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 People are NOT for sale

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans

4.2 Safeguarding Policy			
Approved and Issued by National Committee	October 2020	Version No	8
Scheduled Review Date	April 2025	Previous Review Date	April 2024

Safeguarding Statement of Commitment

ACRATH creates and maintains a culture of safety, empathy and inclusion for all. The care and well-being of children and adults at risk are at the core of all ACRATH’s activities.

Everyone has inherent dignity and ACRATH respects the right of each one to have this dignity valued and protected.

ACRATH has zero tolerance for abuse and fully complies and cooperates with the civil law in each jurisdiction where members, staff and volunteers are engaged.

ACRATH members, staff and volunteers:

- commit to establishing right relationships, restorative justice and promoting a safe and positive environment for children, adults at risk, and in relationship with one another.
- acknowledge the lifelong trauma of abuse victims, survivors and their families.
- acknowledge the resilience and strength of survivors as they seek paths of justice and healing.
- unreservedly express sorrow for the pain, suffering, hurt and harm that people have suffered through abuse and any subsequent failure of Church leaders and others to respond appropriately to that abuse.

Introduction

ACRATH is an association of members, incorporated as an Association in the State of Victoria, who are volunteers and are committed to working to eliminate trafficking in humans in Australia and overseas. It is an Australian Registered Charity with a network that spans across Australia in cities, regional centres and remote Australia. It was founded by a small group of religious sisters in 2005 and is endorsed by Catholic Religious Australia – the peak body for over 150 religious orders in Australia, representing almost 5000 religious sisters, brothers and priests.

It has connections overseas through Talitha Kum, the International Network of Consecrated Life Against Trafficking in Persons, part of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG). ACRATH has a small number of staff and volunteers who are engaged with the National Office under the direction of the National Executive Officer.

Purpose

ACRATH is committed to working together with other organisations and individuals towards the elimination of human trafficking and the harm it causes in Australia, the Asia Pacific region, and globally.

Values

Dignity of each human being

Human Rights

Women's Rights

Justice

Collaboration

Context

Australia is a destination country for trafficked persons. Some people are coerced or tricked into coming into Australia with promises of safe work or are coerced into unsafe relationships. Other people are seeking to migrate to improve their lives and the socio-economic status of their families. As Australia opens up to free trade markets with weakened worker protections in their home countries, the demand for cheap labour, products and services will continue to intensify. This will contribute to an environment where slavery, slavery-like practices, human trafficking, debt bondage, and exploitation in many industries can flourish.

Scope

This Safeguarding Policy applies to all members, staff, volunteers and contractors engaged with ACRATH.

Implementation and Responsibilities

The National Committee of ACRATH has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all aspects of safeguarding, particularly for children, young people and adults at risk are effectively addressed and practised.

The National Committee appoints the Safeguarding Committee which reports to the National Committee.

The Safeguarding Committee supports ACRATH to fulfil its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. The committee has delegated authority to oversee and monitor policies, procedures and practices which safeguard children and adults at risk engaging with ACRATH and to ensure safeguarding functions are embedded in the governance structures and practices of ACRATH.

The National Committee appoints the Safeguarding Coordinator who reports directly to the President.

This position is responsible for co-ordinating, overseeing and monitoring the fundamental obligation of ACRATH to ensure the proper safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

Day to day implementation of ACRATH Safeguarding Policy and practice is delegated to the National Executive Officer and Regional Co-ordinators by the National Committee.

ACRATH adopts and acts in accord with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) as issued and modified from time to time by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd. (See Appendix 1)

ACRATH's practices are consistent with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the legislation of State and Territories and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

Commitment to safeguarding practices

Every member, volunteer, staff member and contractor engaged with ACRATH is familiarised with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, this policy, and ACRATH's Code of Practice, and is expected to comply with the principles and practices that are outlined.

All members, volunteers and staff are required to hold the relevant Working with Children and Vulnerable Persons Checks according to the legislation of the local jurisdiction.

The Working with Children and Vulnerable Persons Check is required by ACRATH members engaged in Companionship, presentations, community engagement (hosting stalls, parish fundraisers); staff, regional coordinators, companions, volunteers and National Committee members.

Records for the relevant Working with Children and Vulnerable Persons Checks are held at the National Office of ACRATH and are kept current by the National Executive Officer.

Response to Complaints

The National Committee, through the President and Vice President, will respond to a person who presents a complaint about abuse with transparency, sensitivity and compassion. A person making a complaint will be made aware of the options available, including the fact that the matter will be referred to the police by ACRATH if it is believed that a crime has been committed.

Any member who receives a complaint is required to refer it to the President and Vice-President (safeguarding@acrath.org.au) who will follow the ACRATH policy in this regard. The complaints process and contact details are published on the ACRATH website.

Pastoral Support

The National Committee through its delegate may arrange with the person making the complaint, appropriate pastoral and counselling support if this is requested by the person. It will be made clear that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if a criminal act has been involved.

