



**Catholic Diocese of Sale**

**Professional Standards**

**SCREENING (CLEARANCE) AND SIGN  
IN FOR CHURCH PERSONNEL AND  
OTHERS**

June 2024

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## Definitions

**Child:** a person who is under the age of 18 years. Throughout this document any reference to either 'child' or 'children' is a reference to a person or persons under the age of 18.

**Church personnel:** Clergy, Religious congregations, Diocesan and Parish employees, and Parish volunteers.

**Adults at risk:** This is the new term for vulnerable adult (as per version 2 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, 2020). The term 'adults at risk' does not define a victim or focus on the individual but rather on risk factors. This a person who, by reason of life circumstances, disability, age or illness, is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or is or may be unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. This can include those suffering from temporary risks such as bereavement and marriage breakdown. This definition of an adult covers all people of 18 years of age or older.

## Abbreviations

ACBC	Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
ACMR	Australian Catholic Ministry Register
CDS	Catholic Diocese of Sale
NCSS	National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
WWC Act	Working with Children Act 2005
WWCC	Working with Children Check

## History of Updates to Policy

29 May 2020 - Approved by Professional Standards Committee in their May 2020 meeting

10 June 2021 - Updated Appendix - Form 3 - details of new Bishop

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Diocese of Sale (CDS) has policies for the safeguarding of children and adults at risk which includes a commitment to the provision of a safe and supportive environment in which people feel safe and a code of conduct.

One of the essential requirements for the CDS is to establish protocols and systems in relation to the protection of children and adults at risk. In particular, the documents relating to protocols and systems used to scrutinise church personnel. This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Diocese of Sale Safeguarding Policy
- Diocese of Sale Complaints Handling Policy
- Diocese of Sale Working With Children Protocol.

This Policy document contains two parts:

- Screening of Clergy, Church personnel and Visitors to Diocese, and
- Sign-in process for all individuals involved.

A separate Records Management Policy will address how records are managed such that they are readily available for scrutiny.

## 2. SCREENING PROCESS

The screening process covers all Church personnel: Clergy, Employees, Volunteers, Contractors and Visitors to the Diocese. Screening consists of the following mechanisms:

### 2.1 Working with Children Check (WWCC)

This screens individuals who are doing child-related work. This is a requirement of the *Working with Children Act 2005*. The CDS mandates that **all** Church personnel undertake a WWCC, regardless of whether their duties are directly involving child-related or child-facing work. In addition, Contractors and Visitors on business or conducting ministry are required to undertake a WWCC.

### 2.2 Police Check

It is possible to obtain a WWCC even if the person has a criminal record provided

the crime is not considered to be a risk to children (e.g. financial crime). It is therefore necessary to have a Police Check to determine the suitability for a position of trust. In particular, it specifies criminal history convictions, findings of guilt or pending court proceedings. The CDS recommends that the Parish Safeguarding Officer has a Police Check in addition to the WWCC.

### **2.3 Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR)**

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference operates the Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR) which provides a central registry of clergy which have been screened with respect to their particular jurisdiction. In Victoria, the ACMR is provided by the relevant Church authority (such as CDS) with both the details of the member of clergy together with Working with Children Check (WWCC) status.

### **2.4 Diocesan Clearance Process**

In CDS, clergy and visitors intending to conduct ministry in the Diocese are subject to the Diocesan Clearance Process. The following steps apply for Clergy or visitors to the Parish from outside the Diocese or a non-Catholic visitor within the Diocese who intend to conduct ministry. Refer to Fig 1 Process for Screening/ Clearance. Forms 1, 2 and 3 are in the Appendix of this document.

After the Person is in contact with Parish A and intends to do Ministry there:

