

# Safe Programs – Practice and Behavioural Guidelines

Practice and Behavioural Guidelines have been developed to guide the planning and delivery of programs, activities and events involving children and young people and situations that may arise in the course of work with children and young people.

These guidelines seek to address situations (e.g. procedures, physical environments) that place children and young people at risk. Situational risk prevention focuses on specific behaviours and practices within a parish, agency or entity that permit or promote specific outcomes. In relation to child safety, physical and social environments within an organisation can be designed or altered to minimise the risk of child abuse (Wortley & Smallbone 2010).

A focus on 'how we do things' and 'where we do things' in a parish, agency or entity is important in promoting the safety of children and young people.

Safeguarding Committees within parishes, agencies and entities can use these Practice and Behavioural Guidelines in developing and reviewing existing programs, activities and events to promote the safe participation of children and young people.

Some guidelines apply to all programs, activities and events involving children and young people, while others provide guidance in relation to specific situations that may arise.

The guidelines address four broad areas:

- conducting programs, activities and events
- supporting the wellbeing of children and young people
- supervision
- child safety offsite.

## CONDUCTING PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

### LOCATION OF PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework does not seek to restrict the social interaction of parishioners and their children who come together to socialise, pray and support one another beyond the activities and programs offered by parishes, agencies and entities (e.g. families who have formed a social friendship who come together to pray in each other's homes).

Parishes, agencies and entities through their Safeguarding Committees should ensure that they are aware of all relevant programs, activities and events conducted 'under their banner' and that they comply with the obligations set out in the Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework.

It is not advisable for CAM parish, agency and entity programs and activities designed specifically for children and young people (without their parents or guardians) to be conducted in the homes of employees and volunteers, with the exception of pastoral support which can be conducted in the home if a parent is present

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(see 'Pastoral support' section). Activities and programs conducted in a participant's home may place children and young people at risk and should be transitioned to parish, agency or entity premises.

This allows parishes, agencies and entities to provide oversight and monitoring to promote the safety of children and young people and respond when there are concerns about child safety.

Programs, activities and events for children and young people should be conducted in venues that are physically suitable (e.g. safe, not isolated) and enable supervision and monitoring, to ensure the safety of children and young people present.

## PASTORAL SUPPORT

Clergy, employees and volunteers provide pastoral support to families, children and young people in a range of settings e.g. in the home, hospitals, immigration detention centres, prison, juvenile justice settings, schools.

For example:

- A priest attends the home of a parishioner after a bereavement.
- A chronically ill young person receives communion in their home from an extraordinary minister of communion.
- Volunteers dropping off material or food aid to a refugee family who has recently moved into the parish provides an important welcome and sense of connection for the family.
- A soup van on a cold night provides warmth and sustenance for young people experiencing homelessness and sleeping rough in the community.
- Volunteers providing pastoral support to children and young people and their families in an immigration detention centre.

Program activities (e.g. food bank, soup van) involving children and young people (being present, as recipients or as volunteers) should be conducted within the context of parish, agencies and entity activities with the approval of the Safeguarding Committee. This ensures that there is an appropriate level of accountability for child safety and that there has been an assessment of the possible risks associated with conducting the program.

At all times, in ministry, clergy, employees and volunteers must be mindful of child safety expectations.

When providing pastoral support in a home setting, where children and young people are present, it is important to minimise the possible risks to children and young people:

- Make contact with a family and arrange a suitable time to attend the home when parents or guardians are present.
- Do not enter a home when a parent or carer is not present i.e. when the child or children are home alone.

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- Avoid any situation in the home where contact with children and young people is unsupervised.
- Interact with children and young people in open and visible areas of the home (e.g. lounge room, kitchen) and avoid private areas (e.g. bedrooms, bathrooms, sheds, garages).
- Do not undertake any activities, which are beyond the boundaries of a pastoral role and beyond the supervision of others (e.g. offer to babysit children, take an individual child on an outing or camping).

See **INFORMATION SHEET: Role boundaries**.

## ENROLMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCESSES

Registration processes (i.e. forms) for children and young people under the age of 18, assist in gathering information relevant to the child or young person's safe participation in a program, activity or event (e.g. contact information, emergency contact information, permission from parents and guardians, medical and other support information), where children and young people are attending without a parent or guardian present.

