

St Anne's Seaford Parish

Reporting Obligations and Procedures Policy

Our parish records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Our parish complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the Children, [Youth and Families Act 2005 \(Vic.\)](#), the [Crimes Act 1958 \(Vic.\)](#) and the recommendations of the [Betrayal of Trust report](#).

Our parish's *Reporting Obligations and Procedures Policy* sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child in our parish environment is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

We work to ensure all children, families and staff know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or a victim or if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

Our parish has also established internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a child. Refer to our parish's Child Protection – Reporting Obligations Policy Flow Chart (Appendix 1).

Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the following policies and procedures:

- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)

This policy applies to everyone involved with children in our church or agency. A child is anyone under the age of 18.

Any child safety concerns must be reported including:

- Disclosure of abuse or harm
- Allegation, suspicion or observation of inappropriate behaviour
- Breach of Code of Conduct
- Environmental safety issues
- Any behaviour or circumstances that create some concern about safety

Abuse means all forms of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect, and includes actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.

All safety issues must be reported to the Parish Priest or Parish Manager.

Depending on the issue, the person with the concern may also need to report to the authorities, as set out in this procedure.

If a criminal offence may have been committed, please first report the allegations to police.

Victoria Police will explain the options that are available to victims and what each pathway may involve. Speaking to the police does not commit the person reporting abuse to a full judicial response. Contact with Victoria Police can be made to the SANO Taskforce of **(03) 9247 6666** or at sanotaskforce@police.vic.gov.au or, **if urgent, by dialling 000**.

The SANO Taskforce is based within Victoria Police's Crime Command and comprises specialist sexual assault detectives. The SANO Taskforce was established to investigate historic and new allegations emanating from the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into child sexual abuse involving religious and non-government organisations and to coordinate investigations emerging from the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse.

SANO investigators are trained experts in sexual assault matters who will maintain the confidentiality of anyone who makes a complaint or wishes to provide information regarding child sexual abuse.

If a person wishes to pursue their complaint through the Church, they can do so through either the Melbourne Response, if the complaint relates to abuse by a priest, religious or Church lay person under the control of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, or otherwise through Towards Healing. Victims can contact the Melbourne Response on (03) 9225 7979 or Towards Healing on 1800 816 030.

Counselling is offered to victims through both the Melbourne Response and Towards Healing processes.

Source: <http://www.cam.org.au/Professional-Standards/Reporting-Abuse>

Appendix 1 – Flowchart