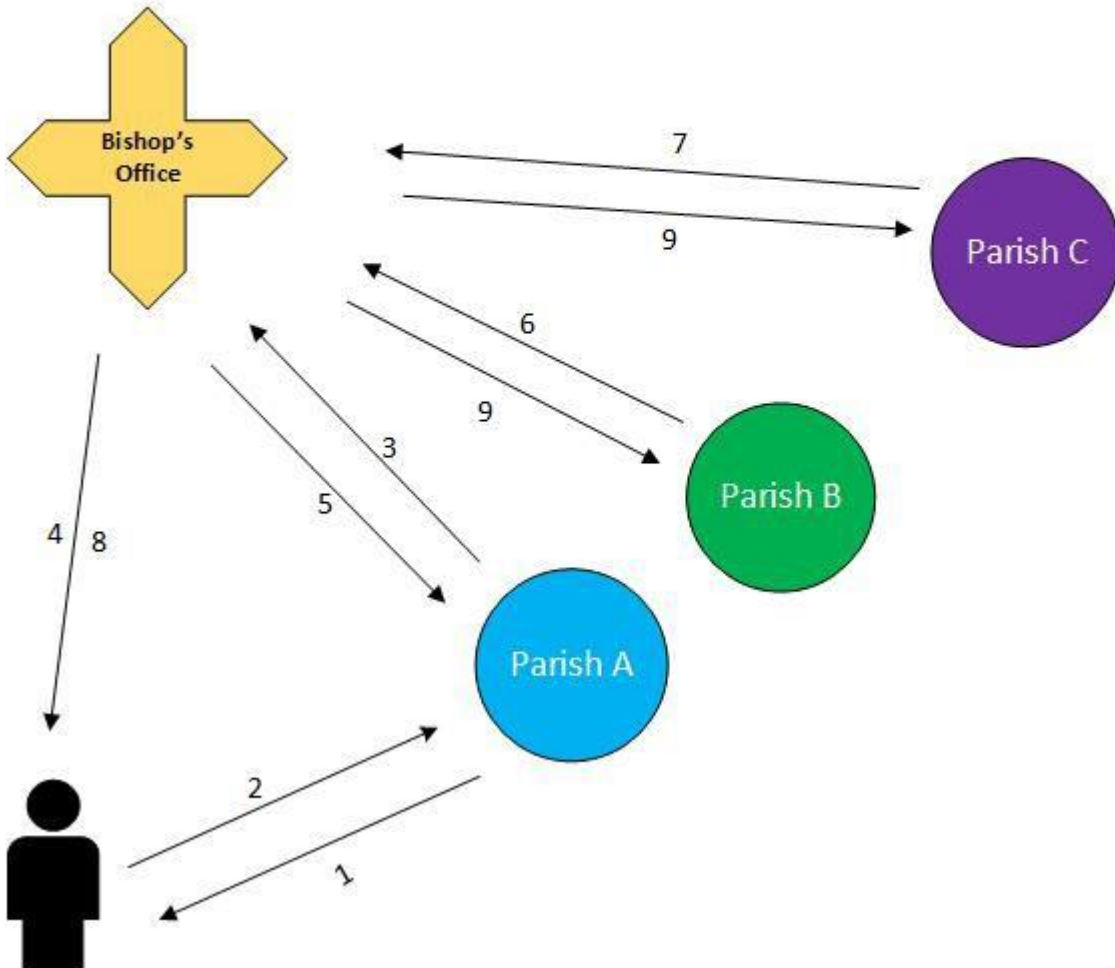
1. Parish A sends Forms 1 & 2 to the person.
2. Person completes Forms 1 & 2 and returns to Parish A.
3. Parish A sends Form 3 with covering letter to the Bishop's Office.
4. The Bishop's Office sends a clearance letter to the person.
5. The Bishop's Office sends a copy of the clearance letter to Parish A.

If the Person is in Contact with Parish B and Parish C and intends to do ministry there:

6. Parish B sends Form 3 to the Bishop's Office (noting clearance from Parish A).
7. Parish C sends Form 3 to the Bishop's Office (noting clearance from Parish A).
8. The Bishop's Office sends a clearance letter to the person.
9. The Bishop's Office sends a copy of the clearance letter to Parishes B and C.

If the clearance is requested by a Diocesan Organiser or the Catholic Education Office, the same steps apply replacing Parish A for Diocesan Organiser or Catholic Education Office.

**Figure 1: Process for Screening / Clearance (For Clergy and Parish Visitors)**



### 3. SIGN - IN PROCESS

The purpose of signing in is to provide a record of the visit of the person to the parish. It is not a screening mechanism but serves to record a person’s presence on parish premises at the particular date and time. Recording whether an individual is on parish premises (church, presbytery, parish hall or other locations) is necessary not only for safeguarding reasons but is also a safety measure in case of a fire or other incident that requires evacuation. Records are to be maintained both during usual operating hours and outside of service hours.

For those who have not been subject to the clearance process, signing in offers the opportunity to record if the individual has WWCC and has read and abides by the Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

This section addresses the sign-in policy for clergy, employees, volunteers and visitors to the parish.