Enrolment or registration processes can also assist in communicating program, activity or event requirements to parents and guardians and help set appropriate expectations in relation to their child's participation (e.g. provide event details, identify the persons conducting the program, activity or event, explain arrangements). See **TEMPLATE: Registration Form**, **TEMPLATE: Consent to Participate**, **TEMPLATE: Permission to Collect Child or Young Person** for examples of forms that can be tailored to meet parish, agency or entity requirements.

## SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT ARRANGEMENTS

Sign-in and sign-out processes are a valuable tool for recording who is present during a program, activity or event e.g. participants, clergy, employees and volunteers.

This information is important in ensuring that:

- appropriate levels of supervision and care are provided
- we can identify the members of the clergy, employees and volunteers who are supervising the program, activity or event
- in an emergency situation, we can act to evacuate safely those present
- when an incident occurs, it is possible to determine who was present, who may have been impacted or who may have witnessed the incident.

Sign-in and sign-out processes also help to record the transfer of responsibility from parents (or guardians) to those responsible for supervising programs, activities or events and vice versa.

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## IDENTIFICATION

When interacting with children and young people, identity badges or name tags are a useful tool in promoting child safety as they:

- help children and young people to build a connection with clergy, employees and volunteers by knowing their names
- assist children to distinguish those who are “in charge” or have a role from others who may be present (e.g. members of the public)
- assist children and young people to know who to speak to if they require assistance or when they are feeling unsafe.

When conducting or attending large events with children and young people (e.g. fetes, camps), it may be advisable to clearly identify those responsible for child safety (e.g. coloured T-shirt, high visibility vest), so that children, young people and other participants know who can be approached in relation to child safety concerns.

## RECORD KEEPING

Parishes, agencies and entities have an obligation to maintain a range of records that demonstrate their compliance with the requirements of the Child Safe Standards in Victoria including the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse found that inadequate and poor record keeping practices led to delays in identifying and responding to instances of child sexual abuse. Good record keeping improves accountability and promotes transparency in relation to child safety.

Creating and keeping full and accurate records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, is in the best interests of children and should be an integral part of institutional leadership, governance and culture.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2017b, vol. 8, p. 22 ('Principle 1')

Parishes, agencies and entities are required to keep a range of records relevant to child safety. The following table sets out broad categories of information and documents that may be kept to demonstrate a parish, agency or entity’s approach to child safety.

Categories	Examples
Safeguarding related policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy</li> <li>• Procedures that relate to child safety</li> <li>• Information about each of the programs that operate within a parish, agency or entity (e.g. brochures, website information)</li> </ul>

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Safeguarding Committee information and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting minutes</li> <li>• program, activity or event risk assessments</li> <li>• correspondence</li> <li>• quarterly reports</li> </ul>
Personnel files	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recruitment and selection documentation (e.g. position descriptions, interview notes, identity checks, referee checks)</li> <li>• personnel files for employees and volunteers</li> <li>• Working with Children Check records and/or criminal history record check</li> <li>• Code of Conduct declarations</li> <li>• training records</li> <li>• Visiting Clergy Register</li> </ul>
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concerns, allegations and reports documentation (e.g. Child Safety Reporting Form)</li> </ul>
Registration documentation for children and young people participating in activities and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• registration forms</li> <li>• sign-in and sign-out sheets</li> <li>• parental permission forms</li> <li>• photographic permission forms</li> <li>• medical management forms</li> </ul>

It is a CAM requirement that parishes, agencies and entities maintain records for a minimum of 100 years.

Due consideration should also be given to:

- the appropriate and safe storage of files to ensure that records are secure (e.g. locked filing cabinet, secure electronic storage, not lost, damaged, altered or corrupted)
- privacy and confidentiality
- access arrangements that are monitored and recorded
- maintenance and currency of files.

## SUPERVISION

### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

A directive issued by Archbishop Denis Hart in November 2016 highlights the important role of the Sacrament of Reconciliation for children and young people. In line with child safety expectations and with principles of openness and visibility, Archbishop Hart has requested:

I am asking that you ensure that the Sacrament of Reconciliation in schools is celebrated in a Church in an open setting in the full view of all participants, who are supervised by staff.

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The Parish Priest and the school staff responsible for the school students should ensure that there is a direct line of sight to the individual penitent.

