

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

1. Committed Leadership, governance and culture

Child safeguarding is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance & culture

2. Children are safe, informed and participate

Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them & are taken seriously

3. Partnering with families, carers and communities

Families, carers & communities are informed & involved in promoting child safeguarding

4. Equity is promoted and diversity is respected

Equity is upheld & diverse needs respected in policy & practice

5. Robust human resource management

People working with children are suitable & supported to reflect child safeguarding values in practice

6. Effective complaints management

Processes for raising concerns & complaints are responsive, understood, accessible & used by children, families, carers, communities & personnel

7. Ongoing education and training

Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills & awareness to keep children safe through information, ongoing education & training

8. Safe physical and online environments

Physical & online environments promote safety & contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed

9. Continuous improvement

Entities regularly review & improve implementation of their systems for keeping children safe

10. Policies and procedures support child safety

Policies & procedures document how the entity is safe for children

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards harmonise with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations which build on the Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

CPSL Values

Courage

We stand firm, act responsively and persevere

Compassion

We honour the dignity of all people and work with understanding, respect and care

Honesty

We embrace openness and transparency, and act with integrity, probity, fairness and consistency

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Catholic Professional Standards Ltd

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Catholic Professional Standards Ltd is committed to fostering a culture of safety and care for children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with the Catholic Church.

CPSL was established in 2016 by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

CPSL functions independently and fosters a culture of increasing transparency and accountability in the Church.

CPSL acknowledges the lifelong trauma of abuse victims and survivors and their families; the failure of the Catholic Church to protect, believe and respond justly to children and vulnerable adults; and the consequent breaches of community trust.

About CPSL

CPSL has five core functions:

- Set safeguarding standards to ensure the safety of children & vulnerable adults who engage with the Church at any level anywhere in Australia
- Provide training & support to enable Church authorities, entities, organisations, ministries & anyone involved in the Church to create a culture of safety for everyone
- Support the Church to build a culture of safeguarding
- Audit the compliance of Catholic entities, organisations & ministries in accordance with the Standards
- Publicly report the results of those audits

Broadly speaking, these five functions mean CPSL performs both an audit & compliance function (assessing & reporting on compliance across entities) & a capacity building function (educating, advising & researching to support compliance & promote continuous improvement).



Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards are designed to be implemented by all Catholic entities, ministries & organisations across Australia.

They constitute a framework which articulates requirements for Catholic entities to promote the safety of children through the implementation of policies & activities to prevent, respond to & report concerns regarding child abuse.

They are designed to drive cultural & behavioural change & promote accountability & transparency of Catholic Church leaders, their ministries & entities.

All children have the right to be safe all the time.

Every individual engaged with any ministry or activity of the Catholic Church has a responsibility to do their part to keep children safe.

Every Catholic entity, ministry & organisation needs to take deliberate steps to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional & psychological abuse. Culture & policies are important enablers of child safety, & they need to both expect & support action. Responsibility for taking action to prevent child abuse & to raise concerns must be understood & accepted by everyone.

The work involved in building & maintaining a safe Church is never completed. It requires a dynamic, multi-pronged & ongoing process of learning, acting, monitoring & reviewing.

It is critical that the ten National Catholic Safeguarding Standards are understood to be inter-related & inter-dependent. Over-reliance on any one component risks compromising the development of a robust child safe environment & may result in weaknesses which could be exploited.

Quick facts about audits

- The audit process looks at the safeguarding practices of dioceses, religious institutes, associations & ministerial public juridic persons
- The audit process is tailored to the unique circumstances of each entity
- During the audit process, the CPSL auditors 'sample' a range of ministries - for example, in dioceses, we seek to visit up to a quarter of parishes & in religious institutes we seek to interview up to a quarter of members of the institute. We also meet with & review a range of ministries providing services involving children such as children's liturgists, altar servers & youth ministry leaders
- The audit process is designed to identify gaps as well as good practices across the range of ministries offered
- Audit reports include recommendations for improvement for the entity & a list of agreed actions for the bishop, leader or management to act upon
- Audit reports are published on the CPSL website - visit '[Safe Church > Church Reports](#)'

Training & support

CPSL delivers a range of training & development opportunities that strengthen the capacity & improve practices of Church entities to safeguard children & vulnerable adults - visit '[Safe Church > Training and events](#)'.

CPSL develops & shares a range of resources & guidance to entities to assist implementation of the NCSS & foster a culture of safety & care for children - visit '[Safe Church > Support materials](#)'.