### 3.1 Clergy

During the Professional Standards Committee Meeting of 19 September 2019, it was proposed that Diocesan clergy would **not** be required to sign-in when they are conducting any ministry within the Diocese. However, if clergy are visiting from outside the Diocese, they would be required to sign-in. Clergy are still required to sign in if they visit a nursing home or a school. Other jurisdictions like the Archdiocese of Perth do not require clergy sign in unless the parish requires it for record-keeping.

Since the purpose of sign-in is for record-keeping and if clergy are not required to sign-in, it is proposed that the parish secretary keep a record of the event and record the names of those who were present e.g. Recording the clergy who attended a funeral mass (regardless of whether they were concelebrating the mass). If however, the recording of the event is not carried out, then it is recommended that the practice of sign-in should continue.

It is strongly recommended that clergy keep a diary or a daily log of their movements across the Diocese. At the moment, the best repository for this would either be a hardcopy notebook or a softcopy format (such as an electronic calendar or note). Details will be addressed in the Records Management Policy.

### 3.2 Employees

Employees of the respective parish are not required to sign-in unless they are visiting another Parish on business. Similarly, employees of the school associated with the parish are also not required to sign-in provided the parish has been given a current list of employees from the school Principal.

Diocesan employees are expected to sign-in when they visit a parish.

### 3.3 Volunteers

Volunteers are those who are involved in ministry include Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Children's Liturgy, Choir, Sacristans, Altar servers, Collectors etc. Rosters for these ministries are managed by the Parish Secretary where in most cases, the names of the volunteers appear in the Parish bulletin. Sign-in sheets should be encouraged to be used as this provides useful records of who was present on church premises at the particular date and time. Periodically, volunteers are required to review and re-commit to the Parish Code of Conduct.

### 3.4 Contractors

All contractors are required to sign-in and present their WWCC and to acknowledge (with a signature) that they abide by the Parish Code of Conduct.

### 3.5 Visitors

All visitors on business or who intend to conduct ministry (including those who have been subject to the Diocesan clearance process) are required to sign-in and present their WWCC and to acknowledge (with a signature) that they abide by the Parish Code of Conduct.

For visitors who are not conducting ministry and who choose to stay on church premises outside of service hours (with the assumption that these are usually locked), these visitors are required to sign into the visitors book, even though they have the permission of the parish priest. For example, if the visitor has been to confession and the penitent chooses to stay in the church for longer than say ten minutes afterwards, then they are required to sign into the visitors book.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Although screening and sign in are valuable safeguarding measures, and are useful in providing evidence of systems and protocols expected of CDS, this alone does not offer a full proof assurance that we are able to safeguard children and adults at risk. What is required is a full suite of measures of which this policy is but one.

### History of Updates to Policy

Draft Review Date	February 2020
Approval Date by Professional Standards Committee	29 May 2020
Date of next major Review	October 2024



## 5. APPENDIX

1. Visitors to the Diocese of Sale Protocol (Clerics)
2. Visitors to the Diocese of Sale WWCC Clearance Protocol (non-Clerics)
3. Statement by Church Authority relating to Professional Standards
4. Request for Clearance for Visitor to Parish



# Catholic Diocese of Sale

PO Box 1410  
6 Witton Street  
WARRAGUL 3820

Ph: 5622 6600

## **VISITORS TO THE DIOCESE OF SALE PROTOCOL** **(TOWARDS HEALING/WWCC CLEARANCE)** **CLERICS**

You are most welcome to visit the Catholic Diocese of Sale.

In order to visit for ministry in our Diocese, you need to complete one of the two steps below *prior* to undertaking any ministry in the Diocese. Please note, apart from Funerals, Sacraments and last minute Parish Supply, it is preferred that several months' notice of your visit be given.

