

Form 6

Code of behaviour for all Church workers (paid and unpaid) working with children



Code of behaviour

All Church workers working with children (paid & unpaid) are required to abide by the following:

- Church workers are expected to create an environment where children are valued, encouraged and affirmed, have their rights respected and are treated as individuals, eliminating any threatening, violent or degrading behaviour
- each parish group must provide an adequate and appropriate number of workers to supervise activities, depending on the ages and activities involved **(Form 7 Developing safe practices refers)**
- all must be treated with equal respect; favouritism is not acceptable and boundaries must be protected.
- emphasis is placed on listening to children
- participants should not be left unattended
- dangerous behaviour or horseplay will not be tolerated
- verbal abuse, bullying or physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstances
- facilities for parish activities must be suitable, safe and secure
- records of attendance must be kept and parental consent forms for attendance at activities must be completed and kept in a safe and confidential manner **(Form 10 Parental consent refers)**
- an Incident Report must be completed in the event of an accident or incident taking place **(Form 17 Incident report form refers)**
- Church workers must not undertake any journey alone with a child. If there is a need for transport in a vehicle, there is a requirement for a minimum of two children to be seated in the rear and parent / carer permission sought, where practicable
- meetings with young parishioners must take place in locations which allow for transparency and accountability (designated office or room with clear glass window); visits to private homes in the absence of parents are not acceptable
- only age-appropriate language, contact and materials are permissible
- under no circumstances should Church workers use, provide, or permit alcohol, tobacco or drugs when working with children
- photographs of young parishioners taking part in activities may only be taken / published with parental permission **(Form 13 Images of children involved in Church-related activities refers)**
- whist pilgrimages and retreats are an occasional part of pastoral programs, these events must adhere to recommended guidelines in terms of parental consent, supervision ratios, insurance, contact details, health requirements and first aid, as well as the general code of behaviour and transport policies
- all correspondence (written / email / phone or via social media) is to go through a parent or carer, not directly to the child.

Note: Young parishioners with special needs or disabilities may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, so appropriately trained or experienced Church workers may be required. This also applies to children who are vulnerable. The involvement of these children may mean that the adult:child ratios are adjusted. Sensitivity and clear communication are essential for children and with their parents or carers. **(Form 8 Including Disabled Children refers)**

Additional best practice requirements for specific parish activities

Altar servers

The sacristan should remain in the sacristy with the door left open at all times when the servers are present, looking out for their safety with equipment and helping them to vest only by demonstration.

It is recommended that, where possible, no one child be in the sacristy with one adult. It is best practice to ensure that there are more than two children or two adults at any given time.

Practices should be arranged in cooperation with parents and schools, having the appropriate number of supervisors present.

The stores and counting office should be considered out of bounds.

If a female altar server is in the sacristy, it is recommended a female adult (preferably mother) be present.

Parish facilities

All non-parish groups using parish facilities are required to have suitable insurance and their own safeguarding children policies.