



Safe Community Policy

Rationale

We believe that a commitment to follow the example of Jesus by respecting the dignity of each person will assist us to work together for the protection of all and for the prevention of any form of abuse – physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual – within our parish community.

We believe that a safe environment is more likely to result if each member of the church community becomes involved in an awareness raising program highlighting the serious and long-term effects of abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Aim

To ensure that the St Francis Xavier and St Clare's Parishes and school community are a safe and enriching environment for people of all ages, with special concern for children, young people and vulnerable adults

To prevent abuse by all members of the Catholic Community – parish personnel, employers, employees, volunteers, priests and religious.

Implementation

1. The parish will comply with the *Working With Children Check Protocol* in place in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.
2. Alcohol, drugs or other substances must not adversely affect the work performance or official conduct of parish personnel or the members of the parish community when undertaking parish work.
3. In the event that a complaint of abuse is made against a member of the parish employees or a parish volunteer the *Towards Healing* protocol will be followed. http://www.catholic.org.au/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=158

Parish personnel (including employees and volunteers) will:

- Treat children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect, listen to and value their ideas and opinions and protect their wellbeing.
- Respect the privacy of members of the Parish Community and their families.
- Always have at least two adults present with a group.
- Arrange as far as possible that no adult is left alone with a child or young person or vulnerable adult where there is little opportunity of their activity being observed by others. Where adults and children, young people or vulnerable

adults meet one to one the meeting must occur in a place where they may be seen by others. While recognizing that emergency situations can arise, this must be the guiding principle.

- Be cognisant of the imbalance in power inherent in adult-child relationships.

Parish personnel (including employees and volunteers) will not:

- Show prejudice or use of oppressive behavior or language with children, young people or vulnerable adults that could be construed as bullying.
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults or do things of a personal nature that children, young people or vulnerable adults can do for themselves.
- Develop inappropriate relationships with specific children, young people or vulnerable adults for their own needs.
- Show favoritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention.
- Have contact with children outside the parish programs or off the premises without a parent or adult being present.
- Give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the parish policy review program

References:

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

<http://www.catholic.org.au/>

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

<http://www.melbourne.catholic.org.au/policies/>

Adapted from documents from the above sources.

Ratified by Parish Pastoral Council on 2 September 2010.