

Selection, Recruitment and Screening

Consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, CAM parishes, agencies and entities recognise that the selection, recruitment and screening of suitable and appropriate persons to work and volunteer in child-related roles play an important role in relation to child safety.

Within an organisational context, some perpetrators purposefully seek volunteering or employment opportunities to gain access to children and young people, while others will take advantage of opportunities and situations to perpetrate abuse.

A thorough and rigorous selection, recruitment and screening process seeks to select persons who are committed and suitable to work with children and young people and reduce the likelihood of recruiting persons who may pose a risk. In addition, the steps in the process help to prepare the applicant for work and ministry in relation to children and young people by introducing them to CAM's organisational culture and expectations with regard to safeguarding children and young people.

The following selection, recruitment and screening steps outline relevant actions to promote the likelihood of selecting suitable persons to work with children and young people. CAM Human Resources can provide support, information and assistance in relation to selection, recruitment and screening processes.

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1. CREATING A ROLE/POSITION DESCRIPTION

Role/position descriptions outline the key duties and responsibilities of a role and provide an opportunity to communicate expectations about child safety. A role/position description establishes the boundaries of a role and forms the basis for managing the behaviour and performance of employees and volunteers.

Role descriptions are important to both paid and voluntary roles.

See **INFORMATION SHEET: Creating Role/Position Descriptions**

See **INFORMATION SHEET: Role Boundaries**

2. COMMUNICATING THE COMMITMENT TO THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

It is recommended that role/position descriptions include the following (or similar) statement, which directs prospective employees and volunteers to either the CAM website or the parish, agency or entity website to view the CAM Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and to the importance placed on child safety:

'We are committed to creating a child safe culture that safeguards children and young people including the safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and young people, children and young people with a disability, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A culture of safety within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne ensures that children and young people can actively participate and fully realise their potential in a faith community. We have a zero tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse and will always act to safeguard children and young people and report suspected abuse promptly to the appropriate authorities. For further information about the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, please visit our website ... [insert website address].'

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

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3. ADVERTISING EMPLOYEE AND VOLUNTARY ROLES

Advertising or promoting the availability of employee and volunteer positions (e.g. via newsletters, websites, online employment sites) assists in broadening the pool of people who may have an interest in working or volunteering in our parishes, agencies or entities and assists. As a minimum requirement, advertisements need to include the following statement:

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

This statement helps to communicate to applicants that the organisation is not a ‘soft target’ for the perpetrators of abuse and that action will be taken to safeguard children and young people.

Sample wording for is also available from Catholic Professional Standards Limited website for use in advertising and recruitment processes: https://www.cpsltd.org.au/media/1401/511-advertising-text-ed1_2019.pdf

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

An application process provides transparency and clarity for applicants wishing to apply for a position. When recruiting for an employee position, a letter of application and a résumé are important sources of information to support decision-making about the suitability of the applicant.

In relation to a voluntary position, an expression of interest process is also an important first step in gathering information about an applicant. It is advisable for child-related work volunteer roles, that the applicant provides a résumé or a summary of their work history or experience.

Successful applications or expressions of interest should be kept as part of the employee or volunteer’s personnel file, to demonstrate that reasonable steps have been taken to gather information about prospective employees and volunteers.

5. SCREENING

Screening processes are an important mechanism for gathering additional information about a prospective employee or volunteer to assist in making recruitment decisions.

For employees and volunteers within CAM, it is a requirement that the following screening measures be undertaken:

- an interview
- referee checks
- an identity check
- a qualification and professional registration check (if applicable)
- an internet search (e.g. Google, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn)
- a Working with Children Check
- a national criminal history record check (Police Record Check) for all employees or volunteers engaged in specific activities.

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5A. INTERVIEW

Interviews for employee or volunteers provide an opportunity for an employer and an applicant to exchange information relevant to determining the applicant's suitability to the role.

