

St Bernard's Catholic Parish, Bacchus Marsh Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People

St Bernard's Church, Bacchus Marsh

Our Lady Help of Christians, Korobeit

Appendix E: Responding to and reporting child Abuse as at July 1, 2022

The material in this appendix is taken directly from the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne website. St Bernard's Safeguarding Officers are available to assist with any concerns.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/uploads/documents/Reporting-child-safety-misconduct>.

https://melbournecatholic.org/uploads/documents/Reporting-abuse-of-safety-related-misconduct_A4.pdf

Child Abuse

Child abuse or child-safety-related misconduct is defined as an act (or series of acts) that endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development and/or a failure to provide conditions to the extent that the health and development of the child or young person is significantly impaired or placed at risk.

Categories of abuse and maltreatment:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- grooming
- problematic sexual behaviour of children and young people
- emotional abuse
- spiritual abuse
- family violence
- neglect
- discrimination
- bullying, including cyberbullying

Clergy, employees and volunteers play a vital role in identifying child abuse or child-safety-related misconduct and are encouraged to be vigilant in responding to possible indicators or signs, disclosures, allegations and reports, and to take action to support a child or young person who is at risk of or experiencing harm.

Reporting child abuse and safety-related misconduct

Any person (eg child, young person, adult, priest, employee, volunteer) can make a report in relation to current or historical child abuse or child-safety-related misconduct.

All clergy, employees and volunteers are required to make a report if they have formed a 'reasonable belief' that a child or young person has experienced abuse, is experiencing abuse or is at risk of harm from child-safety-related misconduct. All concerns, allegations or complaints of current or historical abuse and child-safety-related misconduct will be taken seriously. These concerns will

be treated with sensitivity and acted upon consistent with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's moral, ethical and legal obligations.

Depending on the nature of the behaviour that is reported (eg a criminal act) the matter will be immediately reported to Victoria Police for action. If the behaviour is deemed child-safety-related misconduct (ie not criminal behaviour), the matter will be referred for investigation and subsequent disciplinary action, if the matter is substantiated. All child abuse or child-safety-related misconduct matters are reported to the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Commission for Children and Young People -CCYP). Our parish expects clergy, employees and volunteers to be familiar with CCYP material

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/>

Immediate danger

If a child or young person is in imminent danger, a report to Victoria Police must be made immediately (phone '000').

The Professional Standards Unit (PSU) is responsible for coordinating reports of current and historical abuse or child-safety-related misconduct and liaising with statutory authorities e.g. Victoria Police, Commission for Children and Young People (Reportable Conduct Scheme).

The PSU will:

- Offer support to the person(s) involved
- Initiate risk management processes to ensure the safety of the person and others, clarify the nature of the complaint to determine relevant reporting requirements
- Report the matter to relevant authorities (ie Victoria Police, Child Protection) in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care as soon as possible.
- Wait for clearance before starting an investigation. The PSU will be guided by the recommendations of Victoria Police and/or Child Protection in relation to any action that may be required to promote the safety of those involved and the integrity of an investigation.
- Report the matter to regulatory bodies eg the Commission for Children and Young People

Professional Standards Unit

Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

Phone: 9926 5630

Email: psu@cam.org.au

The CAM site provides information on:

- Who can report
- Reporting obligations: Clergy, Employees and Volunteers
- Mandatory Reporting
- When to act
- How do we report a concern, allegation or complaint
- Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Welfare concerns
- Responding to Historical abuse
- Professional Standards Unit (PSU) role in relation to reports of alleged child-safety-related misconduct and/or child abuse

The following instructions take effect from January 1st 2022

The Catholic Church and religious institutions in Victoria are committed to a safe environment for all children and vulnerable persons with safeguarding embedded within its culture and operations.

Commencing in 2022, [Pathways Victoria](#) will offer a consistent state wide model to respond to disclosures of Catholic Church abuse in Victoria replacing [Towards Healing](#) and the [Melbourne Response](#).

Through the [Pathways Victoria](#) model and processes, the Church and participating religious institutions seek to take responsibility for addressing wrongs that have been committed.

The [model](#) responds to the need of those who wish to connect at a pastoral level with a one-to-one connection with a care coordinator who will walk alongside victims and survivors on their journey. It facilitates a compassionate approach with the opportunity to restore faith and trust with every step of engagement.

Pathways Victoria

From 1 January 2022, any new complaints/claims should be directed to Pathways Victoria

(03) 7064 3940

info@pathwaysvictoria.com

www.pathwaysvictoria.com

National Redress Scheme

Nationally, the [National Redress Scheme](#) also offers an independent model to report institutional abuse. This commenced on 1 July 2018, with survivors of child sexual abuse able to approach the Scheme at any time until 30 June 2027. Under the Scheme, applications for redress are made by independent assessors who decide on the appropriate levels of financial and other support, such as counselling services. The Catholic Church and other institutions participating in the Scheme will meet the costs of redress that the Scheme determines. People wishing to access the Scheme can visit the National Redress Scheme website or phone 1800 737 377.

[Knowmore](#) is an independent service giving free legal advice to assist survivors of abuse by providing them with information and advice about the justice and redress options that may be available to them. Legal advice is available through the [Knowmore](#) website or phone 1800 605 762.

National Redress Scheme

For people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse

Call 1800 737 377

www.nationalredress.gov.au

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From the Australian Catholic bishops' response to Royal Commission report –

The Catholic Church in Australia has been one of the epicentres of the sex abuse crisis in the global Church. But the Church in Australia is also trying to find a path through and out of this crisis in ways that reflects the needs of the society in which it lives. This report outlines, for Australia, a way to discern a synodal path: a new praxis of church governance. But the light which guides the process of discernment is not anchored in this corner of the world. It can radiate out so as to reveal models of synodality that the global Catholic Church can embrace. This is why this report is called 'The Light from the Southern Cross'