

Sample evidence guide

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, Edition 2

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd acknowledges the lifelong trauma of abuse victims, survivors and their families, the failure of the Catholic Church to protect, believe and respond justly to children and adults at risk, and the consequent breaches of community trust.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd is committed to fostering a culture of safety and care for children and adults at risk.



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Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd respectfully acknowledges all Traditional Owners of the land and waters of Australia. We pay respect to their Elders, past and present, and young leaders of today and the future. ACSL commits itself to the ongoing work of reconciliation with our Aboriginal families and communities.

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Introduction

When it comes time for an organisation to begin a self-assessment against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS), it can be hard to decide which types of documents to provide as evidence for each criteria and indicator. This short guide aims to provide examples of documents that may be relevant for each Standard. It is by no means an exhaustive list, rather this short guide is intended as a launching point to trigger your thinking about how your organisation can demonstrate it is implementing elements of the NCSS.

For further information about the types of evidence you can provide in your organisation's self-assessment via the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal, please contact us at assess@acsltd.org.au.

“Your opinion doesn’t matter but your judgment does – let policies and procedures become your friend.”

- *Robert Fitzgerald AM, Age Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission (ACSL Live Learning Safeguarding Adults at risk, March 22, 2024)*





Leadership, monitoring and improvement

Standards 1 & 9

Standard 1



COMMITTED LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE

- A Safeguarding Policy that takes a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. While the Safeguarding Policy promotes the dignity and rights of everyone, your safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices will focus on children and adults at risk.
- Organisational Safeguarding Commitment Statement addressing both children and adults at risk.
- Code of Conduct setting clear behavioural standard towards children and adults at risk.
- Risk Management Plan and strategies that cover all parish and ministry activities.
- Complaint handling, information sharing, record keeping and reporting policies.

Standard 9



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Safeguarding Implementation Plan.
- Self-Assessment plans and schedules.
- Incident and complaints review procedures.
- Policy review schedule.
- Reports on findings of reviews, audits and critical incidents.



Engaging with children,
adults, families and
communities

Standards 2, 3 & 4

Standard 2



CHILDREN AND ADULTS ARE SAFE, INFORMED AND PARTICIPATE

- Safeguarding Policy promoting the empowerment and participation of children and adults at risk.
- Risk management strategies that identify practices that have the potential to disempower children and adults at risk and provide practical ways to respond.
- Posters and brochures giving information about support services within the organisation and outside in the community. These should be provided in easy to read and accessible mediums.

Standard 3



PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES, CARERS AND COMMUNITIES

- The Safeguarding Policy reflects the importance of, and encourage the involvement of families, carers and community and describe how it happens. It may include flowcharts, or decision-making trees, as well as risk management templates. Dioceses and ministries should provide information packages on all key safeguarding documents to new personnel.
- The Complaint Handling Policy includes how families, carers and community members are involved in the process of managing complaints. It may include reference to support resources for all parties involved, guidance on confidentiality of information, and an outline of how the organisation meets legal and regulatory requirements.

Standard 4



EQUITY IS PROMOTED AND DIVERSITY IS RESPECTED

- Your Safeguarding Policy describes how children and adults at risk have their individual needs recognised and how the organisation will respond to children and adults with vulnerabilities.
- Complaints Handling Policy and associated forms.
- Translated versions of key safeguarding documents where relevant.
- Plain language and child friendly versions of key safeguarding documents, e.g., how to make a complaint fact sheet.
- Your Risk Management Plan identifies factors that may increase the risk of abuse for children and adults with vulnerabilities and describes how these will be managed.
- You display your Diversity and Inclusion Plan in open areas.
- Records of events that demonstrate diversity and inclusion.



**Right people, right
role, right knowledge**

Standards 5 & 7

Standard 5



ROBUST HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Employment advertising includes the organisation's Safeguarding Commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk.
- Position descriptions set clear expectations about the role's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child and adult safety and wellbeing.
- Pre-employment and screening practices and processes are fully documented and recorded.
- Records of all checks are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation.
- Induction Packages for personnel include:
 - the Code of Conduct;
 - Safeguarding Policy for children and adults at risk;
 - information about the organisation's child and adults at risk safety practices;
 - information about how complaints are managed; and
 - requirements for reporting, record keeping, and
 - information sharing obligations.

(STANDARD 5 – CONTINUED)

- Records are kept of staff interview results, reference checks and inductions.
- Screening processes for candidates are documented and available to external sources – this might include records of interviews contemporaneous notes, emails, and when recruiting from overseas for ministry, details of phone conversations with overseas formators.
- Performance Development Plans and supervision contracts are developed that describe how performance will be managed.
- Performance Appraisal Templates include attention to knowledge and practice of Safeguarding Standards.
- A Safeguarding induction program (handbook) which is documented and occurs soon after commencement of ministry.

Standard 7



ONGOING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Recruitment, Induction and Training Policies reflect staff training obligations and opportunities.
- Regular education training and education programs, induction and refresher training programs about safeguarding are well documented and available.
- Monitor and maintain training records including dates of induction and refresher sessions.
- Your training plan is available and includes a schedule of upcoming learning opportunities.
- Training review processes, including feedback processes.
- Public Commitment Statement to cultural safety.



**Systems, policies
and procedures**

Standards 6, 8 & 10

Standard 6



EFFECTIVE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

- The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures for children and adults at risk includes information on how to make a complaint, respond to a complaint, investigate a complaint, and provide support and assistance to those making a complaint.
- The Code of Conduct clearly describes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and personnel understand that breaches of conduct will result in disciplinary action.
- Disciplinary policies.
- Accessible complaints handling information is available online and in print, including in the form of a website, social media, brochures, fact sheets or posters.
- Abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referrals are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years.
- Records are kept of complaint handling information and Code of Conduct training.

Standard 8



SAFE PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS

- The Safeguarding Policy identifies how the organisation will keep children and adults at risk safe in both physical and online environments. This should include:
 - guidelines for taking, storing and using images of children and adults at risk;
 - guidelines for personnel on appropriate online communication with children and adults at risk including via personal phones, emails and social media; and
 - strategies to enable children, adults at risk, families, carers, communities and personnel to report issues or concerns in relation to the organisation's online platforms.
- The Risk Assessment Plan assesses risk from four different angles: situational risk, vulnerability risk, propensity risk and institutional risk to identify and strengthen safety in physical and online environments and lists what action will be taken to prevent and reduce each risk of harm and abuse.
- Risk Assessments are completed for each activity.
- The Code of Conduct specifically includes reference to where a third party provides services or uses the organisation's facilities.
- Where appropriate, include safeguarding requirements and agreements into Third party contracts that are signed and maintained by the organisation.

Standard 10



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SUPPORT THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK

- Safeguarding policies include a Statement of Commitment to the safety of children and adults at risk.
- Multiple strategies are applied to address safeguarding and are documented within key policies, including:
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Code of Conduct
 - Complaints Handling Policy includes reporting obligations
 - Risk Management plans
 - Recruitment Policy- including Training and Induction Policies
 - Disciplinary policy
 - WWCC and WWVP policies
 - IT policies
 - Contractual and procurement arrangements with third parties ensure the safety of children and adults at risk.
 - Inclusivity policy supporting children and adults with special needs.



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD

A safe Church for everyone