parish Safeguarding Commitment Statement (Children and Vulnerable Adults) at all times;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults 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;
- becoming aware of and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting of child abuse as required by the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) under which it is a criminal offence for any adult to fail to report;
- reporting any child safety concerns to the parish priest or the Vicar General if the concern relates to the parish priest (or Parish Safeguarding 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; failure to report child abuse is an offence under the law;
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment to a particular child(ren) to the exclusion of others);
- 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. Where such physical contact or doing things of a personal nature is necessary, it shall be done in the presence of another adult;
- 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, young person or vulnerable adult because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability;
- establish unsolicited contact with a child outside of the pastoral duties reasonably associated with the role of the person's position in the parish (unless there is already a pre-existing family or social relationship between them) without the consent and knowledge of the parish priest or the parish safeguarding officer;
- have any private online contact (such as through social media, email, instant messaging etc.) with a child or their family (unless there is already a pre-existing family or social relationship between them), except where necessary e.g. for the purpose of providing families with necessary parish information or documents;
- use any personal communication channel/device such as a personal email account to conduct parish communications with children or vulnerable adults;
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child, unless there is already a pre-existing family or social relationship between them;
- photograph or video a child without the official consent of the parent or guardian;
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or consume them on parish premises or at parish events;
- provide children with or allow them to use tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs at any time.

[End]

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.

I further agree that I shall be bound by any amendments, additions to or deletions from the above Code of Conduct that may be made by St Agatha's Parish from time to time and notice of which has been published on the parish website or by any other means deemed appropriate by the parish.

SURNAME : FIRST & MIDDLE NAMES :

[Please write your names and particulars legibly in BLOCK LETTERS].

ADDRESS:

HOME PHONE NO.: MOBILE NO.:

MINISTRIES VOLUNTEERING FOR :

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (CARD NO.): EXPIRY DATE :

VOLUNTEER : Yes / No EMPLOYEE : Yes / No

SIGNATURE:

DATE: _____

Date of approval by Parish Pastoral Council:

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