



Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga

Youth Leaders Policy and Procedure Manual

For



Child Protection

Version 1/18 Approved

Signed..... August 2018

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To be reviewed by permanent Bishop of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga on appointment.

Review due annually by Bishops Child Protection Delegate and Safeguarding Committee

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Purpose

Engaging young people in the life and mission of the Catholic Church is a fulfilling ministry. With this important work comes a serious responsibility to care for the wellbeing of all young people who come into contact with our parishes and communities. As a result, this policy, its' procedures and any associated documents, are binding on all who work with Youth Ministry, programs and events.

This manual helps you as a Youth Ministry leader or volunteer in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga keep the young people in your ministry safe from physical, emotional and personal harm in every way you and your team engage with them. In this document, young people refers to people under 18 years.

The manual's contents are aimed at modelling and building a contemporary Catholic workplace that is faith-filled, collaborative, consultative and lawfully compliant. It requires all staff and volunteers:

- to take responsibility for their own conduct with children and young people, staff, and the wider school, parish and diocesan community
- to conduct themselves in a manner that is professional, cooperative and consistent with this policy and procedure manual
- supervisors/managers/Chaplains to provide guidance, training, support and supervision

A Safe Environment

A safe environment is one where young people are protected from physical, emotional and personal harm. This manual will help you, as leaders, to know how you can make sure that the young people we work with are not only given the opportunity to encounter Jesus, but that in all their dealings with us, they encounter love, respect and support.

As leaders you can contribute to creating a safe environment for young people in three key ways;

1. By demonstrating that you are suitable as a leader. This sets a standard for the quality of our youth ministry leadership, and ensures that the trust young people and their families give us, is worthy.
2. By knowing how to respond in difficult situations. It is our hope that you will never need to use this knowledge. However, having the confidence to respond correctly, ensures that even if there is an incident, we are still able to provide a safe environment, and takes the stress of the unknown away from you as leaders.
3. Through employing strategies such as proper planning and by consistently complying with this manual, and taking responsibility to act and report when necessary. This you are able to ensure, and show that you are consistently providing a safe environment in which young people are able to encounter Jesus.

Providing a Safe Environment

This policy requires that adults involved in youth ministry ensure that at least two adults are in attendance whilst supervising youth under the age of 18 at all times unless clear and transparent, (and notified to other adults), exceptions exist.

This must include on all occasions of transport where the alternative to two adults being present must be include two youth under 18 being present as an absolute minimum. Written permission from a parent, not txt or phone call, is required for each occasion for youth transport and such records must be held permanently by the relevant youth Chaplain.

The default position is that parents can car pool and make arrangements amongst themselves to ensure transport to events – transport is not a primary or secondary role of youth leaders or Chaplains - and assisting in it should be a rare exception. *The Shared Transport Permission Notice and Annexure D shall be used when any attendees travel in vehicles with Youth Leaders. This includes bus transport whether or not leaders are driving.*

Without exception, no adult leaders or volunteers are permitted to sleep at any location or event in same room as any youth. All participants, leaders and youth will only sleep in accommodation of the same sex and bathroom facilities must be similarly gender specific. Clergy and other Religious must be provided with separate quarters.

Creating a safe environment for young people can be further categorised into two sections, the physical environment and emotional environment.

Physical Environment

- Venue - Know the dangers and rules. An easy way of doing this is through familiarising yourself with the risk assessment process.
- Supervision- Know who is the male and female supervisor, and who to speak to if you have concerns.
- Records- Make sure that there are records of who is present at an activity at all times. Know where and how the sign in/sign out system is in place to prevent a young person from leaving an activity unaccompanied or collected by an unauthorised person.
- Contactable - Have a mobile phone accessible at all times. Ensure attendees and their parents/guardians have a copy of the number.
- First Aid - Know who is trained in first aid. Know where the first aid kit is kept during the event. Record all details of injuries and treatments and who notified and when.
- Inclusion - If a young person has a disability or medical condition, speak with their parents or carer to ensure there is a clear understanding about any special care required, and honestly determine

whether your group has the capacity to provide this care. If necessary, invite the parent or other suitable carer to accompany the young person during the activity (the accompanying adult will need to have a Working with Children Check, as well as a Police Check for overnight stays).

