

St Francis Xavier and Our Lady Help of Christians Parishes

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Risk Management Strategy

Date of Policy: 31 October 2019

Date of last policy review: 13 September 2017

Date of next major review: 1 October 2020

1. Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to eliminate and minimise risk to child safety to ensure the safety and well-being of all children at St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Eltham Parishes.

2. Scope

Children, full-time, part-time and casual employees of the parishes, Parish Leadership Group members, as well as contractors, volunteers, people undertaking work experience or vocational placements and any person regularly on church grounds, are responsible for acting in compliance with this Risk Management Strategy and related policies and procedures.

3. Commitment of the Parish

St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Eltham Parishes is committed to the safety and holistic wellbeing of all children in our parish communities. In accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Eltham Parishes are dedicated to eliminating and minimising risks to children.

This Risk Management Strategy is evidence of the Parishes commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm in fulfilment of the requirements of relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria. The Parishes will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people through maintaining a positive culture and appropriate services to meet the needs of our children. The Parishes are committed to acting in accordance with relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children through implementing the measures in this Strategy Statement.

4. Implementation

In practice, St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Eltham Parishes are committed to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of children means the implementation of the measures outlined below.

The parish process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse, as required by law, is as detailed in the Parish Child Safeguarding Reporting Policy and the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework



5. Code of Conduct

Our parishes have clearly established values and expectations to provide a safe and supportive environment.

St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Parishes employees, parishioners, contractors, volunteers, Parish Leadership Group and Clergy are expected to always behave in ways that promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. They must actively seek to prevent harm to children and young people, and to support those who have been harmed.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Parish employees, parishioners, contractors, volunteers and clergy should avoid situations where they are alone in an enclosed space with a child who is not socially related to them.
- When physical contact with a child is a necessary as part of the parish teaching/learning or community experience; employees, parishioners, contractors, volunteers and clergy must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable;
- Parish employees, parishioners, contractors, volunteers and clergy must always advise the child of what they intend doing and seek their consent;
- Parish employees, parishioners, contractors, volunteers and clergy must not develop an inappropriate relationship with any child;
- Parish clergy, employees, parishioners, contractors, volunteers or clergy must not have a romantic or sexual relationship with a child.
- Parish clergy, employees, parishioners, volunteers or contractors must not engage in any predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child (Grooming).

6. Screening and Recruitment of Parish Employees and Volunteers

St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Eltham parishes are committed to recruiting, selecting, training and managing employees and volunteers in such a way that limits risks to children and fulfils the requirements of Victorian Child Safe Standards, and relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, and ““Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework.

All applicants are provided with copies of the Safeguarding Code of Conduct and the Safeguarding Policy, as well as being directed to the CAM Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework.

The parishes will ensure that its recruitment and selection procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to children from employees by:

- Advertising vacant Employee and Voluntary roles,
- An application process that provides transparency and clarity for applicants,



- A Position description to be provided to all candidates. The position description, which will contain a clear statement about the parish commitment to child safety and supportive work practices, and the requirement to disclose any information relevant to the candidates' eligibility to engage in activities that include young people;
- Undertake a Police check
- Undertake a Referee Check
- Undertake Identification verification
- Qualification and Professional Registration Checks,
- Internet Search on candidates.
- A selection process that includes assessing the application via an interview process and referee and other checks (as identified above) based on the accurate position description;

Ensure that our training and management procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to children from employees via:

- Supportive processes for parish employees, clergy and Parish Leadership Group when they are experiencing challenges, such as mentoring, mediation, conflict resolution, coaching, additional training, and external support and counselling services;
- An induction program which thoroughly addresses the parish policies and procedures, particularly its expectations regarding Child Safeguarding Risk Management;
- All clergy, employees and volunteers are required to sign a statement confirming they have read and agree to abide by the parish Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct and related policies and procedures;
- To assist parish employees, clergy and Parish Pastoral Council to understand their role in providing a safe and supportive environment for children;

7. Child Safety Induction of Parish Employees and Volunteers

Induction is the first step in formally introducing the 'new' person to the culture, policy and processes in relation to child safety within our parishes. The induction processes are in place for all clergy, employees and volunteers to:

- familiarise the person with the requirements of their role
- communicate the commitment to the safety of all children and young people and engender a shared responsibility to safeguard children and young people
- communicate expectations about appropriate behaviour regarding contact with children and young people through the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct
- raise awareness of the CAM Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy Framework and the parish processes and procedures and that are in place to safeguard children and young people from harm
- undertake training with regard to child safety and safeguarding risk management
- equip them to respond and take action to report concerns, reports and allegations of child abuse and neglect.