While formal interviews are usual practice when recruiting employees, informal interviews may be acceptable when recruiting for volunteer roles. Care should be taken to assess the following when working with children and young people as part of the interview process:

- the applicant's beliefs and values
- relevant and applicable experience and skills
- relevant qualifications (if applicable)
- awareness and understanding of the importance of child safety in a parish, agency or entity context.

See **INFORMATION SHEET: Interview Questions** which provides a list of sample interview questions designed to assess the suitability of employees and volunteers for working with children and young people.

It is recommended that interviews be conducted by more than one interviewer. This allows for an additional perspective in assessing the suitability of the applicant to work with children and young people, and assists in taking notes about the applicant's responses.

It is also helpful to consider the role that children and young people might play in a selection process. Seeking the input and/or the involvement of children and young people in recruitment and selection processes serves to empower children and young people and demonstrates that their opinions matter.

For example, children and young people may:

- help to prepare the job advertisement
- be involved in shaping the position/role description by providing their input in relation to the qualities and skills for a particular role
- help to develop interview questions
- participate in some aspect of the interview process
- convening an interview panel of young people
- invite the applicant to come along to a program session (with the applicant's permission) to observe and provide feedback.

Where children and young people are involved in the selection process, it is important to:

- think about how children and young people might be involved e.g. in what aspect of the selection process they will be involved in, which part of the interview process they will be involved in, where there is opportunity for genuine input to enhance the selection process
- consider their age and their level of maturity i.e. their capacity
- clarify the role that children and young people will take in the process, how their views will be taken into account in selection and what weighting these will be given
- preparation and training
- support, feedback and debriefing

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How the interviewee responds to children and young people in the interview is often a good measure of how well that person would work with children and young people.

NSW Commission for Children and Young People 2001, p. 11

Interview notes provide an important record of the applicant's responses to assist in the selection process.

Interview notes should be kept as a record to demonstrate that parishes, agencies and entities have taken reasonable steps to select suitable persons to work with children and young people.

Interview notes should form part of the employee or volunteer's personnel file.

5B. REFEREE CHECKS

A referee check provides an opportunity to obtain independent information about the applicant's previous performance and behaviour.

This information can assist in corroborating the information that the applicant has provided in their interview and/or application, and help to build a picture of how they are likely to perform within the advertised role. Specifically, in relation to child safety, a referee check enables the parish, agency or entity to assess the candidate's capacity to undertake the requirements of the role and their suitability to work with children and young people.

The following guidelines apply to referee checks:

- Request details of three referees from the applicant and make contact with at least two referees.
- The list of referees must include the current, or most recent, employer or organisation where the person has volunteered.
- The list of referees must include a direct supervisor.
- Priority is given to referees who are able to provide information about the applicant's work or engagement with children and young people (if the applicant has previously worked or volunteered in a child-related role).
- The list of referees must not include any person who has a personal relationship with the applicant (e.g. spouse, relative).

It is advisable to use a referee check proforma, with relevant selection criteria listed from the role/position description and specific child-safety focused questions, and to document the referee's responses about the applicant (see **INFORMATION SHEET: Referee Check**). It is important to add the completed referee check information to the personnel file of successful applicant.

See **FACTSHEET: Conducting a Referee Check**.

5C. IDENTITY CHECKS

Once an applicant has been selected but before they commence, it is important to verify their identity by requesting proof of identity consistent with the 100-point proof of identity scheme used by the Australian Passport Office (see www.passports.gov.au).

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One of the risks of identity fraud in relation to child safety is that an unsuitable applicant may assume the identity of another person for the purposes of evading detection through screening measures (e.g. Working with Children Check, Police Record Check).

It is important to document the identity check process and documentation supplied by the applicant, to ensure that parishes, agencies and entities have undertaken appropriate measures to verify the person's identity. See **INFORMATION SHEET: Proof of Identity Record**.

A proof of identity record form should be retained in the employee or volunteer's file, as this demonstrates that the parish, agency or entity has undertaken reasonable steps to verify the identity of the prospective employee or volunteer.