- Food Handling - Be aware of safe food handling practices, and register any activity involving the sale of food (including fundraisers) with your local council. Very high standard hygiene practices are critical at camps, especially in relation to cooking, eating and after bathroom use. Enforce them.
- Allergies - Obtain copies of allergy management plans for young people with known allergies. If a participant has a known anaphylactic allergy, ensure that a leader is trained in responding to anaphylaxis, and that the participant has access to their own adrenaline auto-injector (e.g. EpiPen) at all times. On excursions or camps, strongly discourage food sharing, and advise any known food allergies to those involved in preparing meals, including venues which provide catering for an activity and parents or carers of participants who may be packing meals.
- Sun - Remind young people to protect themselves from the sun and stay hydrated, and insist on sunscreen and hats. Take spare cases of water for outdoor activities.
- Transparency - Encourage young people and adult leaders to raise any concerns about personal safety.

Emotional Environment

- Address young people by name.
- Be a positive role models and contribute to a harmonious and nurturing setting which reflects gospel values.
- Be aware of age differences, older people attending a youth-oriented activity should have a clear purpose for being present.
- Respect the privacy of young people. Do not force young people to give personal sharing in conversations or group settings. Be very aware you are not a spiritual director, trained counselors – turn youth questions of concerns to professionals, other organisation or youth chaplains.
- Do NOT give advice on issues you are not trained, formally qualified or experienced in to give. Refer youth to their own siblings, parents or professionals. Some contact numbers are at the rear of this document for more serious matters.
- Ensure dignity and respect are shown to young people at all times.
- Acknowledge efforts and not just achievements.
- Encourage young people to tell an adult leader about anything that makes them feel worried, embarrassed or afraid.

Cyberbullying - Social Media Restrictions

Cyber bullying is any kind of bullying or harassment carried out using technology.

Bullying or harassment via Social media (and all other forms) is wrong and is not tolerated by the Diocese of Wagga Wagga. The Diocese of Wagga Wagga is passionate about creating a respectful and inclusive environment, about supporting our children and youth and keeping them safe, both online and offline. Cyber bullying may include:

- sharing embarrassing photos of a person online
- sending a person harassing calls, texts or emails
- posting derogatory or humiliating comments about a person online
- setting up fake profiles pretending to be another person must be reported to the

If you or someone you know is being bullied online, you must report it to the Youth Ministry Leadership Team and the relevant Chaplain immediately.

Adult Youth Leaders must not engage in one-on-one discussions with young people online or via telephone, for example through emails or Facebook messaging, instant chatting, Skyping, texting or telephone conversations. This is the same as going into a private room with a young person and closing the door.

All electronic communication between youth leadership members and youth members must be public (e.g. the Facebook for the youth group). If a circumstance does arise where an adult Member needs to communicate with a youth member electronically, the communication should always include at least one other adult leader or parent (for example, by “CCing” the other adult leader in an email, or including the other adult in your groups’ public Facebook message threads).

Employed Adult Youth leaders and volunteer assistants are forbidden to be Facebook friends (or any other software communication platform) with young persons. This is in accordance with policy for all employed staff of the Diocese, including all teachers. *Exceptions may occur where long term prior family associations exist, such must be notified to the relevant Chaplain, who will confirm by contacting parents that such communication is permitted.* Only then will continued use of the platform for private communication be permitted, with appropriate records being kept of the approval by the Chaplain, permanently stored.

This procedure is to keep our youth ministry attendees safe as well as to protect our adult youth leaders against any perceptions or claims of inappropriate behaviour, which can have a damaging effect on an individual both personally and professionally.

Adult Youth Ministry leaders must keep in mind that there are difficulties and risks associated with being friends with young persons online. For example, being Facebook friends with any youth allows them access to the content you post on your wall, as well as the content that your friends may post on your wall. If there is material on your Facebook page that is not appropriate for young persons to view, most importantly it may be harmful to them, secondly you are leaving yourself open to criticism.

Any youth ministry/group public communication platform (i.e. Facebook), must have two adult paid staff as administrators, one may be the relevant Chaplain, but on no occasion are volunteers or youth members permitted to act as platform administrators at any time.

Using electronic communications and digital technologies to harass, bully or humiliate any individual or group of individuals is prohibited. A permission slip from appropriate parent or guardian of youth/children for access and inclusion to youth ministry digital communication platforms is attached as **Annexure C** for use.

Legal Requirements

Checks;

As well as creating a safe physical and emotional environment for young people you must also understand and adhere to the necessary legal and policy and procedural requirements of this manual.