While the directive is intended to apply to the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school settings, the guidelines suggested also serve to support the safety of children and young people who participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation through their involvement in their parish. Where the Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitents is used, this may occur in a chapel or other space within a church that is set apart for this purpose in sight of others but where the priest and penitent cannot be heard, to support the child or young person's right to privacy and the adult's integrity.

Archbishop Denis Hart's directive regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation to all parish priests and principals of primary and secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, 10 November 2016.

<http://melbournecatholic.org.au/Portals/0/Archbishop%20Hart%20directive%20re%20reconciliation%20in%20schools.pdf>

## SUPERVISION WHEN PARENTS AND CARERS ARE PRESENT

Where children and young people attend activities with their parents and carers, it is important to communicate to parents and carers that they are responsible for supervising the children and young people who attend and ensuring their safety. Parents and carers are best placed to provide care and supervision of their own children or those they are responsible for (e.g. other socially related children and young people).

## SUPERVISION WHEN PARENTS AND GUARDIANS ARE NOT PRESENT

Where children and young people attend parish, agency or entity activities without their parents or guardians, clergy, employees and volunteers are responsible for actively supervising children and young people to ensure that they:

- are present and accounted for
- engage appropriately with other participants and do not engage in peer-to-peer abuse
- are in a safe environment
- are protected from possible external threats (e.g. other patrons).

Parishes, agencies and entities need to demonstrate that their Safeguarding Committee has undertaken a risk assessment of the activity, program or event to ensure that appropriate levels of supervision are in place to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Parishes, agencies and entities should ensure that clergy, employees or volunteers do not conduct any activity, program or event on their own<sup>1</sup>; there must be a minimum of two persons. In addition, when determining the appropriate ratio of clergy, employees and volunteers to children and young people, it is important to take into account factors such as:

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of Mass, that may be conducted by a single celebrant in the presence of parishioners.

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- the experience and skill level of the clergy, employees and volunteers
- the size of the group or number of children and young people attending an event
- the age and/or development stage (maturity) of children and young people
- the age range of the children and young people attending (e.g. if young people are attending with primary school aged children)
- the specific needs of the children and young people attending (e.g. medical conditions, disabilities)
- the location of the activity
- the duration of the activity
- the nature of the activities to be undertaken (e.g. adventure)
- the gender of those providing supervision; it is advisable to have male and female supervisors for mixed gender groups
- whether parents or guardians will be present
- whether children and young people will have contact with others (e.g. parishioners, members of the public, other groups of children and young people).

In circumstances, where it is difficult to recruit clergy, employees and volunteers to provide appropriate levels of supervision, it is advisable to request that parents or guardians attend and participate with their child. Where parents or guardians accompany their child to support their child's participation, they are not subject to volunteer screening or induction practices.

Where parents and guardians volunteer to assist with an activity and perform a specific role (e.g. coach, camp supervisor, sacrament preparation program, catering), they will be subject to volunteer screening and induction practices.

## **SUPERVISION WHEN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DRESSING**

There are a range of activities where children and young people may be required to get changed or undressed (e.g. child changing into robes for altar service in the sacristy, young people getting changed into bathers to go swimming while on camp, showering or bathing during overnight stays, putting on a costume for a performance).

Supervision in change room settings is important for ensuring that:

- behaviour of clergy, employees and volunteers is appropriate
- the likelihood of peer-to-peer abuse is minimised
- other persons (e.g. other patrons, adults) do not pose a risk to children and young people.

Several guidelines should be observed to promote the safety of children and young people:

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- Avoid settings where a member of the clergy, an employee or volunteer is alone with a child or young person who is dressing. For example, if a child is alone in a room dressing, it would be advisable for a member of the clergy, an employee or volunteer to stand outside the room and near the door.
- Adults should not be in a state of undress when children and young people are present. Adults should change or shower in a different room if possible, or undertake these activities when children and young people are not present.
- Males and females should be provided with separate changing rooms or bathroom facilities if they are required to undress. Males should not enter female change areas and females should not enter male change areas.
- Children and young people should be supervised by more than one member of the clergy, employee or volunteer when in change rooms, and in a manner that preserves their privacy. For example, volunteers can position themselves near the change room entrances, scanning the room when required to be assured that children and young people are safe.
- Clergy, employees and volunteers should support a child or young person's independence by allowing them to dress, bath and toilet themselves. If assistance is required, the volunteers can supervise each other to ensure that assistance is provided appropriately (e.g. providing assistance to a young child who has requested help).
- Where appropriate, parents and guardians should be enlisted to assist their children to get changed. For example, before a performance of a play, a parent can assist their children to change into their costume.
- Where other patrons may be present (e.g. swimming centre, camp site), additional supervision may be required to ensure that children and young people are not targeted by others in the setting.