### **The Diocese asks you to:**

#### **1: FOR HOLDERS OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC MINISTRY REGISTER (ACMR) NUMBER, PLEASE PROVIDE THE PARISH PRIEST/S, BY EMAIL OR PHONE, WITH:**

- a. Your ACMR Number
- b. Legible copy of your Working with Children Check card
- c. The date/s of your visit
- d. Purpose/s of your visit
- e. Location/s of your visit

#### **2: FOR NON HOLDERS OF ACMR NUMBER, PLEASE:**

- a. Contact the Parish Priest/s of the Parish/es where your ministry will take place to inform and seek permission for your visit.
- b. The Parish Priest will provide you with the necessary documents (Form 45.6 of Towards Healing & Form 45.7 of Towards Healing) to be completed. (*\*\*\*\*\* If you are visiting multiple parishes only one set of documents needs to be completed BUT permission is required from each Parish Priest.*)
- c. For visitors residing in Australia: It is a requirement that all visitors to the Diocese of Sale hold a current Working With Children Card (WWCC) or Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration Card (VIT). Provide a clear copy of your WWCC or VIT Card. For interstate visitors please provide the Working with Children card relevant to your state. If you do not currently have a Working With Children Card you may apply online at:  
<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>
- d. Return the signed documents and copy of the relevant Working With Children card to the Parish Priest. The Parish Priest will then forward your documents to the Bishop with a request for approval.

**The Diocese will:**

1: Send a copy of your Faculty Letter to the Parish Priest/s of the Parish/es you are visiting to inform them that you are cleared to perform ministry at that time.

\*\*\* Please note that it is a requirement of the Diocese of Sale that all visitors, on arrival in our Parishes, sign the Parish Code of Conduct. Visitors must also sign the attendance which is available in the Parish Office (*if visiting outside office hours, the attendance sheet will be made available at the Church/Parish venue*) on each individual visit with date, time of arrival and time of departure. You will also be required to produce your Working with Children Card (or VIT card) at the time of signing in.

2: Send your Faculty Letter to you and your Church Authority, if you provide the email addresses, to let you know that you are cleared to perform ministry and the process is complete.

Please ensure that you provide the above documents/information as soon as possible so that you are able to visit our Diocese. Remember that events are not permitted to be advertised and you are not able to undertake ministry in our Diocese until we have informed the Parish Priest (and any associated Organisation) in writing that you are able to do so.



# Catholic Diocese of Sale

PO Box 1410  
6 Witton Street  
WARRAGUL 3820

Ph: 5622 6600  
Fax: 5623 3535

## **VISITORS TO THE DIOCESE OF SALE PROTOCOL** **(TOWARDS HEALING / WWCC CLEARANCE)** **CHURCH WORKERS** (*non cleric or religious*)

You are most welcome to visit the Catholic Diocese of Sale.

In order to be part of ministry in our Diocese, you need to complete and return the attached documents as directed below *prior* to undertaking any ministry in the Diocese. The Diocese requires at least two months' notice of any proposed visits.

### **The Diocese asks you to:**

- a. Contact the Parish Priest/s of the Parish/es where your ministry will take place to inform and seek permission for your visit.
- b. The Parish Priest will provide you with the necessary documents (Form 45.6 of Towards Healing & Form 45.7 of Towards Healing) to be completed. (*\*\*\*\*\* If you are visiting multiple parishes only one set of documents needs to be completed BUT permission is required from each Parish Priest.*)
- c. For visitors residing in Australia: It is a requirement that all visitors to the Diocese of Sale hold a current Working With Children Card (WWCC) or Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration Card (VIT). Provide a clear copy of your WWCC or VIT Card. For interstate visitors please provide the Working with Children card relevant to your state. If you do not currently have a Working With Children Card you may apply online at:  
<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>
- d. Return the signed documents and copy of the relevant Working With Children card to the Parish Priest. The Parish Priest will then forward your documents to the Bishop with a request for approval.

### **If approval is granted by the Bishop, the Diocese will:**

1: Send a copy of the Letter of Welcome to the Parish Priest/s of the Parish/es you are visiting to inform them that you are cleared to perform ministry at that time.

\*\*\* Please note that it is a requirement of the Diocese of Sale that all visitors, on arrival in our Parishes, sign the Parish Code of Conduct. Visitors must also sign the attendance which is available in the Parish Office (*if visiting outside office hours, the attendance sheet will be made available at the Church/Parish venue*) on each individual visit with date, time of arrival and time of departure. You will also be required to produce your Working with Children Card (or VIT card) at the time of signing in.

2: Send your Letter of Welcome to you and your Church Authority, if you provide the email addresses, to let you know that you are cleared to perform ministry and the process is complete.

Please ensure that you provide the above documents/information as soon as possible so that you are able to visit our Diocese. Remember that events are not permitted to be advertised and you are not able to undertake ministry in our Diocese until we have informed the Parish Priest (and any associated Organisation) in writing that you are able to do so.