- **Youth Ministry Adult Leader Code of Conduct**

Please read, ask questions so you understand, and sign this document. It will help you to navigate some of the challenging areas of youth ministry, and is a starting point for discussion with your leader or mentor if you have questions. (See **Appendure A** at end of this document, a signed original copy is to be forwarded to Bishops Delegate, Child Protection Officer, Diocese of Wagga Wagga, at earliest opportunity and a copy given to the signee). Adherence to it by everyone will go a long way to protect children, preventing harm, and keeping unsuitable persons out of harms way.

- **Working With Children Check (WWCC)**

Whether you are involved in leading activities or working with children in any capacity as a leader or adult volunteer, you are required to have a WWCC. For further information please refer to <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check> or call Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga on (02) 6937 0014 ask for Charmaine in Employee Services, to arrange a WWCC. WWCC is a NSW State Government legal requirement. Persons under 18 years of age cannot get a WWCC, nor can they take on any delegated responsibility for youth supervision or decision making as a volunteer. It is a new State legal requirement that all parents at an overnight event have WWCC clearances.

- **National Police Check**

If you are involved in leading activities (and because of the possibility of the exceptional circumstance need to transport young people in a private car) or working with children in any capacity, you must have a National Police Check completed. Contact Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga on (02) 6937 0014 for further information about this process, ask for Charmaine in Employee Services.

The purpose of the above procedures is to remove those who have been found in the past as unsuitable to work with children, to continue or commence further child related work. This requirement does not include guest speakers at events.

Be aware it does not relate to those who have never been caught or never found unsuitable – they are still out there today harming the innocents.

Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporters are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities. Mandatory reporters are people who deliver wholly or partly, to children as part of their paid or professional work a variety of services including welfare and education (includes youth workers and religious), that therefore includes, paid in any arrangement including Chaplains and the management chain. Extra obligations are on the Diocese Professional Standards and Safeguarding Officer on behalf of the Bishop regarding recording, assessing and reporting allegations and incidents, under the NSW Ombudsman's Act. The more serious may require independent investigations after Police have concluded

their own investigations/prosecutions. Child abuse may also have to be reported to the NSW Department of Family and Community Service for youth that you suspect are victims of abuse in the home or somewhere else other than at your own Youth Ministry events.

NSW Ombudsman Legal Requirements – Reportable Conduct (relates to employees and volunteers’ behavioral breaches)

Special procedures are in place to deal with allegations of reportable conduct or convictions against employees of all government and certain non-government agencies in NSW – this includes all allegations/complaints against employees of the Diocese – Youth Ministry and Groups.

The Ombudsman Act 1974 requires the Diocese of Wagga Wagga to notify the Ombudsman of allegations against employees that constitute sexual offences, misconduct, assault, ill-treatment, neglect and behaviour that causes psychological harm to children.

This includes Youth Ministry employees of any type, and volunteers officially acting as assistants to events.

Some matters are notifiable to the Ombudsman as an allegation of reportable conduct, but are only reportable to the Child Protection Helpline if there are also current concerns that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm.

The responsibility for arranging investigations into allegations against employees lies with the employing agency – depending on the nature of the allegation, cases may be referred directly to Police.

Reportable Conduct includes:

- sexual offences and sexual misconduct ~ includes crossing professional boundaries, grooming behaviour, sexually explicit comments /overtly sexual behaviour involving a child
- physical assault ~ intentionally (or recklessly) inflicting unjustifiable physical force against a child (including causing a child to reasonably fear such harm); it is important to consider the context of the act and any associated aggravating circumstances
- psychologically harmful behaviour ~ conduct that is obviously or very clearly unreasonable and results in significant emotional harm or trauma to a child
- neglect ~ intentional or reckless failure by a worker/carer causing actual or potential significant harm to a child
- ill treatment ~ unreasonable and seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel treatment of a child

The Head of Agency (Bishop) must be informed of any reportable allegation (or reportable conviction) against a current employee.

This is done by the Bishops delegate the Professional Standards Safeguarding Officer. Notifying the Bishops delegate can be done by any means and it is recommended that staff passing the report use the attached form at [Annexure B](#) to consolidate their information and thoughts. Timely reporting once you have observed, suspect or being notified of abuse is fundamental, as the immediate and future protection of children is the first overriding concern.

Head of Agency must notify Ombudsman of any reportable allegation or conviction and ensures proper investigation and appropriate action is taken. Investigations are to be commensurate with the seriousness of the matter. The Ombudsman monitors to ensure the allegation is dealt with appropriately.

