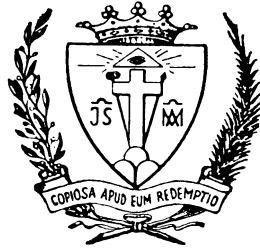


Professional Standards
Redemptorist Province of Oceania
Policy Summary



Safeguarding Children
and
Vulnerable Adults

As a Catholic Religious Congregation, the Redemptorists of the Province of Oceania recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children and vulnerable adults and are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being. We will work in partnership with parents and guardians, church and civil agencies, to provide safe and supportive environments for people of all ages.

All Redemptorist personnel, including staff and volunteers, have a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults through the promotion of their welfare, health and development by ensuring safe and caring environments that support their best interests and prevent abuse.

The safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is at the heart of the Church's mission. There is no place in the Church, or indeed society, for abuse, a grievous crime which can affect people for their entire lives.

Victims come first, although it must be acknowledged that this has not always been the case. The Church and the Redemptorist Congregation deeply regret all instances of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. We accept that grave mistakes were made in the past, and will do all that is possible to provide support and care for those who have been victims of abuse.

In developing and implementing our policy, the Redemptorists are guided by the following foundational principles:

1. The Gospel: Jesus

a. Children

"People brought little children to him, for him to lay his hands on them and say a prayer. The disciples turned them away, but Jesus said, *Let the little children alone, and do not stop them coming to me; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs*" (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:14) In the light of Jesus' manifest love for children, the Church must do everything in its power to ensure that they are welcomed, cherished and protected in a manner consistent with their dignity, equality and vulnerability.

b. Vulnerable Adults

The gospels have numerous examples of how Jesus reached out to heal those who were marginalised because of illness or disease. Some representative examples are: the healing of the blind man Bartimaeus (Mark 10: 46-52), the healing of a leper (Matthew 8:1-4), healing of a crippled woman (Luke 13: 10-17) and the reconciliation of the Samaritan woman (John 4: 1-42).

2. Catholic Tradition and teaching

The fundamental principle in the development of Catholic moral theology is the dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). This means that God is present in every person, regardless of race, nation, sex, origin, orientation, culture or economic standing. This dignity is not the privilege of a few, but the birth-right of all especially those in situations of vulnerability among whom are the marginalised, children and vulnerable adults.

3. Children's rights, international and national law

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) outlines the forty-two fundamental rights to be implemented in national law by the signatories to the convention (this includes the Holy See, Australia, New Zealand and Samoa). Full

realisation of these rights will ensure that children will be “brought up in a spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity,”¹ whilst respecting the cultural identity of each child.

A number of child protection rights contained in the UNCRC are already present in key pieces of national law, canon law, and child and family policy and guidance, including:

Australia:

The following are representative of government policies

Australian Child Protection Legislation

Department of Foreign Affairs Child Protection Policy

National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020

Child Safeguarding Framework

Documents and Agencies of the Catholic Church

National Committee for Professional Standards, 'Towards Healing': Principles and procedures in responding to complaints of abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia 2016 (digital edition)

National Committee for Professional Standards, 'Integrity in Ministry': A document of principles and standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia: June 2004 reprinted 2010.

National Committee for Professional Standards, 'Integrity in the Service of the Church': A resource document of principles and standards for lay workers in the Catholic Church in Australia: September 2011, reprint 2013.

Truth Justice and Healing Council

National Committee for Professional Standards

New Zealand

Redemptorist personnel in New Zealand and Samoa, including staff and volunteers, will follow the Australian policy.

To contact Professional Standards, New Zealand please go to [“Integrity in Ministry”](#)

3. Learning from the past

Addressing the Irish Bishops on 28 October 2006, Pope Benedict XVI stressed the need to: (i) establish the truth of what happened in the past; (ii) to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent it from occurring again; (iii) to ensure that the principles of justice are fully respected; and (iv) above all, to bring healing to the victims and to all those affected by these egregious crimes.²

In December 2013, Pope Francis declared there should be 'zero tolerance' of abuse, and established a Vatican Commission for the protection of minors. In 2015, Pope Francis said that he wants to encourage and promote the Church’s commitment to protection and care “at

¹ Preamble to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (United Nations).

² Pope Benedict XVI, Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Bishops of Ireland on their *Ad Limina* visit, 28 October 2006 (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana).

every level - episcopal conferences, dioceses, institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life - to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the protection of minors and vulnerable adults and to respond to their needs with fairness and mercy.”

The current Australian Royal Commission (2014-2017) into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is investigating how institutions like schools, churches, sports clubs and government organisations have responded to allegations and instances of child sexual abuse. The Redemptorists, their staff and volunteers, are part of the Catholic Church so therefore come under the scrutiny of the Royal Commission.

It is the job of the Royal Commission to uncover where systems have failed to protect children so it can make recommendations on how to improve laws, policies and practices.

The Royal Commission is about creating a safer future for children. It can look at any private, public or non-government organisation that is, or was in the past, involved with children. This includes where an organisation caring for a child is responsible for the abuse or for not responding appropriately, regardless of where or when the abuse took place. The final Report of the Royal Commission is due at the end of 2017.