## SUPERVISION WHEN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE GO TO THE TOILET

A number of factors need to be considered when supervising children and young people in toilet areas. The location of the toilet may determine the level of supervision that is required. If the venue is onsite, in the line of sight of adults conducting the program, easily accessible and there are no other persons present, it may be safe for children and young people to attend on their own. However, if the toilets are located out of the line of sight, in a separate building or it is likely that there are other patrons present onsite, it may be advisable to use a strategy that minimises risk to children and young people (e.g. checking the facility to ensure that there are no persons present who may pose a risk, have two or more children or young people accompany each other to the toilet, or have an adult accompany two or more children).

If the toilet is in a public venue with other persons present, it is advisable for an adult to accompany younger children to the toilet in a group (two or more) and wait inside or outside the toilet area to maintain an appropriate level of supervision depending on the perceived level of risk from other persons. For young people, it is also advisable for them to attend toilets in pairs. However, depending on the perceived level of risk from other patrons (e.g. drunkenness, violence), there may also be a need to provide adult supervision. The child's age and stage of development may also influence the level of supervision that is required when children use the toilet. When parents and guardians are present, they should accompany their own children



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to the bathroom. For example, if a child needs to go to the toilet during Mass, they should be accompanied by a parent.

In situations when parents are not present, if it is safe to do so, it is advisable to enlist a child(ren) to accompany the child who needs to use the toilet and/or a volunteer. In circumstances, where an employee or volunteer is required to accompany a child to the toilet (i.e. wait outside), they should alert a colleague in the vicinity that they are taking a child to the toilet.

Do not assist a child with toileting unless the child has requested assistance.

If a child has wet or soiled themselves, call for assistance from another adult, so that they are present and able to provide assistance and/or contact the parent or carer.

## SUPPORTING THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### MANAGING MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Children and young people attending parish, agency or entity activities and programs may have existing medical conditions and/or additional support needs such as food intolerances, allergies, disabilities, diabetes, asthma, anaphylaxis, epilepsy.

To ensure the safe participation of children and young people, it is important to gather information regarding their existing medical conditions and/or additional support needs during the registration process.

As the primary consideration in relation to the participation of children and young people is safety, it is important that clergy, employees and volunteers consider the requirements of the child or young person and assess whether and how these additional needs might be accommodated within the parish, agency or entity activity.

In collaboration with parents or guardians, parishes, agencies and entities need to work together with families and the child or young person (depending on their age and ability) to develop a strategy to effectively support safe participation which is authorised by the parent or carer and a person in a leadership position within the parish, agency or entity. See **TEMPLATE: Consent to participate**.

While program and activities are designed to promote inclusion and independence, we recognise that often there are limited resources and capacity to effectively manage serious medical conditions and/or accommodate significant support needs (e.g. assistance with feeding, bathing, toileting). In these circumstances, a parent or carer may be encouraged to attend with the child or young person or provide a suitable carer to attend with the child or young person.

### PROVISION OF FIRST AID

Parents and guardians shall be informed via a registration process that first aid will be provided when a child is unwell or injured and that an ambulance may be called in a medical emergency. Parental emergency

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contact details will be gathered through the registration process to ensure that parents or guardians are notified as soon as practicable when a child is unwell or injured.