Exemptions - Reportable conduct does not extend to:

- a) conduct that is reasonable for the discipline, management or care of children, having regard to the characteristics of the children and to relevant codes of conduct or professional standards
- b) physical force that, in all the circumstances, is trivial or negligible but only if the matter is to be investigated and the result of the investigation recorded under workplace employment procedures

The Professional Standards and Safeguarding Officer must be informed of any allegation, reportable or otherwise, to conduct appropriate jurisdictional determination and risk assessments, keep auditable records of all diocese decisions regarding child protection, and fulfill legal obligations of the Bishop to ensure reports are made of summary statistics of exempt reports to the Ombudsman.

NSW Family and Community Services, Child Protection Services (generally relates to behavioral breaches in the home)

Mandatory reporting describes the legal obligation of certain professionals and community members in NSW to report incidences of child abuse and/or neglect. These people are called mandated reporters and they **MUST** report to Child Protection Services if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child at risk of significant harm.

Who is Mandated to Report Suspected Abuse?

Section 27(1) of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 states mandatory reporting applies to:

- a person who, in the course of his or her professional work or other paid employment delivers health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services, or law enforcement, wholly or partly to children, and
- a person who holds a management position in an organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services, or law enforcement, wholly or partly, to children.

Section 27(2) states if:

- a person who is identified as a mandated reporter has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of harm, and those grounds arise during the course of or from the person's work,
- it is then the duty of the person to report as soon as possible, to the Department the name or a description of the child and the grounds for suspecting that the child is at risk of significant harm

You do not need to have proof to report any concerns you have about the safety of a child under 18 or a young person. Indicators that represent reasonable grounds to report a suspected offence include:

- A child or young person discloses that he or she has suffered or is suffering non accidental physical injury or sexual abuse
- Someone else advises you that a child or young person has been sexually abused or non-accidentally injured, or
- Your own observations of the child or young person's physical condition or behaviours lead you to reasonably suspect that the child or young person has suffered or is suffering non-accidental physical injury or sexual abuse.

ANY person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child is at risk of significant harm may voluntarily report to Child Protection Services.

- You do not have to prove that abuse has taken place.
- You only need reasonable grounds for your belief.
- You do not need permission from parents or caregivers to make a report; nor do they need to be informed that a report is being made.
- If you made a report in good faith, you cannot be held legally liable - regardless of the outcome of the report.
- Your identity will remain confidential unless you need to give evidence if the matter goes to court. It is rare that this happens.

Mandatory reporters are encouraged to use the Mandatory Reporter Guide, to guide their decision-making and determine whether or not to report to the Child Protection Helpline under the risk of significant harm reporting threshold. Online NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide:

<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg><https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>

What is Child Abuse and Neglect?

Children and young people have a right to be safe in their own homes and in the community, and live without violence and abuse. Child abuse and neglect is a crime, yet it continues to be an issue in Australia.

There are different forms of child abuse: neglect, sexual, physical and emotional abuse. The law says a child or young person is at risk of significant harm (ROSH) if there are current concerns for their safety, welfare or wellbeing because of one or more of the following:

- Neglect – Neglect is when a parent or caregiver cannot regularly give a child the basic things needed for his or her growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, adequate supervision, and enough parenting and care.
- Sexual abuse – Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child or young person in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children or young people are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. Sexual abuse is a crime. It includes sexual activity between the child and an older child or adult.

- Physical abuse – Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child or young person caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation. Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints. Hitting a child or young person around the head or neck, or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punishing a child or young person (in a non-trivial way) is a crime.
- Emotional abuse or psychological harm – Serious psychological harm can occur where the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional disturbance or psychological trauma.

Unsolicited Disclosure of Abuse - Complaints or Allegations received by Youth Ministry Leaders from Youth

It is extremely important that you act responsibly with any information that you are given, both in the moment with the young person, and in how you handle any information from a young person to ensure they receive the correct care.

Any matters of concern involving serious risk or harm to a young person, must be dealt with appropriately. It is extremely important not only to protect children in the first and most important instance, but is a legal requirement which you are by law compelled to comply with.

Be aware of making it clear to young people before any activity where they may share personal information. It is important that you explicitly state that, "anything they say to you will be held in confidence unless you suspect significant harm is occurring, has happened or might happen, if that is the case your legal and moral duty is to report the matter to child protection authorities, which you will do."

Don't promise more than you can make good on. This means don't promise to keep secrets. Don't promise to be there 'on call' or long term. This is not your role. Your role is to make sure that the young people you minister to are given the correct, appropriate and best care possible.

In order to do this, it is suggested you follow the 4 R's model;

Receive:

Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief. Understand that a common reaction to information about child abuse or serious harm can be unpleasant, shocking or cause disbelief. It is important to not display any signs of denial, shock or disgust at what they are saying, as the young person may be afraid to continue and will shut down. Accept what is being said without judgement. Take it seriously.