5D. QUALIFICATION AND PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION CHECKS

Qualification and professional registration checks are important when a particular qualification or professional accreditation is deemed essential to an employee or volunteer role.

For example, if a parish were interested in recruiting a Senior Pastoral Associate to work in ministry in a parish, the applicant would need to hold a current Certificate of Accreditation ratified by the Archbishop of Melbourne and have completed a graduate diploma or equivalent level based on the Lay Ecclesial Ministers Accreditation Standards.

In relation to child safety, an applicant may misrepresent their qualifications (e.g. report that they have completed qualifications when they have not, produce falsified certificates, qualifications and/or academic transcripts) in order to enter a child-related role, engender trust or gain access to children and young people.

There are a number of ways in which qualifications can be verified:

- Sight the original, or certified copies of, academic transcripts.
- Use a free online service offered by many universities and educational institutions to enable parishes, agencies or entities to undertake a qualifications check.
- Use one of the range of private providers who offer qualification checking services for a fee.

Many professional bodies also issue accreditation documentation to those eligible to work within particular professions (e.g. the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner). These bodies maintain registers of eligible persons, which can be checked online to verify an applicant's professional standing.

Checks of qualifications or professional standing should be documented and retained in an employee or volunteer's file to demonstrate that the parish, agency or entity has undertaken due diligence in relation to specific positions that require specific qualifications or professional registration.

5E. INTERNET SEARCH

An internet search assists a parish, agency or entity to search for obvious red flags in relation to the applicant – bearing in mind:

- It is not always possible to find out everything about an applicant online.
- Not everything on the internet is true.

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- Any relevant information gathered about the applicant should in fairness be shown to the applicant for verification, comment or explanation.

The Child Safety Toolkit (April 2018) prepared by Moores Legal Pty Ltd and published by Our Community recommends:

that Google searches be undertaken. While it's not advisable to believe everything you read on the internet, web searches are very quick and can in some cases help you to uncover red flags about a candidate's past history (p. 29).

Any relevant information about an applicant gathered from the internet, including the applicant's comments or explanations, needs to be filed in the applicant or volunteer's file.

5F. WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

The Working with Children Check (WWCC) assists in protecting children and young people by ensuring that people who work with or care for them undergo a screening process. The WWCC provides an assessment of an applicant's criminal records and any other professional conduct findings to determine whether the applicant poses an unjustifiable risk in relation to child-related work.

The WWCC excludes persons from working with children and young people on the basis of their involvement in:

- serious sexual offences
- serious violent offences
- serious drug offences.

Throughout the duration of the WWCC, a person's criminal record will be monitored in relation to these relevant offences and professional conduct findings in Victoria.

The WWCC is valid for 5 years.

The onus for complying with the *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic) rests on both the individual and the employer (e.g. priest within a parish context, manager of a program in an Archdiocesan entity). Offences against the Act carry penalties ranging from fines to imprisonment.

Across the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, it is a requirement that all clergy, employees and volunteers have a valid WWCC.

Clergy, employees and volunteers are not permitted to work or volunteer within the Archdiocese without a valid WWCC.

Clergy, employees and volunteers who do not have a valid WWCC must lodge an application for a WWCC or present their current WWCC prior to starting child-related work with an Archdiocesan parish, agency or entity.

Clergy, employees and volunteers are required to register their involvement with the parish, agency or entity within 21 days of their commencement with a parish, agency or entity. This should be done through the My Check function of the Working with Children Check website:

<https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/wwccu/login.doj?next=mycheck>

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Archdiocesan parishes, agencies and entities must maintain a register of all WWCCs to ensure that they are valid and linked to the parish, agency or entity.

INFORMATION SHEET: Working with Children Check Requirements provides additional information about WWCC requirements for clergy, employees and volunteers.

5G. NATIONAL CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD CHECK (POLICE RECORD CHECK)

Within CAM, a national Police Record Check is required for clergy and employees upon commencement and every 3 years.