Archdiocesan parishes, agencies and entities must ensure that:

- First aid kits are available to respond to injuries and illnesses that may occur in the provision of activities and programs for children and young people. When determining how many first aid kits are required, consideration should be given to the number of children and young people in attendance, and the location and accessibility of the kits. Offsite activities (e.g. excursion to the local park) may require the provision of a portable first aid kit.
- People suitably qualified in first aid are involved in the care of children and young people.
- First aid is provided in a supervised manner with another adult or child present.
- Contact information for emergency services (e.g. 000) is clearly displayed in visible areas e.g. foyer, noticeboard, parish office.
- Parental emergency contact information is accessible to clergy, employees and volunteers to enable parents and guardians to be contacted as soon as practicable.
- Processes are in place to ensure that incidents are reviewed by the Safeguarding Committee and action is taken to address any risks to children and young people.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

First aid kits and training can be sourced from reputable organisations such as:

- St John's Ambulance [www.stjohnvic.com.au](http://www.stjohnvic.com.au)
- Australian Red Cross [www.redcross.org.au/get-involved/learn/first-aid](http://www.redcross.org.au/get-involved/learn/first-aid)

## ADMINISTERING MEDICATION

Medication including prescription medication can only be administered (or self-administered) with written permission from a parent or carer on a medical consent form including:

- name of the medication
- dosage
- administration instructions
- emergency contact details of parents and/or guardians
- name and contact details of health practitioner.

Medication must be provided in original pharmacy packaging, with the child's name and clear dosage instructions.

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## RESPONDING TO MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Mental health concerns may become apparent when working with children and young people e.g. self-harm, suicidal ideation, depression, anxiety.

Respond by listening in a supportive, non-judgemental and calm manner.

Be clear that other relevant and appropriate persons (e.g. parent, relative, program supervisor or parish priest) may need to be involved to provide support to the child or young person and that contact is made with these persons at the earliest possible time.

Provide information about appropriate services in the community that may assist, for example, general practitioner or school counsellor.

In a crisis situation, where the child or young person is at immediate risk, it is appropriate to contact emergency services on 000. Consent to contact emergency services in an emergency is not required.

## HELPFUL SERVICES

Kids Helpline

phone: 1800 551 800

email: [counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au](mailto:counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au)

online counselling: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling> (24 hours, 7 days)

YouthBeyondBlue Support Service

phone: 1300 22 4636 (24 hours, 7 days)

online chat: [www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support) (3pm–12am, 7 days)

Lifeline – for crisis support and suicide prevention

phone: 13 11 14 (24 hours, 7 days)

online chat: [www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat](http://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat) (7pm–12am, 7 days)

Suicide Call Back Service – provides immediate telephone, video and online counselling

phone: 1300 659 467 (24 hours, 7 days)

website: [www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/about-us](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/about-us)

## FOOD HYGIENE

Programs, events and activities involving eating or sharing food, ensure that appropriate food hygiene is maintained e.g. keep food refrigerated, washing hands before the handling of food.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

Helpful information in relation to food hygiene, the safe preparation and serving of food is available:

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Australian Government Department of Health – Food Hygiene

[www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/gug-director-toc~gug-foodsafety~gug-](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/gug-director-toc~gug-foodsafety~gug-)

Department of Health and Human Services, Victorian Government - DoFoodSafely – free non-accredited online learning resource provided by the Department of Health and Human Services about how to work safely with food.

[dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au/](http://dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au/)

## SUN PROTECTION

Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place in relation to sun protection. These may include:

- provision of sunscreen
- conducting activities indoors, shaded areas or during times of the day which minimise sun exposure and high temperatures
- wearing of a hat and/or eye protection whilst engaging in outdoor activities

## USEFUL RESOURCES

SunSmart

[www.sunsmart.com.au](http://www.sunsmart.com.au)

## PHYSICAL CONTACT INITIATED BY A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

Where a child or young person seeks to initiate physical contact that is concerning or inappropriate (e.g. excessive hugging, insisting on sitting on a person's lap, kissing, excessive touching), it is important to redirect the child or young person's behaviour in a supportive but clear manner. This can be achieved by offering an alternative gesture, re-positioning or creating some distance (e.g. giving a high five, asking the child to sit next to you, putting a hand on the child's shoulder).

In situations where particular behaviour can be anticipated, it may be important to be proactive in offering an alternative appropriate gesture. It is important to keep in mind that very young children or those with an intellectual disability may have difficulty understanding or regulating their behaviour, so as adults it may be important to redirect behaviour in a sensitive manner.

Clergy, employees and volunteers should be proactive in seeking assistance from an immediate supervisor or the Professional Standards Unit when behaviour is concerning, impacting other children and young people, or harmful for the child or young person.

