

APPENDIX E: RECRUITMENT, INDUCTION, SCREENING AND TRAINING

“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be wiser; teach a righteous man and he will increase in learning.” Proverbs 9:9

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Robust recruitment practices, induction, screening and training of Personnel engaged by the Diocese of Armidale are critical in ensuring that all who work with children or adults at risk are suitable, appropriate for the role and well-equipped to respond to safeguarding concerns.

2. RECRUITMENT

2.1. The Diocese and its Parishes and Agencies must apply thorough recruitment processes in the process of engaging all employees, volunteers and contractors. This includes:

- a) explicitly stating our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk in advertisements and relevant role descriptions;
- b) assessing roles for risk and the level of contact with children and adults at risk;
- c) including child/adult at risk related questions in interviews for Personnel who will have contact with children/adults at risk;
- d) conducting referee checks where appropriate;
- e) providing this Policy to new Personnel;
- f) obtaining signed agreement to the Safeguarding Code of Conduct;
- g) obtaining and verifying necessary checks (Working with Children’s Check (WWCC)/National Criminal History Check (NCHC)/declarations); and
- h) providing safeguarding induction training.

2.2. For child-related roles (including employees, volunteers and contractors), the following must occur:

- a) interview of the applicant;
- b) proof of identity;
- c) obtain professional/other qualifications;
- d) obtain two references (written or oral with notes recorded) to assess suitability to work with children (this is not required but strongly recommended);

- e) obtain and verify WWCC/NCHC/declaration where relevant; and
- f) provide safeguarding induction training prior to any contact with children; and
- g) have a supervised probationary period for new employees and volunteers, to assess suitability and provide flexibility where a person is not appropriate within the role.

3. **SCREENING**

3.1. The Safeguarding and Professional Standards Office provides guidance material (screening matrix) clarifying which roles require a National Criminal History Check (NCHC), a declaration and/or Working with Children Check (WWCC).

3.2. NATIONAL CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK

- a) Some roles in the Diocese and its Parishes and Agencies involve managing property, Personnel and finances. NCHC's are crucial in ensuring Personnel are appropriate and trustworthy to undertake this work.
- b) For new engagements requiring an NCHC, the check must be 12 months old or less. Where an application for a NCHC has been sighted, but the check has not yet been given, a statutory declaration stating past and pending criminal convictions will suffice in the interim.
- c) NCHC's must be reviewed every five years.
- d) Should a NCHC contain questionable criminal convictions, Personnel should seek the advice of the Safeguarding and Professional Standards Office as to the suitability of the individual to conduct the relevant work. Consideration will be given to the nature and gravity of the convictions, and the role requirements, when assessing whether the individual remains suitable for the role.
- e) Unless otherwise agreed, the individual is to bear the cost of the NCHC.

3.3. DECLARATION

- a) Some volunteer roles require a declaration rather than a NCHC. The Safeguarding and Professional Standards Office has a screening matrix specifying these roles. The required declaration includes declaring any past convictions, ongoing legal proceedings, investigations or other disciplinary measures that may or may not affect their position.

3.4. WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

- a) Any person who is or intends to be engaged in child-related work requires a WWCC under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW) (the 'WWCC Act'). Engaging in child-related work prior to obtaining a WWCC will result in:

- for the individual: a fine of up to \$11,000, 2 years imprisonment, or both; or
 - for the employer: a fine of up to \$5,500 for an individual or \$11,000 for a corporation if they employ the individual while knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that the individual does not hold a WWCC but is required to. The 'employer' under the WWCC Act could include the Parish Priest/Administrator, the Diocese, Agency head or others.
- b) The WWCC Act sets out a number of areas within the definition of 'child-related work'.¹ This includes 'religious services', such as work of a priest/minister, or any role involving activities primarily related to children (youth groups, youth camps, teaching children, etc).² There are also some exemptions.³
- c) The Safeguarding and Professional Standards Office will provide guidance on which roles require WWCC's. This includes roles that the Diocese consider positions of trust for Children.
- d) Each Parish Priest/Administrator and Agency head **MUST** verify the WWCC's received prior to the individual having contact with children in their engagement with the Diocese. This can be delegated to another appropriate person. Where an exemption applies, a record of this and associated documentation should be kept.
- e) For OCG audit purposes, in relation to WWCCs, records must include full name, WWCC, date of verification on OCG portal and WWCC expiry date. This can be requested by the OCG at any time. Under the WWCC Act, a Parish Priest/Administrator or Agency head who fails to maintain this record is subject to a fine of up to \$5,500.
- f) Relevant action may be taken depending on the outcome of the verification or application process.
- g) No person may commence work with children unless they have a current WWCC and the verification has shown it has been cleared (or there is evidence of a submitted application in process – see section 8(1)(b) *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 No 51*).
- h) Those who hold a WWCC must keep the OCG notified of any changes to their details within 3 months of the change and are subject to fines if they fail to do so.

4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLIANCE

4.1. The Chancery Office is responsible for ensuring all necessary checks are obtained for Clergy, Seminarians and Religious, as well as Personnel working in the Chancery.

¹ Section 6 WWCC Act.

² Section 13 *Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013* (NSW).

³ Part 4 *Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013* (NSW).

- 4.2. Parishes are responsible for ensuring all necessary checks are obtained and verified for Personnel engaged within their Parish;
- 4.3. Agencies are responsible for ensuring all necessary checks are obtained and verified for Personnel engaged within their Agency, however where this is not possible, the Chancery will assist;
- 4.4. The Catechist Support Coordinator is responsible for ensuring all necessary checks are obtained and verified for all catechists.
- 4.5. Contractors are responsible for ensuring their employees/volunteers comply.

5. **TRAINING**

- 5.1. Personnel in this Diocese must know and understand their safeguarding obligations, legally and morally. The Diocese supports them in this knowledge and experience, including through providing opportunities for training.
- 5.2. Personnel are required to undertake safeguarding training as per the Safeguarding Screening Matrix. This includes Clergy, seminarians, Religious (including brothers and sisters), employees, volunteers, students (trainees/apprentices/ student placements) and contractors. The level of training required will depend on the nature of the role and level of contact with children/adults at risk.
- 5.3. Safeguarding training must be completed at least every three years.
- 5.4. Safeguarding training critically includes:
 - Diocesan policy and procedures;
 - the nature, impact, indicators and factors of abuse and contributing to risk of abuse (to children and adults at risk, and including cultural safety);
 - boundaries and behaviours (Code of Conduct);
 - managing risk;
 - how to respond to concerns;
 - reporting obligations; and
 - e-safety.
- 5.5. There may be access challenges to training for Personnel across the Diocese, for example, for those with limited internet access and living geographically far away from a Parish in which training will take place. To mitigate this, the Safeguarding and Professional Standards Office will provide training in a range of formats. Upon discussion, this may include provision of a PowerPoint that may be displayed in a Parish or with a group of people.

5.6. Parish Priests/Administrators and Agency heads are responsible for maintaining training records of their Personnel, and providing access to the Safeguarding and Professional Standards Office.

5.7. Key staff in the Safeguarding and Professional Standards Office must complete online ACSL Introduction to Safeguarding Training and Leaders training (where relevant).

6. REGISTER

6.1. A register of WWCCs, NCHCs/declarations and training is to be maintained by Parish Priests/Administrators and Agency heads. The Chancery Office maintains a register for all Clergy and Seminarians.