While all volunteers in Archdiocesan parishes, agencies and entities are required to undertake a WWCC, not all volunteers are required to undertake a Police Record Check.

The requirement for a Police Record Check is determined by those requirements of the role that extend beyond the scope of the WWCC (i.e. serious sexual, violent or drug charges or convictions) to other offences that may impact the safety of children, young people and vulnerable persons (e.g. theft, fraud, driving offences).

For example, from a child safety perspective, a volunteer role which involves the driving of a bus for youth group outings or camps would require a Police Record Check, which may shed light on relevant offences – such as speeding, drink driving or driving while disqualified – that impact on the safety of young people.

It is advisable to consider the inherent requirements of each volunteer role and assess the potential risks to children, young people and vulnerable persons to determine whether a Police Record Check is required for the specific role and/or activities that will be performed by volunteer.

Some examples of activities within volunteer roles that may require a Police Record Check include:

- driving
- home visiting
- visiting special care facilities (e.g. refuges, hospitals, nursing homes)
- visits to community support agencies (e.g. disability support centres)
- overnight stays (e.g. camps, interstate or overseas trips)
- records and/or financial management with access to personal information about families, children and young people (e.g. name, address, date of birth, family circumstances).

USEFUL RESOURCES

A National Police Record Check can be obtained through:

- Victoria Police: www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=274
- Australia Post: <https://auspost.com.au/police-checks>
- fit2work online system for Police Record Checks: www.fit2work.com.au

A Police Record Check should be obtained before a member of the clergy, employee or volunteer commences a new role. See **INFORMATION SHEET: Criminal History Record Check (Police Record Check)**.

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Where there is likely to be a delay during the processing of a check, applicants are required to complete a statutory declaration – see **Criminal History Statutory Declaration**.

Archdiocesan parish, agency and entities must maintain a register of national criminal record checks, recording the reference number, the date on which the check is undertaken and the details of the organisation that has processed the check e.g. Victoria Police, Australia Post, Fit2Work, and ensure that checks are undertaken for all relevant roles every 3 years.

All criminal history record information e.g. disclosable outcomes, will be treated in the strictest confidence and stored securely e.g. locked filing cabinet, password protected electronic files.

Disclosable outcomes that appear e.g. court charges, convictions, findings of guilt with no conviction should be referred to the CAM Professional Standards Unit, HR Department and/or the Vicar General's Office to determine the suitability of the person for ministry or employment in the Archdiocese (see Review Process for Criminal History Information in **INFORMATION SHEET: Criminal History Record Check (Police Record Check)**).

Obligation to Disclose Criminal Charges and/or Convictions

Clergy, employees and volunteer have an obligation to immediately inform their “manager” if charged or convicted with a criminal offence that may be considered relevant to safely working with children and young people and their ministry, work or volunteering role, in the intervening period prior to the next Police Record Check.

6. PROBATIONARY PERIOD

A probationary period for employees and volunteers enables the parish, agency or entity to assess if the employee or volunteer is suitable to undertake their role and work with children and young people.

The probationary period for employees and volunteers across the Archdiocese is usually 6 months, in relation to child safety, this period provides an opportunity to identify employee or volunteer behaviour and attitudes that may compromise the safety of children and young people.

Activities to be undertaken during the probationary period include:

- induction including child safety responsibilities
- role/position orientation to ensure clarity in relation to duties and responsibilities
- child safety training
- supervision and monitoring of performance.

The probationary period allows the parish, agency or entity to work together with the employee or volunteer to shape their engagement with the organisation and their involvement with children and young people to promote positive outcomes and safe interactions.

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Privacy considerations

Consistent with the expectations set out in the CAM Privacy Compliance Advice, parishes, agencies and entities must comply with Australian Privacy Principles.

Parishes, agencies and entities must take active steps to ensure the security of personal information and protect this information from unauthorised access, disclosure, misuse, loss, interference or modification. It is a requirement that any information gathered through the selection and recruitment process is securely stored and treated with the utmost privacy.



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

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