



Holy Spirit Catholic Parish, Gungahlin

'Empowered by the Spirit to Serve'

POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE - HOLY SPIRIT PARISH, GUNGAHLIN

Introduction:

The Parish of Holy Spirit Gungahlin will treat all the children in its care with respect and integrity. The majority of children in the parish come under the auspices of our four Catholic schools, and these children will be covered by the care policies of the Catholic Education Office. There are also a significant number of children who attend Mass or parish programs and other liturgies who are not students of the parish schools. However, wherever they attend school, when the children are participating in a Parish function or liturgy, they will be protected by the Holy Spirit Parish Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable People.

Relevant activities include children's liturgy, youth groups, altar servers, volleyball players and those attending church functions.

Care and Support for Children:

All adults, in both paid and voluntary capacities, will hold a valid Working With Vulnerable People Card (WWVP) prior to taking up any role in the Parish which involves, or could involve, children (that is: all people under the age of 18 years). The Parish will not employ anyone, in either paid or voluntary capacity, who has had any complaints of child or adult sexual and/or physical abuse laid against them. The Parish acknowledges that it is impossible to always be sure of this factor so it pledges to take all reasonable steps to ensure this policy is implemented.

The Parish's response to any complaint will be framed by the following guidelines as developed by the Archdiocese:

1. The Complainant will be believed; along with members of his or her family.
2. The complaint will be reported immediately to the Police, the Parish Priest, the Vicar-General and the Institute of Professional Standards and Safeguarding. The Parish will support the investigation to the full extent of its capacity. Unless waived by the complainant, the Parish will not divulge the complaint to any person outside the investigation.



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3. The alleged offender will be removed immediately from any responsibilities or functions which bring him or her into contact with children, and especially the victim and his or her family. Where appropriate they will be stood down pending the outcome of investigations and possibly legal proceedings.
4. The Parish will offer whatever support it can to the victim and his or her family; including immediate and, if necessary, on-going counselling. Other forms of support will be positively considered upon request.
5. The Parish will keep full and accurate records of the complaints and all steps taken to address them. The statistics, including outcomes, will be available annually.
6. Where a complaint has been proven, the Parish will make reparations as directed by the courts and the Archdiocese or, if a more informal complaint is made and accepted, any reparations will be considered under the guidelines established by the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn and its Archbishop.
7. All steps taken by the Parish will be conducted in accordance with the policies of the Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn.

Detailed guidelines and policy statements can be found at:

catholic.org.au/professional-standards-safeguarding-documents/

The Code of Conduct is at: catholic.org.au/professional-standards/child-protection-code-of-conduct/