



Little Flower Church Kedron
Parish of St Thérèse and St Anthony
In the care of the Franciscan Friars

15th April 2015

All Staff, Volunteers, Parish Members, Visitors and Contractors

CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES – KEDRON CATHOLIC PARISH

Safe environments don't just happen; they require ongoing planning, commitment and maintenance. Organisations falling within the scope of the blue card system are required to implement child and youth risk management strategies which address eight minimum requirements. The purpose of these strategies is to ensure that organisations have appropriate policies and procedures in place to identify and minimise the risk of harm to child and young people in regulated service environments.

Who needs a blue card?

Paid employees, volunteers and trainee students need a blue card if their work or practical placement in a church, club, association or similar entity includes, or is likely to include, providing services that are mainly directed at children, or conducting activities that mainly involve children, unless an exemption applies.

- eight consecutive days, or
- once a week, each week, over four weeks, or
- once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks, or once a month, each month, over six months

To comply with the Commission's strategy, Kedron Catholic Parish has developed the following:

- A statement of commitment
- A code of conduct
- Policies for recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff and volunteers
- Procedures for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm
- A plan for managing breaches of your child and youth risk management strategy
- Policies and procedures for compliance with screening requirements
- A risk management plan for high risk activities and special events
- Strategies for communication and support

Kedron Catholic Parish has complied with these eight minimum requirements to:

- address our commitment to creating a safe and supportive service environment
- strengthen our capability to provide such an environment
- assist us in managing any particular concerns with respect to the safety and well being of children and young people who are involved with the Kedron Catholic Parish, and
- promote the consistency of our approach to risk management, with respect to its compliance with the requirements under the Commission's Act.

1.0 Statement of Commitment

Kedron Catholic Parish supports the rights of children and young people and is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment directed at ensuring their safety and wellbeing. In order to support this commitment, we are dedicated to our child and youth risk management strategy which has policies and procedures in place to effectively address the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our care.

2.0 Code of Conduct

Kedron Catholic Parish is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, especially those who use our services. Our workers will treat all children and young people with respect and understanding at all times and listen to their concerns. To ensure children and young people are kept safe from harm, the following code of conduct for interacting with children and young people applies.



Who must comply with the code of conduct?

This code of conduct applies to all paid employees, volunteers and visitors who enter our Kedron Catholic Parish environment.

The standards of appropriate behaviour

Behaviour	Appropriate	Inappropriate
Language	• Using encouraging/positive	• Insults, criticisms or name calling
Relation-	• Being a positive role model	• Favouritism or giving gifts
Physical	• Allowing for personal space	• Violent or aggressive behaviour including
Other	• Appropriate attire/clothing for	• Using alcohol or other substances before

In the event that the code of conduct for interacting with children and young people is breached, actions will be taken in accordance with our plan for managing breaches of the child and youth risk management strategy.

3.0 Recruitment, Selection, Management and Training of Staff and Volunteers

Kedron Catholic Parish has effective policies and procedures in place for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers. Each process is considered separately in order to minimise risks at each stage to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people.

While the blue card screening process is an assessment of a person's eligibility to work with children and young people, the recruitment and selection of our staff is our first opportunity to ascertain a person's suitability to work with children and young people in the Kedron Catholic Parish. Our training and management allows us to monitor and develop our staff member's skills and performance.

Kedron Catholic Parish employs people who are committed to safe and supportive environments for children and young people. Our staff and volunteers understand that by working with children and young people they have a responsibility to promote their wellbeing and protect them from harm. They also know that they have an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the child or young person's life. All staff and volunteers are aware of and share Kedron Catholic Parish's values and promote the wellbeing of children and young people.

Recruitment and Selection

Kedron Catholic Parish understands that recruiting the most appropriate people is an essential part of creating a safe and supportive environment for children and young people. Our recruitment strategy assists us to find people who will contribute positively to a safe and supportive environment for children and young people and deter unsuitable applicants. Our recruitment strategy has taken into consideration the following:

Position Descriptions

Kedron Catholic Parish has clear position descriptions which detail the skills and experience needed by our staff and volunteers to perform their duties and contribute to an environment which is safe and supportive for children and young people.

Each position description starts with a brief statement about Kedron Catholic Parish and details what the tasks or duties are of that role. Finally, it outlines what skills and attributes a person needs to fulfil the role. This has been undertaken to help us:

- establish an understanding of the roles and expectations for staff to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people
- become more aware of the tasks required for specific activities
- develop requirements of the position‘ (ie. selection criteria)
- identify training needs
- reduce the risk of harm to children and young people, and
- attract and retain staff.

