

Standard 5



Robust human resource management

People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safeguarding values in practice

5.7.1 The entity implements a system to assess the safeguarding credentials and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy and religious moving between different seminaries, formation programs and Church jurisdictions.

Guidelines for managing the movement of clergy and religious for ministry.

Being able to verify safeguarding credentials and having a process to manage the movement of those in ministry is critical. Entities must ensure that safeguarding is prioritised, whilst also not compromising an individual's privacy. Safeguarding responsibilities under the Standards sit alongside other civil and legal responsibilities, such as WWCCs, and relate to the process by which a person gains permission to minister within a Church Jurisdiction. This document discusses the requirement for safeguarding statements as part of the process of applying for and granting permission to minister, but does not address all other responsibilities.

This requirement and related processes were previously outlined in *Towards Healing* 45.6 and 45.7.

Towards Healing 45.6 stated:

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 cleric 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.

Towards Healing 45.7 stated:

In these same circumstances the Church Authority in the diocese or 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 Authority.

The responsibility for this area, including the governance of the ACMR has been transferred to Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) as of 2021. This has now resulted in the requirements of *Towards Healing* 45.6 and 45.7 being integrated into the *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards* (NCSS) under the NCSS 5.7.1¹.

To fulfil the requirements of 5.7.1, the entity must have a system that:

- requires dual declarations are made by both the individual and the Church Authority;
- clearly defines 'good standing';
- verifies that an individual coming to exercise ministry in a new jurisdiction is currently in good standing;
- records visiting ministers in new jurisdictions (e.g. a sacristy register for visiting clergy to record the date, time and purpose of their attendance);
- records the movement of seminarians and candidates for formation across different seminaries or formation programs;
- updates immediately if there is a change in status; and
- has defined accountabilities, supported by education, to promote participation in the system.

NCSS 5.7.1 requiring entities to assess the safeguarding credentials and management of movement of those in ministry between Church Authority jurisdictions is directly aligned with the Royal Commission Recommendation 16.58.

Managing movement for ministry

This guide focuses on the implementation of NCSS 5.7.1, with regards to the process by which a cleric or religious applies for and is granted permission to minister in another Church jurisdiction. There is a focus on ensuring that the responsibilities of both the sending and receiving Church Authorities are fulfilled.

Key principles

- Movement for ministry should be managed in a manner which reduces associated safeguarding risks, while maintaining confidentiality and without creating undue barriers for clergy and religious, or also increasing the administrative burdens on Church entities.

¹ It should be noted that this standard applies to clergy and religious, along with those who are in formation towards ordination or religious life, such as seminarians or novices.



- The safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk must always take precedence when assessing the safeguarding credentials and managing the movement of those in ministry (the paramountcy principle).
- Receiving Church Authorities must both request and obtain a safeguarding declaration from any cleric or religious seeking to minister, as well as an accompanying statement from their Church Authority.
- Receiving Church Authorities are ultimately responsible for ensuring that proper processes are followed before a person is given permission to minister (including that no person ministers without permission).
- The sending Church Authority is responsible for affirming that a cleric or religious is in 'good standing' and that all information needed by the receiving Church Authority is provided (including any information required to conduct a risk assessment and implement management strategies).
- Fulfilling the safeguarding requirement of these statements (of the individual and sending Church Authority) can be achieved via three pathways. These pathways include usage of the ACMR or by completing one-off declarations (including sharing any additional information as appropriate to the applicant).

Overview of processes

There are three possible processes by which a receiving Church Authority can verify the safeguarding credentials of a cleric or religious who is seeking to minister.

The first applies to ACMR ID holders and is the easiest means of fulfilling this responsibility. The second may be used by non-ACMR ID holders who have never been subject to a substantiated complaint of abuse and are not currently the subject of any allegation, investigation or other safeguarding concern (these people would be eligible to hold an ACMR ID if desired). The third process is to be used where a Church Authority has grounds to believe that the person may present an elevated risk, whether due to contemporary or past matters, and involves appropriate information sharing, risk assessment and management to address the concern and enable the individual to minister safely.

There are also some clergy and religious who must not be permitted to minister. It is critical that Church entities' systems ensure that no person who is not able to provide the two safeguarding statements required is able to minister. This can be achieved through strict and consistent adherence to the processes outlined above. If these are complied with carefully, a person's inability to demonstrate good standing when applying for ministry will prevent permission being given.



1. Process for an ACMR ID holder

The Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR or the Register) assists Church Authorities to fulfill their safeguarding responsibilities when granting clergy and religious permission to minister. This is achieved by ACSL obtaining all the required statements, identity verification and other included information from each cleric, religious and from their Church Authority. Once the registration processes are complete an ACMR ID is provided which can be checked to verify the holder's standing.

More information is required from both the applicant and Church Authority when gaining an ACMR ID, compared to a one-off statement. This is to ensure that the ACMR remains reliable, and balances safety with efficiency. The requirements for an ACMR ID are detailed in the safeguarding statement forms available on [ACSL's website](#).

Further information on the ACMR and Frequently Asked Questions are available on [ACSL's website](#). For detailed explanation of the procedures, refer to the ACMR Procedures Guide also available on [ACSL's website](#).

Process for cleric or religious

When applying to minister in another Church jurisdiction, an ACMR ID holder must simply provide their ID as part of the application process in order to demonstrate their good standing.

Process for sending Church Authority

Given the nature of the ACMR, the sending Church Authority has fulfilled their responsibilities in managing movement simply by gaining ACMR IDs for their members. All Church Authorities must comply with the requirement to change the status of any ACMR ID holder, should they for any reason become unable to affirm any element of the Church Authority Safeguarding Statement (available on [ACSL's website](#)).

