

# Safeguarding Policy

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. Protect the safety of people that interact with or are affected by CatholicCare Victoria (CCV).
2. Support a positive and effective internal culture which promotes the safety and care of all including:
  - a) Children and young people
  - b) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
  - c) People from a culturally diverse background
  - d) People with a disability
  - e) People with a mental health problem or illness
  - f) LGBTIQ+ communities
  - g) Older People
  - h) Recent arrivals to Australia and Asylum Seekers
  - i) Others who experience vulnerability.
3. Describe the key elements of Safeguarding at CCV.
4. Define the key terms we use when talking about protecting people or safeguarding.
5. To define how we assess and determine the criteria for Safeguarding at CCV.
6. Assist CCV to meet its legislative and regulatory compliance obligations.

This policy applies to all staff, students, volunteers, Board and associated committee members, carers, labour hire and contractors at CCV and applies across all sites and activities.

## 2. Policy

CCV requires all staff, students, volunteers, Board and associated committee members, carers, labour hire and contractors to:

1. Ensure the safety, wellbeing, respect, and dignity of all who use our services, work in our service, or come into contact with our service.
2. Ensure we deliver high quality, safe services for everybody, every time - where respectful, positive relationships are central to everything we do - this is the CCV way.
3. Understand staff, students, volunteers, Board and associated committee members, carers, labour hire and contractors share responsibility for protecting everyone from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Beyond this, particular people have specific responsibilities, and they must carry out their duties without exception and comply with CCV's Code of Conduct, policy statements, procedures, and practice guidance in relation to the safety of all people.
4. Be actively alert to safety risks (including abuse, neglect, or exploitation), that some individuals and groups experience and act to protect, respond and report the risks.
5. Commit to promoting and protecting the welfare, cultural safety and human rights of people that interact with, or are affected by, our work.
6. Welcome all people, including First Nations people, those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, faiths and spiritualities, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ communities, recent arrivals to Australia and Asylum Seekers, people of all ages, those with lived experience or caring responsibilities and those impacted by social and financial disadvantage.

7. Understand our values which emphasise the importance of honouring the unique human dignity of each person, especially those who are marginalised. We honour the inherent human rights of all.
8. Recognise that all people, regardless of their age, gender, race, religious beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, family, or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation and how to work in solidarity with people to empower them about their rights.
9. Actively support people's rights understand the internal systems and processes to ensure children, young people and vulnerable others are seen, heard, believed, and responded to.
10. Actively listen and respond to the views and concerns of all children and adults interacting with our services.
11. Ensure that all people are supported to maintain their identity, make informed choices about the service and care they receive, participate in decisions that affect them and are taken seriously.
12. Know that CCV has zero tolerance for all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Take all concerns and any disclosures of abuse seriously, whatever their origin. Address any report of abuse or concern.
13. Know that CCV takes a survivor-centric approach in all we do and understand what that means in our work.

## **2.1 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

CCV recognises the specific vulnerability of children and young people and requires staff, students, volunteers, Board and associated committee members, carers labour hire and contractors to:

1. Uphold the right of all children to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, including protection from physical and psychological harm, sexual abuse, and witnessing family violence.
2. Seek to create conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children.
3. Ensure that children and young people who rely on CCV are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Ensure that families and communities CCV work with are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Participate in the establishment of a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

## **2.2 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE**

CCV recognises the generational traumatic impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and requires staff, students, volunteers, Board and associated committee members, carers labour hire and contractors to:

1. Participate in to continually improving our cultural safety by talking with and listening to Aboriginal people, acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the areas where we work, recognising the impacts of the past and respecting and embracing Aboriginal culture in every aspect.
2. Know that that Aboriginal people hold distinct rights and must not be denied the right to enjoy their identity and culture, to maintain their kinship ties and to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material, and economic relationship with the land and waters with which they have connection under traditional laws and customs.