Kedron Catholic Parish undertakes regular reviews of each position description as we believe this is an important feature for ongoing performance improvement.

Advertising positions

Kedron Catholic Parish position advertisements:

- include a clear statement about our safe and supportive work practices
- include clear, concise details about our organisation
- provide brief details about the position and working conditions, and
- name a contact person for more information.

Candidates are informed if they are going to be subjected to a police check, blue card screening, referee checks, identification verification, and that Kedron Catholic Parish will request that the candidate disclose any information relevant to their eligibility to engage in activities involving children and young people.

Selection Process

At the selection stage Kedron Catholic Parish endeavours to choose the most suitable candidate for the advertised position. This process provides an opportunity to select people who will promote and protect the rights, interests and wellbeing of children and young people. The following methods are used to select the most suitable candidate:

- Assessment of applicant
- Interview
- Referee checks

Probationary period of employment

Each new employee or volunteer is given a set probationary period of employment which allows us to assess their performance and evaluate their suitability for the position. During the probation period:

- goals are set
- training needs are identified, specifically in relation to risk management practices, and
- support provided to allow the new employee to be successful in undertaking the role.

During this initial phase of employment, an induction program is also undertaken to help the new employee or volunteer gain a better understanding of your organisation.

4.0 Concerns

Kedron Catholic Parish has in place policies and procedures for

- handling disclosures, allegations and/or suspicions of harm, and
- managing breaches of your risk management strategy and code of conduct.

These policies include:

- a distinction between what is a disclosure, allegation or suspicion of harm and what is a breach of the risk management strategy
- clear guidelines in relation to how these issues will be managed, including consequences for breaches, and

Kedron Catholic Parish train staff and volunteers in identifying risks of harm and handling disclosures or suspicions of harm. Staff and volunteers are aware that they must respond as quickly as possible to an allegation or suspicion of harm or a breach of our risk management strategy. This is done to ensure the best interests of the child or young person is always the first priority.

All employees and volunteers, contractors, committee members and work experience staff must comply with this policy.

Definitions

Harm

Harm as defined under the *Child Protection Act 1999* as ***“any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. For harm to be significant, the detrimental effect on the child’s wellbeing must be substantial or serious, more than transitory and must be demonstrable in the child’s presentation, functioning or behaviour”***.

Harm may be categorised in the following types:

- physical abuse, for example, beating, shaking, burning, biting, causing bruise or fractures by inappropriate discipline, giving children alcohol, drugs or inappropriate medication
- emotional or psychological abuse, for example, constant yelling, insults, swearing, criticism, bullying, not giving children positive support and encouragement
- neglect, for example, not giving children sufficient food, clothing, enough sleep, hygiene, medical care, leaving children alone or children missing school, and
- sexual abuse or exploitation, for example, sexual jokes or touching, exposing children to sexual acts or pornography or having sexual intercourse with a child or young person under 16 years of age (even if the child appears to have consented).

Suspicion of harm

Suspicion of harm occurs if:

you are concerned by significant changes in behaviour or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries.

Disclosure of harm

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened or is likely to happen.

Disclosures of harm may start with:

- I think I saw...
- Somebody told me that...
- Just think you should know...
- I’m not sure what I want you to do, but...

Procedures to minimise harm to children and young people

Kedron Catholic Parish works to minimise harm to children and young people by acting in a manner that supports their interests and wellbeing, by:

- making sure that children know that it is their right to feel safe at all times
- teaching them about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in general
- letting them know who is and who is not an employee
- allowing them to be a part of decision-making processes
- making sure they are safe by monitoring their activities and ensuring their environment meets all safety requirements
- teaching them about appropriate and inappropriate contact in a manner appropriate to their age and level of understanding

- teaching children and young people to say ‘no’ to anything that makes them feel unsafe
- encouraging them to tell staff of any suspicious activities or people, and
- listening to children and young people and letting them know that staff are available for them if they have any concerns.

Procedures for receiving a disclosure of harm

Staff and volunteers are instructed when receiving a disclosure of harm:

- to remain calm and find a private place to talk
- don’t promise to keep a secret; tell them they have done the right thing in telling you but that you’ll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe
- only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter; probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries, and
- not to attempt to conduct their own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.

