

ALL SAINTS PARISH

GUIDE TO CHILD PROTECTION

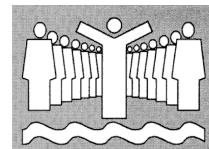
At All Saints Parish we are committed to safeguard the welfare of all people with whom we come into contact.

This responsibility is a reality all within the Church must share.

The information provided below is provided as a means for us to safeguard the needs of the vulnerable including children and young people while also enabling the Church, its Parishes/Agencies, to meet its duty of care and legal obligations to those persons who at different times may be in their care.

Any suspected or alleged harm or abuse reported to a member of All Saints Parish must be handled in accordance with the Child Protection Act 1999 and the policy set out below:

1. Report immediately any suspected or alleged harm or abuse to your immediate group leader as a first step, but should they not be available, then the Parish Priest.
2. Your group leader will report to the Parish Priest.
3. Your availability to discuss this matter further with the Parish Priest or respective government authorities is paramount.
3. At all times confidentiality is crucial and you must not discuss the suspected or alleged harm or abuse with any other person other than your immediate group leader or the Parish Priest.
- 4, All reports of suspected or alleged harm or abuse must be documented using ASF010 Suspected or Alleged Harm or Abuse Report, which should be handed to your immediate group leader within 24 hours of receiving the report.



Appendices 5.11 and 5.12 taken from the Archdiocesan Service Document - Employment Guidelines Manual

APPENDIX 5.11

CHILD PROTECTION

Definitions are outlined in *Appendix 12*

DISCLOSURE OF SUSPECTED OR ALLEGED HARM/ABUSE

A child in need of protection is a child who has suffered harm, is suffering harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering harm; and does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm. The Archdiocese accepts that there may be times where a child or young person participating in church activities and/or services may disclose harm/abuse or there may be times where there is a suspicion of harm and/or abuse. It is critical that employees and/or volunteers know what is expected of them in these circumstances. All reporting of allegations is highly sensitive and should be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

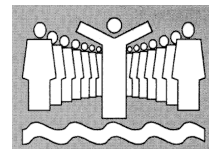
Each Vicariate/Service should have individual policies and procedures in relation to child protection and reporting in place that is congruent with the individual legislative requirements that govern the service delivery e.g. Child Care Act, Disability Services Act.

There are reasonable grounds under which a person can suspect harm. These include:

- A child or young person discloses they have been harmed;
- Someone else (e.g. another child, parent) discloses that harm has occurred or is likely to occur;
- A child or young person discloses harm to another (it may be possible they are referring to themselves);
- Significant changes in behaviour of a child or young person or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries; or
- Harm to a child or young person is directly witnessed.

Where there is a suspicion that a child or young person is being harmed physically, sexually or emotionally, the following must occur:

- Keep calm
- Do not question or investigate
- Do not challenge parents/careers about your suspicions
- Record all details that support the suspicion
- Discuss the matter with the Service Manager, Director or Parish Priest and decide what action needs to be taken



- Never make promises to a child or young person that cannot be kept.

Where a child or young person discloses harm or abuse by someone else, it is important to:

- Listen carefully to what is said and keep calm
- Do not express shock or disbelief
- Be non judgemental
- Offer reassurance and support
- Believe the child
- Record all details that support your concerns
- Inform your Service Manager, Director or Parish Priest and decide what action is to be taken
- Report as appropriate to the police, Department of child safety and any other related department where this is required (e.g. Disability Services)
- Do not undertake an investigation, this should be undertaken by local authorities.

Where there is a disclosure of an allegation of harm only ask questions to confirm the need to report the matter to the police or Department of Child Safety.

Where a worker, volunteer or parishioner witnesses or receives an allegation of harm and/or suspected harm, they must report it to the Manager or Director of a service or Parish Priest. Further follow up on information may be required before an assessment of the situation and reporting requirements can be determined.

In situations where there is uncertainty, question or concern regarding the reporting of an allegation of harm, clarity should be sought from relevant Department of Child Safety or Police service.

Suspicion or allegations of harm that involve an offence against a child or young person must be reported to the Police or Department of Child Safety.

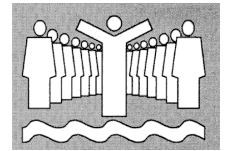
Where there is a need to report allegation of harm to the Police or Department of Child Safety, the investigation must be undertaken by these authorities.

Where it is alleged that an employee or volunteer is the source of harm against the child or young person the employee or volunteer will be stood down from their duties until the matter is investigated and resolved.

If the allegation is proven the employee or volunteer's employment will be terminated.

DOCUMENTING THE DISCLOSURE

If notes are being taken whilst a disclosure is being made it is important to ensure that the child or young person is informed why the documentation is occurring and its importance. The explanation should be appropriate to the age and level of understanding of the child or young person.



The information that should be documented includes:

- Exactly what the person is disclosing including “I said”, “they said” statements, dates, times, location and who was present;
- The questions that were asked;
- Any comments made; and
- Actions following the disclosure.

NOTIFICATION TO POLICE AND/OR DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY

The allegation must be reported to the Department of Child Safety where:

- The alleged case of harm may be caused by a family member;
- The family is not acting to protect their child from harm;
- Disclosure of harm is related to shared family care; or
- Disclosure of harm is related to residential services for a child or young person.

Disclosure of harm that indicates a criminal offence has taken place (eg sexual or physical assault) should be reported to the Police.

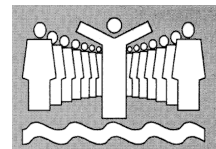
The police will require the following details:

- Details of the disclosure of harm;
- Name, age and address of the child or young person harmed;
- Where the child or young person is at that point in time;
- Any identifying information of the alleged perpetrator; and
- The details of the person reporting the harm.

Employees and/or volunteers who have been involved with disclosure and suspicion or allegation of harm can be debriefed and supported through the Employment Assistance Program, ACCESS.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any issues relating to suspected or alleged harm and/or abuse to children and young people is highly sensitive and must be treated in such a way. Any reports or documentation on disclosures must be kept secure at all times. Access should be strictly limited to those involved in the matter.



CHILD PROTECTION DEFINITIONS

Who is a Child?

Under the Child Protection Act 1999 s8 defines a child as an individual under 18 years of age.

What is Harm?

The Child Protection Act 1999 s9 defines harm to a child as; any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.

Harm can be caused by:

- a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
- b) sexual abuse or exploitation.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is anything which individuals, institutions or processes do (or fail to do) which directly or indirectly harms children in the here and now and/or damages their prospects of a safe and healthy development into adulthood.

What is Physical Harm?

May include beating, shaking, burning, biting or grabbing hard enough to leave a mark, throwing a child or strangulation, to the extent that there are lasting physical effects.

What is Emotional Harm?

Includes constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child or young person, withholding praise and affection, or constant yelling.

Emotional harm can also be caused by a failure to provide the psychological nurturing necessary for a child or young person's physical and emotional growth and development.

What is Neglect?

Includes the ongoing failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life and adequate supervision needed for optimal growth and development.

What is Sexual Harm?

May take many forms, from sexual jokes, innuendo in conversation and showing pornographic images to a child, to sexual touching and invasive sexual acts.