It is important to document this behaviour and to discuss the most appropriate course of action with an immediate supervisor or the Professional Standards Unit. An appropriate response may include:

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- discussing the behaviour with the child or young person if appropriate depending on their age and stage of development
- communicating with parents and guardians
- monitoring and supervising the child or young person on an ongoing basis
- reporting to authorities (e.g. Child Protection, or Police, if it is suspected that the inappropriate behaviour is an indicator of possible child abuse (see section for definitions and indicators of abuse)

## PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Physical restraint means holding a child or young person to stop them from being able to move all or part of their body.

In an emergency situation, it may be permissible to use reasonable physical restraint when a child or young person's behaviour poses an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to themselves or others and in situations where there is no other option in relation to maintaining safety.

Physical restraint must never:

- impact on or stop someone from breathing
- involve the use of restraint materials e.g. ropes
- be used as punishment or discipline
- be used as a joke

Clergy, employees and volunteers must:

- continuously monitor the wellbeing of the child or young person when they are being restrained to ensure that they are safe
- stop using physical restraint when the harm or danger is no longer present and/or assistance has arrived e.g. ambulance or police
- inform parents and guardians in situations where physical restraint has been used immediately after the incident

## USEFUL RESOURCE

State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training 2017, *The principles for reduction and elimination of restraint and seclusion in Victorian government schools*.

[www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/participation/15Principals.pdf](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/participation/15Principals.pdf)

## SECLUSION

Seclusion refers to putting a child or young person in a room or area that they cannot get out of, or believe they cannot get out of (e.g. courtyard).

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Seclusion is permitted strictly as a last resort when a child or young person is a danger to others and where there is no other option for maintaining safety (e.g. a young person is threatening others with a weapon). It should only be used until assistance can be provided (e.g. ambulance, police).

Seclusion must never be used in circumstances where a child or young person is about to hurt themselves or is threatening to hurt themselves – supervision must be provided and emergency assistance requested immediately (e.g. ambulance, police).

It is prohibited to use seclusion as a form of punishment.

In situations where seclusion has been used, after the incident parents and guardians must be informed.

## USEFUL RESOURCE

State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training 2017, *The principles for reduction and elimination of restraint and seclusion in Victorian government schools*.

[www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/participation/15Principals.pdf](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/participation/15Principals.pdf)

## CHILD SAFETY OFFSITE

### TRANSPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Ordinarily, parents and guardians are responsible for arranging and providing transport for their children to and from regular programs, activities and events.

However, there may be situations when a parish, agency or entity is required to provide transport for children and young people within the scope of parish, agency or entity activities offsite (e.g. excursions, camps).

In transporting children and young people, our concern extends beyond preventing child abuse to ensuring that children and young people are also physically safe

When transporting children and young people within a parish, agency or entity context, it is important to ensure:

- Transportation is authorised by the relevant supervisor or manager of the program (e.g. the parish priest will authorise the travel plans for the youth group to attend Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral).
- Transportation occurs only if prior written consent has been obtained from parents or guardians who have been informed about the purpose of the travel, form of transport proposed, route, proposed stops, destination, supervision arrangements and whether others will be present.
- Transport is provided in a registered, insured and roadworthy vehicle.
- The driver is licensed, medically fit to drive, authorised to drive the relevant class/category of vehicle, has a Working with Children Check and a criminal history record check.

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- The designated driver has a zero blood alcohol level and is not under the influence of drugs that may foreseeably impact their ability to drive safely (e.g. medication that has a sedative effect).
- Safety restraint measures (e.g. seat belts, car seats) are used to keep children and young people safe in cars.
- There is no smoking in the vehicle.

A child or young person must never be transported on their own – there must always be others present in the vehicle (e.g. another adult, other children) to avoid a situation of one-to-one unsupervised contact.

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. an emergency situation) where it is necessary for a child or young person to travel alone with clergy, an employee or volunteer:

- The immediate supervisor will be informed before the travel occurs.
- Parents or guardians (or emergency contacts) will be contacted to advise them of the circumstances of the travel and/or seek their permission (e.g. taking a child to the hospital).
- Information will be provided to ensure that all parties are aware of the route, estimated travel time and anticipated stops during the journey.