Reporting guidelines for disclosures or suspicions of harm

Kedron Catholic Parish will take the following immediately following a disclosure or suspicion of harm.

Documenting a suspicion of harm

If there are concerns about the safety of a child, record concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible. If a parent explains a noticeable mark on a child, record your own observations as well as accurate details of the conversation. If you see unsafe or harmful actions towards a child in your care, intervene immediately, provided it is safe to do so. If it is unsafe, call the police for assistance.

Documenting a disclosure of harm

Complete an incident report form or record the details as soon as possible so that they are accurately captured. Include:

- time, date and place of the disclosure
- word for word‘ what happened and what was said, including anything you said and any actions that have been taken, and
- date of report and signature.

If you need to take notes as the person is telling you, explain that you are taking a record in case any later enquiry occurs.

Reporting the disclosure or suspicion of harm to authorities

Kedron Catholic Parish will not conduct its own enquiries in relation to the disclosure or suspicion of harm or try to come to an agreement between the parties involved. The person who receives a disclosure or suspects harm is to contact the relevant authority to ensure information provided is comprehensive and accurate.

Report the matter to:

- Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) on freecall 1800 811 810, or
- Queensland Police Service (*provide local contact details*).

Actions following a disclosure of harm

Support and counselling will be offered to all parties involved.

Processes for those involved in the report

The child or young person

The children and young people involved should be offered appropriate counselling and support.

The person who made the report

Under Section 22 of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, a person who reports suspected child abuse is protected from civil or criminal legal actions and is not considered to have broken any code of conduct or ethics.

Details of the person who made the report are to be kept completely confidential and will not be made available to the family of the child or young person, or the person against whom the allegation has been made.

The person against whom the allegation has been made

If the person responding to the allegation of harm is a member of the Kedron Catholic Parish, you may need to review their duties. If they continue to interact/work with children, ensure that they are appropriately supervised at all times. Kedron Catholic Parish may want to seek legal advice as to the extent to which that person can carry out duties in the organisation.

Review procedures

Kedron Catholic Parish's policy and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm are to be reviewed and assessed regularly to ensure that the organisation is continuing to provide a safe and supportive service environment.

Breach of Risk Management Strategy

A breach is any action or inaction by any member of Kedron Catholic Parish, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of our child and youth risk management strategy.

This includes any breach in relation to:

- statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm
- code of conduct for interacting with children and young people;
- procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers
- policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the children and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register
- risk management plans for high risk activities and special events, and
- strategies for communication and support.

All stakeholders are to be made aware of the actions or inactions that form a breach as well as the potential outcomes of breaching the child and youth risk management strategy.

Who must comply with this plan?

All employees and volunteers, contractors, committee members, work experience staff, parents and carers, children and young people must comply with this policy.

Processes to manage a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy

Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner. The following will occur:

- all people concerned will be advised of the process
- all people concerned will be able to provide their version of events
- the details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded
- matters discussed in relation to the breach will be kept confidential, and
- an appropriate outcome will be decided.

Suitable outcomes for breaches

Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

- emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct
- providing closer supervision
- further education and training
- mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate)
- disciplinary procedures if necessary, or
- reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.

5.0 Consistency

Compliance with the Chapter 8 of the Commission's Act (Blue Card Compliance)

Kedron Catholic Parish complies with legislation and maintains an accurate blue card register, and reviews and updates our child and youth management strategy annually as required.

The appointed contact person responsible for managing blue cards at Kedron Catholic Parish is the Parish Manager – Allan Dunn. The Parish Manager is also responsible for maintaining the blue card register of all staff and volunteers.

Paid employees and Kedron Catholic Parish volunteers need a blue card if their work at a school includes, or is likely to include, providing services directed mainly towards children, or conducting activities that mainly involve children, for at least:

- eight consecutive days, or
- once a week, each week, over four weeks, or
- once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks, or
- once a month, each month, over six months

Annual Review

Kedron Catholic Parish annual review of our child and youth management strategy considers:

- if our policies and procedures are being followed
- whether any incidents relating to children and young people's risk management issues occurred
- the actual process used to manage any incidents
- the effectiveness of our policies and procedures in preventing or minimising harm to children and young people, and
- the content and frequency of training in relation to our child and youth risk management strategy.

Any relevant changes made as part of our annual review process are documented and appropriately communicated to staff.

We thank you for your respect of this policy.

Stephen ofm

Fr Stephen Bliss ofm Parish Priest

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