

Safe Church Policy

Ecumenical Catholic Church of Australia

Our Commitment to Safety

At the Ecumenical Catholic Church of Australia, ensuring the safety and dignity of every person involved in our worship, ministries, and community life is foundational. We believe that everyone—no matter their age, gender, ability, culture, sexuality, or background—reflects the image of God and deserves protection and respect on every level: physical, emotional, and spiritual.

Purpose of This Policy

This policy exists to:

- Protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults in every part of ECCA's ministry life
- Provide clear guidance for clergy, staff, volunteers, and lay leaders about safe, respectful behaviour
- Guarantee that our pastoral care aligns with the Gospel and the integrity of the wider Church
- Make sure we meet all legal requirements for child safety and protection, both nationally and within each state

Our Commitment

We minister with radical inclusivity, answering Christ's call to serve and protect those who are most at risk. In all we do, we commit to:

- Transparent recruitment for clergy and lay leaders, including mandatory Working With Children Checks (WWCC) and police clearances
- Ongoing training and formation in safeguarding and pastoral ethics
- Open accountability structures and spiritual supervision

The values that guide us are rooted in our mission:

- Integrity, mercy, and humility
- Duty of care and respect for every person
- Collaboration among clergy, laity, and relevant external partners
- A special focus on supporting the vulnerable

Key Safeguarding Practices

Screening:

Before beginning their role, every clergy member, staff person, and volunteer must pass all necessary Working With Children and Vulnerable People checks.

Training:

All those serving in ministry must complete Safe Church training (such as SCTA workshops)

before starting and refresh this training every three years. Additional formation will be provided in trauma awareness, maintaining healthy boundaries, and ethical pastoral care as needed.

Code of Conduct:

A comprehensive Code of Conduct sets clear expectations for boundaries, safe ministry, and spiritual responsibility. All leaders are required to affirm and follow this code.

Supervision:

Regular supervision and pastoral oversight are provided to support ministers and nurture the overall health of the community.

Responding to Allegations & Misconduct:

Any report of harm or abuse is addressed quickly, transparently, and with compassion. Our procedures are designed to deliver justice for victims while offering fairness and support to all parties.

Safe Participation:

Our programs encourage open communication, active listening, and create spaces where children and vulnerable people can safely raise any concerns. Ministry teams remain sensitive to each person's unique context, aiming to provide the best possible support.

Definitions

- Child: Any person under 18 years of age.
- Abuse: Includes (but is not limited to) emotional, sexual, physical, spiritual, or financial harm, as well as bullying, coercion, or neglect.
- Safe Environment: One where well-being is promoted and risks are minimized across all spiritual and pastoral activities.
- Safe Leader: Someone who has been properly screened, trained, supported, and held accountable.
- Safe Program: Activities assessed for risk, run collaboratively, and aligned with our mission.

Legal Framework

This policy is shaped by Australian national and state/territory legislation protecting children and vulnerable people.

National Guideline:

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children – "Protecting Children is Everyone's Business" (2009–2020), Commonwealth of Australia

State/Territory Child Protection Legislation:

State/Territory Relevant Legislation

ACT	Children and Young People Act 2008; Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011
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State/Territory Relevant Legislation

NSW	Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998; Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
NT	Care and Protection of Children Act 2007
QLD	Child Protection Act 1999; Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000
SA	Children's Protection Act 1993
TAS	Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997; Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013
VIC	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005; Working With Children Act 2005
WA	Children and Community Services Act 2004; Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004