Reassure:

Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable. Tell the young person that they have done the right thing by telling you and that you believe them. Don't make promises that you can't be sure to keep, e.g. "everything will be all right now". Reassure the child that they did nothing wrong and that you take what is said seriously. Don't promise confidentiality – never agree to keep secrets. You have a duty to report your concerns. Tell the child that you will need to tell some people, but only those whose job it is to protect

children. Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk. It takes a lot for a child to come forward about abuse.

Record:

Do not assume anything – don't speculate or jump to conclusions. Do not investigate, interrogate or decide if the child is telling the truth or not. Remember that an allegation of child abuse may lead to a criminal investigation, so don't do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation.

Let the child explain to you in his or her own words what happened, but don't ask leading questions. Do ask open questions like "Is there anything else that you want to tell me?" Communicate with the child in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference. This is especially important for children with disabilities and for children whose preferred language is not English. Do not ask the child to repeat what they have told you to another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to. Once reported do not discuss the case with anyone outside the official child protection team. This is critical - confidentiality of the victim must be maintained, equally disclosure of the identity and gossip about an alleged offender outside of police or agencies whose job it is to investigate can have tragic unintended consequences.

Make some very brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible. Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by Court. Record the date, time, place, words used by the child and how the child appeared to you – be specific. Record the exact actual words used; including any swear words or slang. Record statements and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions – keep it factual. It is highly recommended you use the Confidential Incident Recording Form found at Appendix B of this manual.

Confiding in the Right People

If you are unsure who to speak to, don't be afraid to approach the Wagga Wagga Youth Ministry leaders, or Chaplains – or those responsible in ultimately supervising all attendees at an event, for example at a schools based event, a Principal may be more appropriate, saying;

"I have a question regarding the safety of a young person, am I able to speak with you about this, or is there someone more appropriate."

In a parish setting you would talk to the Parish Priest, in a school setting speak with your contact person or the Principal, and at a Youth Ministry event you would talk to the event coordinator or the designated incident person (this may be either the Youth Ministry worker or a senior teacher or supervising clergy – the nature of the event will clearly dictate the appropriate person – either way ask a senior event manager present).

However, if you feel someone is in imminent danger of serious harm or criminal behavior contact the Police first on 1800 333 000.

You are always welcome to contact the Diocese Professional Standards Safeguarding Officer on 0400 487 591 for advice if you wish.

Reporting an Incident

Dealing with breaches and matters of concern.

1. The Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga aims to deal with all reports of any type of abuse or assaults fairly and appropriately, and to act on the following principles:

- Promoting a positive experience of the Church and creating a strong community of faith;
- Preventing misconduct where this is possible;
- Ensuring fair process for persons against whom allegations are made; and
- Dealing effectively with any allegations which are substantiated, including responding compassionately to anyone who has been affected.

You may come across possible breaches of the Youth Ministry Adult Leader Code of Conduct, or matters that cause you concern, in any number of ways.

These might include:

- Disclosure made to you by a young person;
- Observing events that cause you to form an objectively reasonable belief that a young person is being harmed or abused, or is at risk of being harmed or abused (whether by a family member or by another person); or
- Being present and witnessing an event or incident.

Alternatively, an incident may occur during an activity you are responsible for, such as:

- A young person being lost;
- A young person being injured; or
- A medical emergency.

Regardless of the way in which an issue arises, you should always report circumstances that cause you concern and you should certainly always report:

- Any material breach of the attached Youth Ministry Adult Leader Code of Conduct
- Any incident in which a young person is harmed or goes missing
- Any emergency situation including a medical emergency
- Any hazard or risk of harm to a young person that is not being adequately addressed
- Any allegation of sexual misconduct
- Any disclosure by a young person, or an objectively reasonable belief you have formed, that a young person is being abused or is at risk of abuse of any kind
- Any allegation of violence inflicted by an adult upon a young person
- Any allegation in which an adult has been under the influence of drugs (illicit or misused medication) or alcohol while responsible for young people
- Any incident in which a young person has been harmed or injured (either physically or psychologically) or is at risk of harm or injury
- Any allegation of conduct which is or might be unlawful and
- Any conduct which would or might give rise to a mandatory requirement to report under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (the Care Act)

If you are not sure whether to report a matter, or would like any guidance about how to report, please contact your ministry supervisors or chaplains in the first instance.