If it is a criminal act, support will be offered to the complainant to make a report to the police.

Record Keeping

The National Committee is committed to keeping accurate confidential records of all complaints received, in a manner that respects the applicable Privacy Regulation, for a period not less than 50 years. (See 3.2 Records Management and Archives Policy)

If/when ACRATH ceases to exist, every effort will be made to ensure the preservation of the archival material under agreement with another entity of the Catholic Church.

Professional Compliance

ACRATH members, volunteers and staff and contractors will comply with the relevant professional codes of practice which apply to their professions as well as follow ACRATH's Code of Conduct.

Regular training will be conducted for members, volunteers, and staff to familiarise them with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, this policy and Code of Conduct that relate to their engagement and to the obligations of ACRATH.

Communication

The National Committee will ensure that:

- Guidelines for relating to the media are developed, implemented and reviewed according to the schedule for policy updates.
- Guidelines will include procedures for accurate and timely information should an issue of complaint become public.

ACRATH's Statement of Commitment is published on its website and in other appropriate publications.

Review

The Safeguarding Policy and related documentation will be reviewed annually or earlier as required by the Safeguarding Committee and the National Committee.

Contact Details:

ACRATH President president@acrath.org.au

Safeguarding Complaints: safeguarding@acrath.org.au

National Office: 54 Beaconsfield Parade Albert Park, Victoria 3206

T: 03 9645 5986

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd

Phone: 1300 603 411

Email: info@acsltd.org.au

Appendix 1**National Catholic Safeguarding Standards**

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards provide a framework for Catholic Church entities to promote the safety of children and adults at risk. They constitute a framework which articulates requirements for Catholic entities to promote the safety of children and adults at risk through the implementation of policies and activities to prevent, respond to and report concerns regarding abuse.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd <https://www.acsltd.org.au/>

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (2022, Edition 2)

- 1. Committed leadership, governance and culture**
The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture.
- 2. Children and adults are safe, informed and participate**
Children and adults are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- 3. Partnering with families, carers and communities**
Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults.
- 4. Equity is promoted and diversity is respected**
Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
- 5. Robust human resource management**
People working with children and adults are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice.
- 6. Effective complaints management**
Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities and personnel.
- 7. Ongoing education and training**
Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and adults safe through information, ongoing education and training.
- 8. Safe physical and online environments**
Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed.
- 9. Continuous improvement**
Entities regularly review and improve implementation of their systems for keeping children and adults safe.
- 10. Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults**
Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.

Appendix 2

Definitions of Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve:

- being repeatedly rejected, name called or put down;
- being frightened by threats;
- continual coldness to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development;
- repeated exposure to family violence.

Family Violence

Family violence is behaviour by a person towards a family member that is:

- physically or sexually abusive;
- emotionally abusive;
- coercive or controlling or dominating behaviour toward a family member, causing the family member to fear for their safety or that of another family member;
- behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness or otherwise be exposed to the effects of behaviour referred to above.
- Exposure to family violence includes children seeing, hearing or experiencing the violence in a number of ways.

Grooming

Many perpetrators of sexual offences purposely create relationships with children and young people, their families and carers in order to create a situation where abuse could occur. Grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a person for sexual activity.

Examples include:

- spending special time with a person e.g. in private settings, away from the organisation, online; - isolating the person from family and peers;
- giving gifts to a person - showing favouritism;
- allowing the person to step out of boundaries or rules;
- touching inappropriately;
- testing and breaking professional boundaries.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide for the person's basic needs for life e.g. food; shelter; clothing; medical attention; supervision or care.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a person suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by another person. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a person.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power, force or authority to involve a person in any form of sexual activity. Sex offenders may engage in both contact and non-contact behaviours. Behaviours that sex offenders may engage in include:

- touching or fondling;
- obscene or suggestive phone calls/text messages;
- exhibitionism and/or voyeurism;
- pornographic images;
- penetration with penis, finger or other object into the mouth, anus or vagina.
- It is important to note that sexual abuse includes both contact and non-contact behaviour.

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is considered a specific form of sexual abuse because children and adults at risk, are unable to give informed consent. Sexual exploitation takes different forms. It can include being involved in sexually exploitive relationships, exposure to pornography, receiving money, goods, drugs or favours in exchange for sex with one or more adults, or being exploited in sex work. In all cases, those exploiting others have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, physical strength, economic or other resources.

Online Abuse

Online abuse is abuse that occurs when a person is abused with the use of the internet. Online abuse is multidimensional and occurs in many forms including but not limited to:

- image based abuse;
- verbal abuse;
- grooming;
- exposure to pornographic images;
- 'revenge porn'.

Further information: Australian E-safety Commissioner <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

Related Terms**Cumulative Harm**

Cumulative harm involves repeated and ongoing abuse and/or neglect which detrimentally impacts a person's development and wellbeing.

Multi-Dimensional Harm

Multi-dimensional harm occurs where a child is subjected to multiple forms of abuse.