As a religious Congregation Redemptorists commit to this journey of justice, truth, healing and abuse prevention. Pope Benedict XVI said the pastoral burden for Australia's bishops had been made heavier by the past sins and mistakes of others, most regrettably including some clergy and religious.

"The task now falls to you to continue to repair the errors of the past with honesty and openness, in order to build, with humility and resolve, a better future for all concerned."³

4. COMMITMENTS

Together with the foundational principles outlined above, as part of our policy on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, the Redemptorists, their staff and volunteers, commit to:

4.1 Mandatory reporting

Redemptorists, their staff and volunteers, have a duty to notify the statutory authorities of their concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child or vulnerable adult is being or has been abused, either physically, emotionally, sexually, or through neglect.

Concerns, knowledge or allegations may relate to possible abuse by a member of the Redemptorists, their staff and volunteers, can also relate to incidents in the child's family, or elsewhere in the community.

4.2 Caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them

Measures to create and maintain environments that are safe for children, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the ministry of Redemptorists for children, and the adults who work with them, will continue to be strengthened and reviewed. This will be done through training, support, communications and quality assurance.

³ https://www.sydneycatholic.org/news/latest_news/2011/20111021_1566. (21 October, 2011)

4.3 Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations

Each person who brings any concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Redemptorists will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child protection procedures and Church requirements.

All concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation)⁴ will be reported via the Designated Liaison Person to the appropriate authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person (religious, cleric or lay) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child or a vulnerable adult. If the allegation relates to a Redemptorist, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation will be reported to the appropriate national bodies set up by the Church.

All Redemptorists, their staff and volunteers, will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to its own members, the Redemptorist Congregation will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and the respondent.

4.4 Caring pastorally for complainants and other affected persons

Each person who has suffered child abuse by a Redemptorist, their staff and volunteers, will receive a compassionate and just response, and will be offered pastoral care, counselling and support.

A pastoral response to the family, parish, Congregation and to the wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

4.5 Caring pastorally for respondents and other affected persons

The Redemptorists, in responding to concerns, knowledge or allegations of child sexual abuse, will respect the rights under civil law and canon law of an accused cleric, religious, staff member or volunteer.

4.6 Actions to be taken by the Redemptorist Provincial and Council when responding to a complaint

- 4.6.1 Any complaint will be referred to the Independent Commission for Professional Standards for the Redemptorists of Oceania.
- 4.6.2 The Commission will respond to the allegations(s) according to the procedures of civil law and Professional Standards of the Catholic Church.
- 4.6.3 If an allegation refers to criminal behaviour it will be referred directly to the police, and the alleged perpetrator will be stood down from all ministry.
- 4.6.4 If an allegation refers to 'inappropriate professional behaviour' the Commission will recommend action to the Provincial Council.
- 4.6.5 Victims belong to families and/or religious communities. The Redemptorists are mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the alleged victim's changed situation.
- 4.6.6 Abusers belong to families and/or religious communities. The Redemptorists are mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the alleged abuser's changed situation.

⁴ The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason. [Code of Canon Law, c.983.1, in Catholic Church (1983)].

4.6.7 All requisite steps will be taken to restore the good name and reputation of anyone who has been wrongly accused of abusing a child or vulnerable adult.

5. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all Redemptorists in the Province of Oceania and includes all professed members. It includes those in initial formation, and those lay associates who both work and minister with Redemptorists as well as those in the employ of the Redemptorist Congregation. It also includes those who voluntarily share in our mission and ministry. Full understanding of and adherence to this policy should lead to a deepening in the understanding of, and respect for, the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults to participate as people of faith in the life of the Church.

The care and protection of children and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church, and is a requirement that applies regardless of the nature of the Church activities in which children and vulnerable adults are involved. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in creating a healthy environment in which they are safe and can develop to their full potential.

6. PUTTING THE POLICY INTO ACTION: SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

The Redemptorists, their staff and volunteers, will implement this policy **by ensuring that all our ministry and activities comply with applicable indicators under each of the following safeguarding standards:**

1. Creating and maintaining safe environments
2. Procedures for responding to child protection concerns, knowledge or allegations as well as those concerning vulnerable adults
3. Care and support for the person making the complaint
4. Care and management of the person against whom the complaint has been made
5. Training and support for keeping children safe
6. Communicating the church's safeguarding message
7. The Redemptorists, their staff and volunteers, will comply with the Professional Standards of the Catholic Church

7. INDEPENDENT COMMISSION FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE REDEMPTORISTS OF OCEANIA.

The Independent Commission for Professional Standards for the Redemptorists of Oceania is not in the employ of the Redemptorist Congregation. It is a group of professionals who will assess any complaint that is made against a Redemptorist, a staff member or a volunteer. They will follow the procedures outlined in 4.6, and act per both the civil law and the Professional Standards of the Catholic Church.

Independent Contact Officer: **Mr Robert Algie** (*Carroll and O'Dea Lawyers*)
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The Redemptorist Communities of the Province of Oceania

Date: 20 February, 2017

This document will be reviewed early in 2018

“Let us find the courage needed to take all necessary measures and to protect in every way the lives of our children, so that such crimes may never be repeated. In this area, let us adhere, clearly and faithfully, to ‘zero tolerance’.” Pope Francis