The Person Making the Report

Any person may make a report to you. In the case of an allegation of sexual or other abuse of a young person you should not investigate the matter yourself, or raise it with parents/guardians or the alleged abuser directly. As an employee or approved volunteer of the youth leadership/activity team you must report the matter using the procedures set out below as you are legally bound to do so by, firstly state law, and secondly by adherence to Diocesan policy. *However, if a young person is in imminent danger, the matter should be reported directly and immediately to NSW Police on 131 444.*

Reporting Procedure

The process for reporting and dealing with any concerns or breaches of this Manual or Codes of Conduct by leaders and volunteers assisting in Youth Ministry is as follows:

1. Discuss with your immediate supervisor, or if they are subject of the complaint, contact the person above.
2. Regarding reporting to Community services you can check whether relevant or not by using the Online NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide
<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>
<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>
3. *Regardless of report made to government authority at the time – Police, Family and Community services, Ambulance attendance or any other agency - all matters must be notified to the Diocese of Wagga Wagga Professionals Standards Officer, regardless of your role at the Youth Ministry. Blatantly trivial matters will not be proceeded with and blatantly serious urgent matters will be referred to Police. Over reporting by staff is a safer state than underreporting with the risk of our protection systems and processes failing and children suffering ongoing harm.*
4. If deemed appropriate, or even if unsure - contact the Child Protection Helpline 13 2111. If not a matter for their jurisdiction they will politely advise you so.

Remember always contact the supervising manager of the event or school staff on site or Chaplain in the first instance for advice and direction - depending on the persons involved and nature of the concern. You may also call the Diocese of Wagga Wagga Professionals Standards Safeguarding Officer for advice on 02 69370279 or 0400 487 591.

Either way all allegations of abuse of any type by Youth Ministry employees or volunteers, or any Diocese staff involved in Youth Ministry must be reported to the Diocese of Wagga Wagga Professionals Standards Safeguarding Officer via 02 69370279 or 0400 487 591 or email reevesd@wagga.catholic.org.au

A [Confidential Incident Recording Form](#) should be used to record details of any incident or matter of concern, and can be found at Appendix B of this document.

Nothing in this document restricts the right of any person to report any matter to the police or other authorities.

Protecting Young People - Summary Checklist

1. Make sure you have all relevant checks required in this policy by the Diocese and State and Federal law (see page 5).
2. Make sure you have read and signed the Youth Ministry Adult Leader Code of Conduct. All adult leaders, or assistants, acting in a paid, volunteering or visiting capacity, are required to have read it, be given their own copy in a form they request, and be given the opportunity to have any part explained, prior to active Youth Ministry involvement in any event or meeting. Attached Youth Ministry Adult Leader Code of Conduct (see appendix A).
3. Make sure all adult leaders, or assistants, acting in a paid, volunteering or visiting capacity, have been given a copy of this manual, in a format they prefer, and informed they are required to have read it, and be given the opportunity to have any part explained, prior to active Youth Ministry involvement in any event or meeting.
4. An adult leader should never be alone with a young person. Always remain within eyesight of others.
5. Physical punishment is never appropriate. Ensure leaders have agreed on a standard plan for managing inappropriate behaviour, and ensure another leader is present when correcting a young person. If a young person is a danger to themselves or others, parents or carers should be contacted to remove their young person. In an emergency situation contact 000.
6. When praying with young people, request permission before laying hands on a young persons' head or touching a young person, and pray in teams of two adults.
7. No private or excessive touching.
8. Avoid showing favouritism or engaging in emotionally inappropriate or age inappropriate relationships.
9. Advise young people that if anything is disclosed which is of harm to themselves or others, it cannot be kept confidential.
10. Bullying or harassment via social media is wrong and is not tolerated by the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.
11. Only release young people aged under-18 to known people at the conclusion of an activity. If in doubt, contact the parents or emergency contact to confirm.
- 12. Complaints/Allegations must**
 - **be treated at notification place and time as always true and believed,**
 - **treated seriously regardless of content**
 - **advice sought from appropriate qualified agencies or persons**
 - **records made and kept**
 - **report made to appropriate authorities**
 - **with strict confidentiality maintained within those who need to know as part of the child protection process.**

This document aligns itself to the Catholic Integrity in the Service of the Church Policy which should also be read, especially Sections 3.1 and 5.5. This can be found at <https://www.catholic.org.au/documents/1344-integrity-in-ministry-2010-1>

