

St. Michael's Parish Traralgon

Child Safety Code of Conduct for Children and Vulnerable Adults

Statement of Commitment

Central to the mission of St Michael's Parish is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of 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 children, young people and vulnerable adults at St. Michael's Parish Traralgon 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 Caring for Children, Promoting Child Safe Parishes".

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and parish council members at St. Michael's Parish Traralgon, 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 and vulnerable adults, as noted below.

Acceptable behaviours

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

- adhering to the parish Child Safe Code of Conduct and upholding the parish's Statement of Commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and harm by supervising diligently
- 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 and vulnerable adults with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children and vulnerable adults with a disability (for example, by ensuring reasonable care is taken to cater for any additional needs being faced)
- ensure as far as practicable that an adult is not alone with a child or vulnerable adult, for example by ensuring visibility
- reporting any allegations of children or vulnerable adults 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 or vulnerable adults that could be seen as favouritism or grooming (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children or vulnerable adults which may be construed as unnecessary physical contact
- manage disruptive or unsafe behaviour by degrading or isolating a child or vulnerable adult; corporal punishment is never acceptable. Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort or in an emergency
- use inappropriate language or engage in adult or mature discussions in the presence of children or vulnerable adults
- express personal views or discriminate against any child or vulnerable adult because of cultures, race or sexuality
- have contact including online with a child or vulnerable adult 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, other than to conduct parish communications
- photograph or video individually a child or vulnerable adult without the consent of the parent or guardians (excluding group photos; for example, at Sacramental celebrations)
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs