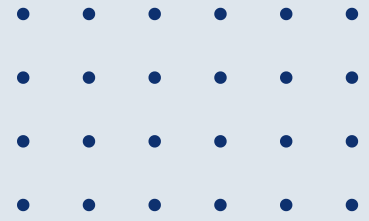# ACSL

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD
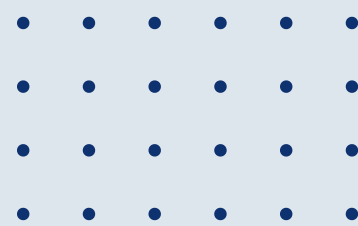
A safe Church for everyone

2022 | RISK-BASED AUDIT AND REVIEW FRAMEWORK

# Risk-based application of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards apply to all Catholic entities. To acknowledge the range of structures and governance that exist across Catholic entities, a risk-based application of the Standards has been developed to ensure a proportionate response.

The primary factors considered in the risk-based approach are:

- Are personnel within the entity engaged in any ministry which directly involves contact with children or adults at risk?
- Does the entity have governance of any ministry which involves contact with children and or adults at risk?
- Is the entity managing active abuse allegations?

The three-tiered category system employed with NCSS Edition 1 focused on the level of engagement with children, using the logic employed for many of the states Working with Children Check legislations.

When considering the application of Edition 2 (addressing safeguarding requirements for both children and adults), the risk-based approach focuses on the nature of the ministry conducted, who has governance of that ministry, and complaints activity.
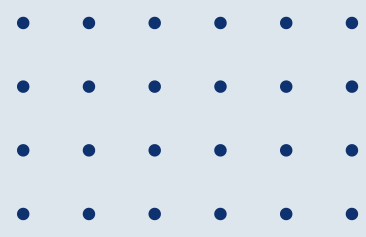
This informs a proportionate response to the NCSS through three review pathways:

1 **Self-report for Catholic entities not engaged in any ministry involving children or adults at risk.**

2 **ACSL limited review or peer-review for Catholic entities that are engaged in ministry, but do not have governance for the ministry conducted.**

3 **Audit for Catholic entities who are engaged in ministry and have governance of that ministry.**

Using this risk-based approach, the scope and complexity of a review or audit will correlate with the overall risk-profile of the entity, including whether it is managing active complaints of contemporary or historical abuse.
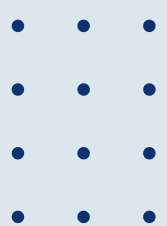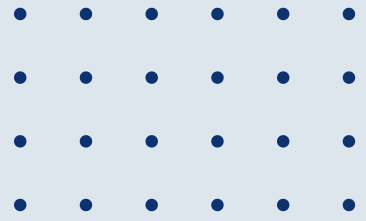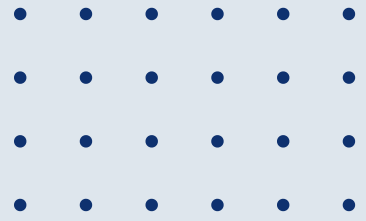
Review pathways

Self-report pathway

This pathway is available to cloistered or enclosed orders or contemplative ministries or to entities whose members are not involved in any ministry.

The self-report requirements include demonstrating commitments to key indicators in several Standards.

The Self-Reporting Pathway will be supported by ACSL through access to a self-assessment indicators relevant to the entity's operations via the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal. The self-assessment will be validated by ACSL, prior to certification being issued to the entity.

ACSL limited review or peer-review pathway

The ACSL limited review or peer-review pathway is for entities who have members practicing ministry that involves contact with children and/or adults at risk, but do not have overall governance for the ministry, or for entities with no members in ministry but which are responding to active complaints of abuse.
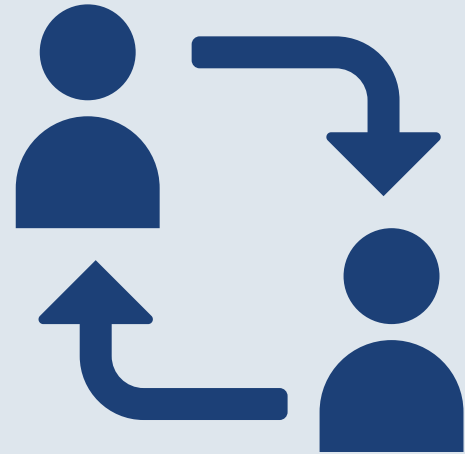
If a Church Authority enters a formal arrangement with another Church Authority, to provide governance, management and oversight of its work with children or adults at risk, this formal arrangement must specify that the members are, for the purposes of safeguarding, considered as personnel of the Church Authority and as such must comply with all requirements of the hosting Church Authority.

The ACSL limited review or Peer-review requirements include responding to Standards proportionate to the entity's ministry and risk profile.

Undertaking a limited review or peer-review will involve a self-assessment, via the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal, and an examination of supporting evidence by ACSL or an independent panel of reviewers. If the assessment is contracted to an auditor on the NCSS Auditor Register, it will be validated by ACSL, prior to certification being awarded to the Church entity.
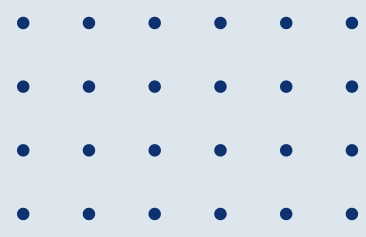
Audit pathway

The audit pathway is for entities who have members engaged in ministry and have governance over that ministry. Dioceses and Ministerial Public Juridic Persons would follow this pathway.

The Audit pathway involves an initial self-assessment against all 10 Standards, via the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal, followed by an in-depth validation process, including testing and site visits with a proportionate sample of parishes, ministries or offices, and informational interviews with key staff, based on the risk profile of the Church Authority. For a limited number of entities, a review of risk factors during validation of the self-assessment, such as the nature of ministry with children and adults at risk, history of complaints, and whether there are ministries overseas may mean that an audit needs to be conducted on fewer standards.
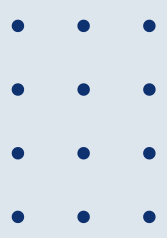
Assessment, and certification against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards is evidence of compliance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
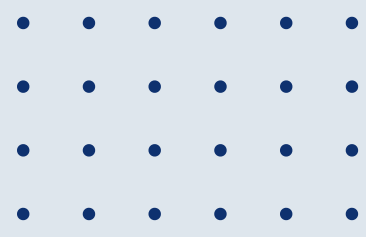
ACSL Audit, Review & Certification Program

Individual Church entities enter into a service agreement with ACSL to participate in the ACSL Audit and Review Program. This begins with a self-assessment process through the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal.

Once the preliminary self-assessment is complete, a service agreement is executed, and the Church entity, including all related entities will be deemed to be participating in the ACSL Audit, Review and Certification Program.

This Program is a three-year cycle of external audits or reviews and annual reporting to maintain certification. Audit Reports are published by ACSL.

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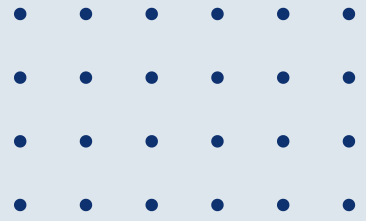
For more information about ACSL's risk-based Audit and Review framework, please contact ACSL at assess@acsltd.org.au