Resources

Online NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>

Telephone Contacts Action and Support for Youth Workers and Youth themselves

- 13 21 11** Child Protection Helpline (open 24 hours/7 days) - To report suspected child abuse or neglect or confirm if report required
- 13 14 44** NSW Police assistance line for sex assault allegations
- 13 11 14** LIFELINE - a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services
- 1800 55 1800** Kids Help Line - Crisis support
- 132289** Parentline for support with online issues or visit <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/report.aspx>
students can call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 also for online issues
- 1800 695 463** A national relationships helpline for young people to talk to someone about the relationship issues they may be experiencing, or if they are unclear about where to draw the line between what is, or is not, a respectful relationship.
- 1800 99 10 99** Child Wise-National Child Abuse Prevention Helpline. Confidential support service for individuals, organisations, professionals and parents requiring assistance with child protection.
- 1800 650 890** Headspace A free and confidential telephone and online service for young people aged 12-25. Qualified youth mental health professionals provide support to young people worried about their mental health or experiencing issues such as depression, bullying and isolation. Support is also available to concerned parents or carers.
- 1300 1300 52** Parent Line NSW. Trained, professional counsellors with experience in helping families offer advice and information for parents and carers. Support is available for issues such as behavioural and emotional problems, discipline, adolescent issues, family relationships, sole parent issues, school problems, child care and juvenile justice.

Websites

Online NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide;
<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>

NSW Ombudsman, Practice Update 2011, Defining Reportable Conduct.
http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0013/5620/PU_CP_02_11_Reportable_Conduct_v3.pdf

NSW Department of Family & Community Services
<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/mandatory-reporters>

The Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner's Cybersmart website <https://www.esafety.gov.au/> provides cyber safety information for young children, teens and parents. It also has an Online Helpline for young people who have had negative online experiences, such as cyber bullying. Phone **1800 55 1800**

Legislation that underpins the protection of children and youth is as follows:

Children and Young People (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/caypapa1998442/

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/acts/1998-157.pdf>

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2012/51/historical2015-11-02/full>

Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)
<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1900/40/full>

Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/oa1974114/

Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/inforce/4d329f0b-0983-e6ac-d6fd-83cb6190360e/1998-146.pdf>

Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
http://www5.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/fla1975114/

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Parental Responsibility Contracts) Act 2006
<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/acts/2006-67.pdf>

Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga Youth Ministry Adult Leader - Code of Conduct

All adult leaders, or assistants, acting in a paid, volunteering or visiting capacity, are required to have read and be familiar with this Code of Conduct, be given the opportunity to have any part explained, and to agree and sign in accepting the terms and conditions of this Code of Conduct, prior to active Youth Ministry involvement in any event or meeting.

I, (PRINT NAME IN CAPITALS) will:

- Conduct myself in a Christian manner through language, dress and behaviour and be a positive role model to promote the values of the Catholic Church through my words and actions.
- Act in accordance with the federal laws, and the laws, regulations and rules of the State/Territory in which the activity is hosted.
- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration. I will only use physical restraint as a last resort or in an emergency.
- Avoid all forms of discrimination and respect the dignity of each person without regard to economic status, age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or physical or mental abilities.
- Use positive reinforcement and communication rather than criticism, unhealthy competition, or comparison.
- Adhere to emergency plans and evacuation routes at any venue and adhere to all instructions provided by venue staff.
- Uphold the authority of those responsible for the program or activity in which I am participating and assist them to engage youth participants.
- Ensure there is another adult present in any situation where I am in the presence of minors.
- Seek assistance if a young person’s behaviour is causing danger to those around him or her, and if necessary, contact police.

I will not:

- Engage in any inappropriate conduct, but especially with minors.
- Form inappropriate relationships with a young person; for instance, by placing myself in a position where a young person may come to rely on me emotionally, or by attempting to act as a surrogate parent. It is my responsibility, not the young person’s, to set appropriate guidelines and boundaries. I will not show favouritism to any particular young person such as through gifts or continually showing greater attention than is given to others.
- Upload, post on social media or transmit via a mobile device embarrassing or inappropriate photos of myself or others.
- Smoke in the presence of minors, purchase tobacco products or distribute tobacco products to minors.
- Possess, use or be under the influence of alcohol while supervising minors or while participating in the activity, or purchase alcohol for or distribute alcohol to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- Use, purchase, possess, distribute or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Purchase, download, possess or distribute pornography.
- Participate in, or tolerate behaviour which humiliates, ridicules, threatens or degrades others.
- Use physical discipline in any way for behaviour management of others. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This includes but is not limited to slapping, pinching, shaking, hitting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviour of a minor.
- Use rude or offensive language in the presence of a minor.