## USEFUL RESOURCE

VicRoads Child Restraint Guidelines

[www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/safety-and-road-rules/vehicle-safety/child-restraints](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/safety-and-road-rules/vehicle-safety/child-restraints)

## EXCURSIONS

The individual or group organising an excursion will need to undertake a risk assessment and planning process to reduce the likelihood of harm with guidance from the Safeguarding Committee. Excursions are to occur with the authorisation of the Safeguarding Committee.

While there is an expectation that clergy, employees and volunteers will adhere to relevant practice throughout the duration of the excursion, there is a need to for the Safeguarding Committee to consider risks and challenges posed by planned activities (e.g. abseiling), the location (e.g. rural location, in the city) and the setting (e.g. isolated location, in a bush setting, in a crowded stadium).

Through this process a number of factors will be addressed, including but not limited to:

- purpose of the excursion
- planned activities and their associated risk (e.g. water-related activities, bushwalking)
- suitability of the environment or venue for an excursion (e.g. child safety arrangements, location, amenities, expertise in hosting activities for children and young people)
- supervision arrangements
- logistics (e.g. costs, transport arrangements, catering, equipment)
- provision of first aid (including managing medical conditions)

*The Archdiocese of Melbourne is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children, young people and vulnerable adults.*

# Safe Programs – Practice and Behavioural Guidelines

- supporting the participation of children and young people with additional needs
- emergency management plans
- risks specific to child safety and mitigation strategies
- risks specific to physical safety (e.g. sunscreen, hydration, managing medical conditions).

Risk assessment and planning documentation must be kept to demonstrate that a rigorous approach has been taken to reducing possible risks to children and young people.

Parents and guardians will be informed in writing of the excursion and their permission will be required before a child or young person is permitted to attend.

See **TEMPLATE: Excursions and Outings Consent Form**

## CAMPS AND TRIPS INVOLVING OVERNIGHT STAYS (E.G. IN VICTORIA, INTERSTATE OR OVERSEAS)

Camps or trips involving overnight stays (including billeting) are only to occur with the authorisation of the Safeguarding Committee after a thorough risk assessment process has been undertaken to ensure that child safety can be assured throughout the duration of the event.

Extensive planning is required when organising overnight stays to ensure the safety of children and young people. Both risk assessment and planning documentation must be kept to demonstrate that a rigorous approach has been undertaken in relation to child safety.

Once approved, parents or guardians, young people and children shall be informed in writing (e.g. camp information and permission form) in relation to relevant aspects of the event and permission will be required before a child or young person is permitted to attend.

Clergy, employees and volunteers must assume responsibility for children and young people during the entire stay. This may include:

- Facilitate children and young people's participation in a safety briefing where they are encouraged to express their views about their safety and advised how to seek assistance from clergy, employees and volunteers if they feel concerned, unsafe or distressed.
- Implement appropriate emergency and evacuation plans (e.g. bushfire, floods).
- Do not leave children or young people under the supervision of others (e.g. tour guides, camp leaders).
- Do not permit sleeping arrangements that may compromise the safety of children and young people (e.g. unsupervised sleeping arrangements, employees and volunteers sharing a room or bed with a child or young person).
- Separate sleeping areas for participants under 18 years of age and those over 18 years of age (including separate showering arrangements).
- Ensure there are separate sleeping and bathroom areas for males and females.
- Providing additional support and/or supervision for children and young people with additional needs.



# Safe Programs – Practice and Behavioural Guidelines

- Ensuring that any accompanying person (e.g. friends, relatives, spouses, parents) is not permitted to attend the trip without first being screened and briefed about expectations of behaviour consistent with those of clergy, employees and volunteers.
- Ensure that no others (including other parishioners, visitors or members of the general public) have unsupervised access to children and young people under any circumstances.
- Ensure that children and young people have access to a phone so that they are able to contact their parents if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed at any time during the trip.
- Advise parents that they are permitted to make contact with their children during the trip if they wish.
- If children and young people are being billeted, ensure that they are paired with another child or young person at all times. Host families must participate in screening and induction processes to ensure they are aware of their responsibility to maintain a safe environment for children and young people.
- Where the camp has been organised for families (i.e. parents attending with their children), parents are to be advised that they are responsible for supervising their own children and are consulted with regard to relevant child safety arrangements (e.g. how accommodation will be arranged, access to bathroom facilities, transportation).



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