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### 2.3 CCV will use the following to underpin Safeguarding effectiveness:

3. Building processes, activity, and systems that enable empowerment, dignity and respect.
4. Supporting our team to enhance their knowledge, skills and awareness in providing safe and inclusive practices.
5. Having in place policies and practices that uphold equity and support our work to be delivered in accordance with relevant state and commonwealth legislation.
6. Having in place non-discriminatory practices and equitable processes and systems that address abuse, prejudice, racism, bias, and discrimination.
7. Embedding safety and wellbeing into our organisational leadership, governance, and culture.
8. Screening and probity checking people who are working with children, young people and vulnerable people.
9. Identifying areas of risk and developing effective measures to mitigate or eliminate them.
10. Effective, transparent and accessible complaint and incident management systems.
11. Ensuring our physical and online environments are safe.
12. Collecting, storing, retrieving and transferring information in compliance with cybersecurity and privacy and confidentiality guidelines and legislation.
13. Continually review risks, best practice, and identify areas for improving our response to safeguarding.

## 3. Links to strategic plan

CCV's strategic goal is to build thriving communities where people live with dignity, choice, and empowerment and where individuals are connected and wellbeing is nurtured, a key component of this goal is our commitment to safeguarding through safe, inclusive, and accessible services that:

- Provide safe, inclusive, and culturally relevant services.
- Recognise the inherent dignity of every individual.
- Ensure the safety of every child and young person that we work with.
- Support all types of families to experience strong, safe, reciprocal, and respectful relationships.

## 4. Measuring Effectiveness

CCV measures the effectiveness of our Safeguarding practice through the accreditation or alignment with the following Standards, declarations, Legislation and Regulations:

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Human Service Standards
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act
- Child, Youth and Families Act
- Privacy Act
- ISO 9001 and ISO 27001
- National Standards for Mental Health Services
- Rainbow Health Australia, Rainbow Tick Standards
- National Aged Care Standards

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## 5. Definitions

<b>Safeguarding</b>	Safeguarding is protecting the welfare and human rights of people that are, in some way, connected with CCV particularly people that may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. The definition of safeguarding use to be narrower and refer to protecting children or vulnerable adults. However, Australian legislation broadened the definition to include everybody.
<b>Vulnerable people</b>	<p>While all people must be protected from harm, there are additional legislative and ethical considerations for protecting vulnerable people. Vulnerable people can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children and seniors</li> <li>• people with a mental health problem or illness</li> <li>• people who identify as LGBTIQ+</li> <li>• people with impaired intellectual or physical functioning</li> <li>• people from a low socio-economic background</li> <li>• people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders</li> <li>• people who are not native speakers of the local language</li> <li>• people with low levels of literacy or education</li> <li>• people subject to modern slavery, which involves human exploitation and control, such as forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking, and child labour.</li> </ul> <p>Vulnerable people are not limited to the users of its services. They can include our staff, volunteers, and people in third parties, such as partners.</p>
<b>Abuse, neglect or exploitation</b>	<p>Means all forms of physical and mental abuse, exploitation, coercion of ill-treatment. This might include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual harassment, bullying or abuse</li> <li>• Sexual criminal offences including child sexual abuse, grooming, rape and sexual assault</li> <li>• Threats of, or actual violence, verbal, emotional or social abuse</li> <li>• Cultural or identity abuse, such as racial, sexual or gender-based discrimination or hate crime</li> <li>• Coercion and exploitation</li> <li>• Abuse of power.</li> </ul>
<b>Survivor-centric approach</b>	Means considering and lawfully prioritising the needs, right and wishes of survivors.

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## 6. Related documents

### **CCV DOCUMENTS**

#### **Policies**

CCV Client Centred Service Policy  
CCV Privacy Policy

#### **Procedures**

CCV Client and Community Feedback Procedure  
CCV Client at Risk Procedure  
CCV Client Rights & Responsibilities  
CCV Child Safe Procedure  
CCV Client Safety Procedure  
CCV Duty of Care Procedure  
CCV Probity Procedure  
CCV Responding to Assault Incident or Allegation Procedure  
CCV Responding to a Child Abuse Incident, Disclosure or Concern Procedure

#### **Governance**

CCV Child Safety Governance Structure  
CCV Code of Conduct

### **GENERAL RESOURCES**

#### **Legislation**

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)  
Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)  
Child Safe Standards 2022 (Vic)  
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)  
Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)  
Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)  
Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)

#### **Standards**

Australian Charities and Not-for-profits  
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing  
Human Service Standards  
ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 27001:2013 (Certification for Record Keeping, Privacy and Data Retention)  
National Aged Care Standards  
National Catholic Safeguarding Standards  
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations  
National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010  
Rainbow Health Australia, Rainbow Tick Standards 2020  
Victorian Child Safe Standards 2022

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