I hereby declare that I am not currently being investigated, nor have been investigated in the past, to my knowledge; nor have I ever been charged or convicted; for an offence against any person whether an adult or a minor (including but not limited to: murder, assault, battery, sexual assault, injury to a minor, and abandoning or endangering a minor); I have never been terminated from employment or a volunteer position for reasons related to allegations of physical or sexual abuse by me; nor have I sought or received any medical, physical or psychological treatments for reasons involving physical or sexual abuse by me. I understand that should my response to any of the above statements change, I am obligated to inform Wagga Diocese Youth Ministry Leadership immediately.

I understand that should I admit to or be found guilty of an incident of sexual misconduct of other offence against any person (as noted above), or if it appears that an alleged claim is substantiated; my involvement with the activity shall be immediately terminated.

Further, I understand that my failure to agree to and abide by this Code of Conduct will bar me from participating in the activity.

I have read the above Code of Conduct and agree to follow it. I understand that if the Code is breached then Wagga Diocese Youth Ministry may:

- Report my misconduct to local statutory authorities, if the breach in any way violates local ordinances or laws
- Dismiss me from the activity
- Ban me from involvement in future events

Signature: _____

Date: _____

**Signed Original Copy to be forwarded to Bishops Delegate, Child Protection Office, Diocese of Wagga Wagga, at earliest opportunity. Copy to Signee.*

Confidential Incident Recording Form

This Confidential Incident Recording Form is part of the Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga’s Youth Leader’s Policy and Procedure Manual. This form should be used by paid youth Ministry staff or leadership volunteers and may be used by anyone who wishes to record any incident or breach of the Code of Conduct, make a complaint or report any issue of concern regarding young people in a parish or agency of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

Non staff (i.e. event attendees or advocates) may use this form, or you can call Father Sean Byrne on 0428 581 447 or 6923 1284 or email frseanbyrnes@gmail.com

Alternatively, you can call the Diocese Professional Standards and Safeguarding Officer on 0400 487 591 or email safeguarding@wagga.catholic.org.au

In all cases where immediate emergency assistance required call Police on 000 or alternatively 1800 333000 or 131444 for non-urgent Police assistance to report a crime.

Name person completing this form	
Position held in parish or Diocese Agency	
Address	
Telephone	
Date of incident/s or concern	
Date form was completed	
Details of the incident/s or concern: (please be as descriptive as possible, include dates, locations, full names of all involved including witnesses etc).	
What action have you taken already?	
Who have you informed? - name, title (if relevant) and date	

Signature: _____

Date: _____

The following form needs to be provided to parents/guardians for any young people that need to access a youth ministry communication platform, signed and dated by the parents/guardians and retained on the youth ministry records permanently.

DIGITAL USE PERMISSION NOTICE

As Parent/s/Carer/s.....(name print)

Of.....(name(s) print).

I/we give permission for my /our child to use electronic communications and digital technologies for youth group purposes. I understand this permission is required so that students are able to make optimum use of the group technology and actively participate in all lessons or events. The communication is only required for the Youth Ministry public communication platforms ONLY as one on one direct communication between leaders and youth is not permitted.

I / we believe that my/ our child understands their responsibility to use technology responsibly.

Parent/Carer/Guardian Name Print:

Sign

Date

(original copy to retained permanently in Youth Ministry records and by the relevant Chaplain in printed hard copy)

PERMISSION NOTICE FOR SHARED TRANSPORT

As Parent/s/Carer/s.....(name print)

Of.....(name(s) print).

I/we give permission for my /our child to share private transport with a leader of the Youth Ministry team to attend the official event/gathering, advertised as the:

.....

at location of.....

On the date/s of.....ONLY

I understand the Youth Leader may not have a full car license.

I understand the Diocese Policy for Youth leaders and volunteers transporting youth is:

- **The default position is that parents can car pool and make arrangements amongst themselves to ensure transport to events – transport is not a primary or secondary role of youth leaders or Chaplains - and assisting in it should be a rare exception.**
- **Written permission from a parent, not txt or phone call, is required for each occasion for youth transport.**
- **On all occasions of transport two adults shall be in the vehicle.**
- **Where it is impossible for a second adult to be present two youth under 18 must travel together as an absolute minimum.**
- **Records of permission from Parents/Guardians shall be retained permanently**

Parent/Carer/Guardian Name Print: _____

Sign: _____

Date: _____

(original copy to retained permanently in Youth Ministry records and by the relevant Chaplain in printed hard copy)