Process for receiving Church Authority

A receiving Church Authority should ensure that there is an option for those applying to minister under their jurisdiction to fulfill the requirement for safeguarding statements via use of their ACMR ID. When a receiving Church Authority has verified an ACMR ID, via our [checking site](#), they have satisfied this part of their responsibilities in managing movement. If no ACMR ID is provided, they must require a statement as detailed below.

Note: Records of a person's application, confirmation of their ACMR status, granted permission to minister and information of their visit must be retained by the receiving Church entity.



2. Process for one-off declarations of good standing

Declarations of good standing

A receiving Church Authority may verify a cleric or religious' good standing through one-time safeguarding statements. In this process, the person seeking to minister, along with their Church Authority, provide these statements to the receiving Church Authority. If they can declare that the person has never had a substantiated complaint made against them and presents no known safeguarding risks, the person may be permitted to minister.

Both safeguarding statements and the permission to minister apply only to the ministry activity detailed in a single application (including the duration noted). If the cleric or religious wishes to conduct other ministry or to minister outside of the period covered, a new application to minister will be required with fresh safeguarding statements.

If a cleric or religious wishes to minister in more than one Church jurisdiction other than their own, a separate application is required for each. Each application will require a new set of safeguarding statements unless multiple receiving Church jurisdictions have been named on one set of statements.

If a Church Authority wishes to declare a person's good standing in an ongoing way, they may use the ACMR as detailed above.

Process for the cleric or religious

When applying to minister in another Church jurisdiction, a cleric or religious provides a safeguarding declaration to the receiving Church Authority. They must also ask or arrange for their Church Authority to provide an accompanying statement.

Process for sending Church Authority

When a person seeks to minister in another Church jurisdiction, their Church Authority is required to provide a statement regarding their good standing.

If the Church Authority is aware that the person has had a substantiated complaint made against them, or is aware of anything which suggests a risk, this information must be included in the statement (see below).

Process for receiving Church Authority

A receiving Church Authority must not allow ministry to be conducted without having received the two statements (individual and Church Authority). If no safeguarding concerns have been raised in the statements, then following the formal granting of permission, the recording of these documents fulfils the receiving Church Authority's obligations.

Note: If information regarding substantiated complaints, or safeguarding risks are disclosed against the applicant in these statements, then see 3. *Process for Managing Disclosed Safeguarding Concerns* below.



3. Process for Managing Disclosed Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding statements and risk assessment

If there are any safeguarding concerns with an individual seeking permission to minister, it is crucial in the management of movement that receiving Church Authorities are made aware. Sharing this information and any risk assessment particulars will allow receiving Church Authorities to determine whether a person should be allowed to minister with appropriate risk management strategies in place.

Both safeguarding statements and the permission to minister apply only to the ministry activity detailed in a single application (including the duration noted). If the cleric or religious wishes to conduct other ministry or to minister outside of the period covered, a new application to minister will be required with fresh safeguarding statements.

If a cleric or religious wishes to minister in more than one Church jurisdiction other than their own, a separate application is required for each. Each application will require a new set of safeguarding statements unless multiple receiving Church jurisdictions have been named on one set of statements.

Process for cleric or religious

Where a person who has been the subject of a substantiated complaint [or is presently the subject of an unresolved complaint or investigation] seeks to minister in another Church jurisdiction, they must disclose this as part of their safeguarding declaration.

Process for sending Church Authority

A Church Authority providing a safeguarding statement must disclose any substantiated complaints made against the person seeking to travel, including any other information that may indicate a safeguarding risk. This initial disclosure will include enough information to allow initial assessment by the receiving Church Authority. The sending Church authority will also assist with further risk assessment and management strategies through information sharing as required.

Process for receiving Church Authority

Where a receiving Church Authority receives an application to minister that discloses substantiated complaints or information that may indicate a safeguarding risk, the receiving Church Authority must begin a risk assessment process. While preserving the confidentiality of all parties, the Church Authority must gather enough information to allow them to make a decision as to whether to grant permission to the applicant. Information gathering in some matters may be relatively simple, for instance simply asking the sending Church Authority to provide existing risk assessment and management documents, while others may be more complex.



A receiving Church Authority's overriding concern must be the safeguarding of children and adults at risk. If a receiving Church Authority either believes that the applicant poses an unacceptable risk of harm to children or adults at risk, or if they are unable to satisfy themselves that this is not the case, the application must be denied.

If a receiving Church Authority is satisfied that the person does not pose an unacceptable risk and that no active management is needed, permission may be granted after the risk assessment process has been completed.

If the Church Authority is satisfied that the identified risks can be mitigated through active risk management, then a risk management plan must be documented, outlining the appropriate measures, with evidence of its implementation recorded. This process will need to involve at least the receiving Church entity's safeguarding personnel and those who directly oversee the location(s) in which the ministry will be conducted. The applicant's confidentiality is to be preserved in this process so far as this does not impede risk management. Any measures decided on will need to be documented and shared with all parties. Final approval to travel will then be subject to agreement by the applicant to risk mitigation measures and compliance with them after arrival. Any failures to abide by agreed measures will trigger at least suspension of permission to minister, which can only be restored after a review of the breach and a new assessment process. This information will also be shared with the person's Church Authority.

In all cases where a safeguarding statement, accompanying documentation or correspondence include sensitive material regarding an applicant or any other person, it is to be regarded as confidential and handled accordingly. Such information should only be used and shared as necessary for safeguarding purposes. Those who receive, access, store or otherwise interact with this material must be mindful of their responsibilities under privacy legislation, including relating to the secure storage of the material, as well as the importance of record keeping (see NCSS 1.6.1).