An induction checklist has been established, which incorporates child safety and other relevant elements of engagement and employment with our parishes. This is to ensure the ‘new’ person is equipped to undertake their role.

An induction checklist which is endorsed by the immediate supervisor and the ‘new’ person is retained in an employee or volunteer’s file to demonstrate that they have participated in an induction process addressing child safety.

New Parish employees and volunteers must complete an Induction program, before commencing their role.

8. Child Safety – Education and Training

St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Eltham Parishes provide employees, volunteers and clergy with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters. This includes induction, ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

In undertaking the training of existing employees and new employees, on an ongoing basis, to enhance skills and knowledge and to reduce exposure to risks, as follows:

- The Parish Child Safeguarding policies and procedures;
- Identifying, assessing and minimising risks to children;
- Handling a disclosure or suspicion of harm to a child;
- Keeping a record of the training provided to employees;

9. Supervision and Performance Management

While supervision and performance management can have a broad focus e.g. meeting key performance indicators, meeting organisational objectives or targets and provides a range of benefits for organisations, these activities within our parishes play a pivotal role in promoting the safety of children and young people.

Within a child safety context, supervision and performance management enables our parishes to:

- Monitor the engagement and participation of children and young people to assess the delivery of programs, activities and events to ensure they meet the needs of children and young people.
- Observe the behaviour of those working with children and young people to ensure that they are fostering a respectful, safe and supportive environment.
- Identify any possible breaches of the parish Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and/or any warning signs that a person is not safe or suitable to work with children.
- Identify the needs of those working with children and young people (e.g. support, learning needs, skill development) to actively support them to successfully perform their roles.



- Demonstrate a culture of accountability in relation to child safety (i.e. ‘we are vigilant and will act to safeguard children and young people’).
- Create transparency and openness, modelling behaviour that suggests ‘it is OK to talk about things, ask questions and raise concerns’ and that issues will be addressed.

Performance management in relation to child safety is the continuous process of supervising and guiding efforts of employees and volunteers to ensure that the safety of children and young people objectives of the parishes are met.

It is a requirement of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy that those whose roles involve working with children and young people are provided with supervision and performance management.

10. Procedures for Handling Disclosures and Suspicions of Harm

St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Eltham Parishes recognises that children and young people are vulnerable members of the community and that extra measures must be taken to protect and support them.

Procedure, as follows for handling disclosure and suspicion of harm

In accordance with the, Victorian Child Safe Standards and relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, if a parishioner, parish employee, volunteer or clergy is aware or reasonably suspects harm has been caused to a child under 18 years and the harm has not been reported under the Child Protection Policy, the individual must report the harm to the Parish Safeguarding Officer at childsafety@sfxmonty.org or clergy.

The types of harm reported may include emotional or psychological abuse or neglect or sexual exploitation.

Parish employees, clergy or a member of the Parish Child Safeguarding Committee who will refer to the parish Child Protection Reporting Policy.

11. Implementing and Reviewing the Child Risk Management Strategy

This Strategy in its entirety and its related policies and procedures are evidence of fulfilment of the requirements of Victorian Child Safe Standards and relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria. The parish is committed to reviewing the parish Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct annually.

To ensure that children and young people are kept safe from harm, our employees and appropriate volunteers are required to possess a current Working with Children Check. The



parish secretary manages and maintains the Working with Children Registrations for the parish.

12. Compliance and Monitoring

St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Parishes is committed to the annual review of this strategy.