**APPENDIX - Form 2**

To : The Bishop's Office  
Catholic Diocese of Sale  
P O Box 1410  
**WARRAGUL VIC 3810**

I, (Name) ..... in accordance with the policy of the Catholic Church in Australia relating to professional standards state that there have not been any substantiated complaints of abuse against me and I am not aware of any circumstances that might give rise to a complaint of abuse against me regarding professional standards.

I am aware that, moving into a new jurisdiction, I will be subject to the requirements of relevant State legislation concerning clearances to work with certain categories of persons.

Date of Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature:

Name:

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Relevant Paragraphs from Towards Healing (*revised January 2010*)**

- 45.6 Whenever a cleric or religious is to transfer from one diocese or institute to another (whether within Australia or coming from overseas), or is to carry out a ministry or apostolate in another diocese or institute, the Church Authority to which the person is to be transferred shall ask for a written statement from the priest or religious indicating whether there have been any substantiated complaints of abuse against him or her or whether there are known circumstances that could lead to a complaint of abuse. Such statements shall be held as confidential documents by the Church Authority.
- 45.7 In these circumstances the Church Authority in the diocese of institute where the cleric or religious previously lived and worked, shall provide a statement in writing to the new diocese or institute indicating whether such authority knows of any complaints of abuse which have been substantiated or is aware of circumstances that could lead to a complaint of abuse, or whether it considers that there would be an unacceptable risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults if the person were to be allowed to engage in particular kinds of ministry. Where there has been a substantiated complaint, the Church Authority shall furnish all information necessary to evaluate the seriousness of the offence, and shall report on all treatment undertaken, and other measures employed to ensure that further offences do not occur. Such statements shall be held as confidential documents by the church Authorities.

\*\*\*\* On Diocesan/Congregational letterhead

**STATEMENT BY CHURCH AUTHORITY  
RELATING TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

Dear Bishop O'Regan,

In response to the requirements of Towards Healing Paragraph 44.7, as the relevant Church Authority of (*write Name of visitor here*)

, I hereby state that in relation to this person,

there have been no substantiated complaints of abuse against him or her, nor are there any known circumstances that could lead to a complaint of abuse.

I am aware that, moving into a new jurisdiction, this person will be subject to the requirements of relevant State legislation concerning clearances to work with certain categories of persons.

Duration of Visit / Appointment:

The purpose of Visit / Appointment:

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Full Name

Date of Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:

Official Role:

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Relevant Paragraphs from Towards Healing (*revised January 2010*)**

- 45.6 Whenever a cleric or religious is to transfer from one diocese or institute to another (whether within Australia or coming from overseas), or is to carry out a ministry or apostolate in another diocese or institute, the Church Authority to which the person is to be transferred shall ask for a written statement from the priest or religious indicating whether there have been any substantiated complaints of abuse against him or her or whether there are known circumstances that could lead to a complaint of abuse. Such statements shall be held as confidential documents by the Church Authority.
- 45.7 In these circumstances the Church Authority in the diocese of institute where the cleric or religious previously lived and worked, shall provide a statement in writing to the new diocese or institute indicating whether such authority knows of any complaints of abuse which have been substantiated or is aware of circumstances that could lead to a complaint of abuse, or whether it considers that there would be an unacceptable risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults if the person were to be allowed to engage in particular kinds of ministry.. Where there has been a substantiated complaint, the Church Authority shall furnish all information necessary to evaluate the seriousness of the offence, and shall report on all treatment undertaken, and other measures employed to ensure that further offences do not occur. Such statements shall be held as confidential documents by the church Authorities.

**REQUEST FOR CLEARANCE FOR PARISH VISITOR**

Date:

Dear Bishop Greg,

I refer to the application of *(insert name)* ....., who has applied for clearance to minister in the Diocese/Parish of

*(insert name)* .....

I confirm that I have undertaken due diligence regarding the proposed ministry of this person and I am satisfied that their proposed ministry is in keeping with the Catholic Ethos. I now ask that you grant *(cross out inapplicable)* Temporary Faculties/a Letter of Welcome to:

**Name of Visitor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postal Address of Visitor:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address of Visitor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mobile phone of Visitor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Visit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose of Visit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date/s of Visit:** \_\_\_\_\_

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Sophy Morley

*Documents Attached (please tick):*

- Personal Clearance
- Organisation Clearance
- Copy of Working With Children Card

**OR**

- For applicable Australian Clergy: ACMR Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Copy of Working With Children Card