

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

Implementation Guide Standard 10



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD

A safe Church for everyone

EDITION ONE - 2019

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd acknowledges the lifelong trauma of abuse victims, 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.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd is committed to fostering a culture of safety and care for children and adults at risk.

This is the first edition of the ***National Catholic Safeguarding Standards – Implementation Guide Standard 1*** produced by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (formerly Catholic Professional Standards Ltd.)

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ACSL respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters on which we work. We pay respect to their Elders, past and present, and young leaders of today and the future. ACSL commits itself to the ongoing work of reconciliation with our Aboriginal families and communities.

STANDARD 10



Policies and procedures support child safety

Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children

Safeguarding policies and procedures are intended to promote an environment in which the safety of children is paramount. They also enable personnel delivering services to children, or engaging in ministries with children, to feel supported to carry out their 'work' with confidence.

Commitment

Merely having policies and procedures in place does not guarantee child safety. The total commitment of the entity's leadership and all personnel to implementing policies and procedures is essential in preventing child abuse, and responding to and reporting concerns regarding the safety of children. In short, one aim of having policies and procedures in place is to build commitment, not mere compliance.

Consultation

Building commitment requires broad consultation with all stakeholders, including children, parents and carers, the community, clergy, religious, employees and volunteers. This includes in the development stage and in any subsequent reviews. To enable maximum input, a thorough consultation process takes various forms such as open forums/meetings, suggestion boxes, questionnaires and email submissions.

Communication

It is essential that the Safeguarding Policy and procedures are regularly promoted and easily accessible in a variety of formats, including child-friendly versions, posters, and other languages (as appropriate). Good practice would reference part or all of the Policy and procedures regularly and in a variety of contexts including in newsletters, welcome packs, at parent or community forums, during Child Protection Week, in homilies, at staff meetings, in volunteer briefings and in preparing for child-focused events.

It is not enough, however, to simply communicate the existence of the policy and procedures; ongoing training and education is required where participants can ask questions, discuss practical scenarios and gain confidence in their understanding of the Policy and its procedures.

10.1 Policies and procedures address the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

How could your entity implement this criterion?

- The entity's Safeguarding Policy and procedures incorporate the intent of all the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards to ensure that the best interests of the child are paramount.

Standard 1: Committed leadership, governance and culture

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

Standard 2: Children are safe, informed and participate

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

Standard 3: Partnering with families, carers and communities

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

Standard 4: Equity is promoted and diversity respected

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Standard 5: Robust human resource management

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

Standard 6: Effective complaints management

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

Standard 7: Ongoing education and training

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

Standard 8: Safe physical and online environments

Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimize the opportunity for children to be harmed

Standard 9: Continuous improvement

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

Standards 10: Policies and procedures support child safety

Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children

Aligned with

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - National Principle 10.1

Royal Commission Child Safe Standard 10 (a)

10.2 Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand.

How could your entity implement this criterion?

Ensure that your Safeguarding Policy and procedures are:

- readily and publicly accessible (for example, there is a link to them from the institution's website home page that is no more than three clicks from the home page, or available on public noticeboards);
- downloadable or available as a single Word or PDF document;
- ideally available in multiple modes for individuals with different levels of English literacy and proficiency, modes of communication and access to digital technologies (for example, multiple languages/dialects, visual aids/posters, audio and audio-visual resources);
- available in child-friendly and developmentally appropriate formats that pay attention to children's diverse characteristics, cultural backgrounds and abilities;
- provided to all personnel and volunteers at induction, and communicated further via education and training.¹

Ideally, include training sessions that are interactive with opportunities for questions and discussions and include practical examples and scenarios.

Aligned with

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - National Principle 10.2

Royal Commission Child Safe Standard 10 (b)

¹ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Final Report: Volume 6, Making Institutions Child Safe*, p 435, 2017

10.3 Best practice policy models and stakeholder consultation inform the development and review of policies and procedures.

How could your entity implement this criterion?

[Also refer to Standard 1 Implementation Guide 1.1]

It is recommended that your entity has a Safeguarding Policy and procedures document that:

- clearly states the entity's zero tolerance of child abuse;
- is user-friendly and written in clear and simple language that is meaningful to all personnel, the children it works with, and their parents and carers;
- is publicly accessible in a variety of formats;
- has specific administrative details listed including:
 - the effective date, review date, author (s), and the Church Authority's approval
 - a list of related documents or policies that must be read in conjunction with the safeguarding policies and procedures e.g. Risk Management Policy, IT Acceptable Use Policy;
- includes relevant legislation and regulations;
- defines terms used in the policy;
- specifies to whom the policy applies;
- defines the different types of abuse covered by the policy;
- lists indicators of possible abuse and how to respond;
- specifies legal reporting obligations ;
- includes a diagram that shows reporting lines (for example a flowchart or decision tree);
- describes what action to take if a child is at imminent risk of harm;
- identifies when reports are to be made and the relevant authority to whom they should be directed (including reporting to the Police, Reportable Conduct Schemes, Child Protection authorities);
- articulates consequences for breaches of the policy (e.g. dismissal, suspension or transfer to other non-child-related duties);
- references the Code of Conduct; and
- sets out education and training requirements (including frequency) for all personnel.

Some entities may choose to include all procedures relating to safeguarding in the one over-arching Safeguarding Policy (for example: including recruitment, selection and screening procedures; risk management strategies; child empowerment and participation principles and strategies). Other entities may choose to have separate, discreet procedures that are listed and cross-referenced at the beginning of their Safeguarding Policy. Each entity should choose which format works best for them, depending on their size and the complexity of their ministries.

Ensure that policies and procedures are subject to regular reviews [refer to Standard 9 Implementation Guide 9.1].

In both the development and subsequent reviews of the Safeguarding Policy and procedures the entity should include a process of stakeholder consultation. This adds a range of perspectives and helps build a shared commitment to safeguarding.

Aligned with

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - National Principle 10.3

Royal Commission Child Safe Standard 10 (c)

10.4 The Church Authority and leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.

How could your entity implement this criterion?

Church Authorities and leaders [refer to Standard 1 Implementation Guide 1.1, 1.2]:

- publicly endorse and promote the entity's Safeguarding Policy and procedures;
- commit to continuous improvement through reviews and updating policies and procedures to reflect current best practice;
- access appropriate experts/mentors when dealing with complaints, such as consultative panels.

Aligned with

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - National Principle 10.4

Royal Commission Child Safe Standard 10 (d)

10.5 Personnel understand and implement the policies and procedures.

It is important that the Safeguarding Policy and its procedures are living documents where practice is consistent with policy [refer to Standard 7 Implementation Guide 7.1].

How could your entity implement this criterion?

Ensure that all personnel:

- are aware of, have read, understand and intend to follow the Safeguarding Policy and procedures and can provide examples in which they have done this. This includes signing the entity's Code of Conduct.
- receive adequate training and education regarding the Policy and procedures and how to implement them. Include question and answer time and scenarios to work through the practical components, especially in relation to reporting concerns.
- know that they are required to comply with reporting obligations concerning suspected or known child abuse;
- know who to approach with concerns or questions.

Encourage regular discussion and feedback from personnel on their understanding and practical implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

Aligned with

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - National Principle 10.5

Royal Commission Child Safe Standard 10 (e)