



**A Safe and Welcoming Church**

**Safeguarding Children Policy and  
Standards for the Catholic Archdiocese  
of Johannesburg 2025**

## CONTENTS

**Foreword from the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Johannesburg**

**Decree of Promulgation**

**Safeguarding Children Policy Statement**

**Vision and Mission**

**Principles**

**Implementation and Scope of the Safeguarding Children Policy**

**Application of the Safeguarding Children Policy Standards**

**The Safeguarding Children Policy Standards**

**Standard: Leadership, Governance and Accountability**

**Standard: Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding**

**Standard: Responding Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law**

**Commitment by the Church Authority**

**Appendix A: Glossary of Terms**

**Appendix B: Definitions of Abuse in the Republic of South Africa**

**Appendix C: Legislation, International Treaties, the South African Constitution, and Regulation Underpinning the Safeguarding Children Policy**

**Appendix D: Criteria to Meet the Safeguarding Children Policy Standards**

**Appendix E: Reporting Flow Diagram**

**Appendix F: Safe Recruitment**

**FOREWORD FROM THE METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP  
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG**

**Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me. (Mark 9:37)**

**The participation of children and young people in the life of the Church is essential to our mission. This revised policy, modelled on the latest policy designed by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (the National Board) and informed by and embedded in Gospel values and in the rights of children, presents the most up-to-date, best-practice opportunity for all members of the Catholic Church in the Johannesburg Archdiocese to ensure that all ministry with children is safe, and that children can remain central to the mission of living the Gospel.**

**Archbishop Stephen Cardinal Brislin**

**METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG**

## DECREE OF PROMULGATION



Cardinal Stephen Brislin  
Archbishop of Johannesburg

## DECREE OF PROMULGATION

In accordance with the provisions of Canon 8:2 of the Code of Canon Law,  
I hereby decree the promulgation of the policy for safeguarding for the  
Archdiocese of Johannesburg through the publication of the document  
"Child Safeguarding Policy". This policy comes into force from the day of  
this decree and shall remain in force until modified by myself.

The application of this policy is mandatory throughout the Archdiocese of  
Johannesburg. Any exceptions requires the explicit approval of myself or  
my delegate.

Given at Johannesburg on the first **day of the month of October, 2025.**

+ 

+Stephen Cardinal Brislin  
Archbishop of Johannesburg



## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY STATEMENT

The Gospel teaches the importance of ensuring that the Catholic Church community is a warm, welcoming and safe place for children.

**Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. (Mark 10:14-15)**

Children are gifts from God; to be cherished and recognised for the joyful contribution they make as valued members of the Church. Our challenge is to follow the example of Jesus in cherishing them. Safeguarding is key to this important task and should be seen, not as a burden, but as an opportunity to embrace and encourage children's ministry, following the example of Jesus Christ.

This Church body pledges to safeguard children and young people from harm and to support them in their development as valued and integral members of the Catholic Church. The Church's ministry will be inclusive and will uphold their rights.

Consistent with Gospel values, and with civil and criminal law, those who minister will do so with dignity and integrity, honouring their calling to ensure that children and young people are welcomed, cherished and protected, following the example set by Jesus.

This Safeguarding Children Policy will be honoured and complied with by all ordained clerics, by vowed female and male religious, and by all lay staff and volunteers in the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg.

## VISION AND MISSION

This quote from Pope Francis focuses on our role of welcoming and supporting children in the life of the Church.

**Our generation must show that it can rise to the promise found in each [child and] young person when we know how to give them space.**

**This means that we have to create the material and spiritual conditions for their full development, to give them a solid basis on which to build their lives; to guarantee their safety and their education to be everything they can be; to pass on to them lasting values that make life worth living; to give them a transcendent horizon for their thirst for authentic happiness and their creativity for the good; to give them the legacy of a world worthy of human life; and to awaken in them their greatest potential as builders of their own destiny, sharing responsibility for the future of everyone. If we can do all this today, we anticipate the future that enters the world through the window of the young.**

Pope Francis reminds us that, ‘in the Confiteor, we ask forgiveness not only for the wrong we have done, but also for the good we have failed to do’. In the past, the Catholic Church failed in its duty to protect children and young people.

Previous Church policies have focused on establishing consistent standards to prevent abuse and assist the Church on its journey to learn from the mistakes of the past and ensure that children’s safety is a core part of its mission.

**Even when the path forward is difficult and demanding, I urge you not to get bogged down; keep reaching out, keep trying to instil confidence in those you meet and who share with you this common cause. Do not grow discouraged when it seems that little is changing for the better. Persevere and keep moving forwards!**

Inspired by Pope Francis’ words, this new child safeguarding policy builds on the foundations of past learning and experiences. The policy provides a new focus on leadership and governance to embed a culture of safeguarding where:

- The Church has an important role to play in creating and maintaining an environment in which children and young people can grow and flourish in their humanity and come to experience the dignity that Jesus proclaimed.
- Children will be welcome and safe.
- Church personnel will uphold the rights of children, in line with Gospel values.

## PRINCIPLES

### **Ministry with children based on scripture**

The words and actions of Christ guide engagement with children. Throughout his teachings, Jesus places a sacred obligation on all who minister in the Catholic Church to uphold human dignity, including the dignity of children.

### **Ministry with children based on national law, canon law and government regulation**

The Church upholds the civil, criminal and canon laws relating to the care and protection of children, within the jurisdictions in which it ministers (a full list of relevant legislation is set out in Appendix C). Church personnel will honour and uphold their legal responsibility (in line with mandatory reporting obligations) to report all allegations, knowledge, suspicions and concerns of child abuse to civil and canonical entities, and to manage the risk to children.

### **Ministry with children based on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, children's rights and international treaties**

The Church will uphold the moral and legal obligation to fulfil children's rights commitments as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Constitution of South Africa and other relevant international treaties. This includes ensuring the safety of children in all ministries, and having children participate in the decisions and activities that affect them.

### **Caring for complainants**

The response to complainants will be pastoral, caring and compassionate. This approach must be about listening, acknowledging the hurt experienced by the complainant and their family, and offering support that reflects the individual needs and circumstances of the complainant on their journey towards healing. The Church will engage with the complainant in order to ensure that they have a voice in deciding the appropriate support response.

### **Providing a fair and just process for respondents**

The Church will ensure a just and fair process that upholds the rights of an accused cleric or a male or female religious under civil and canon law, maintaining a presumption of innocence unless there is an admission of guilt or a finding of guilt.

Throughout all investigative and canonical processes, the Church will engage with the relevant statutory and ecclesiastical authorities to ensure that risk to children is appropriately assessed and managed.

### **Acknowledging the safeguarding journey of the Church**

The abuse of children in the Catholic Church has happened and must never be forgotten. Children were harmed. Progress has been made in establishing and responding to the truth of what happened. Therefore, it is recognised that safeguarding is a core and important part of ministry. The Church commits to continuing this journey of justice, truth, healing, and preventing abuse.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND SCOPE OF THE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

This policy applies to all Catholic Church bodies in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg and is addressed to all Church personnel. The promotion of good child safeguarding, responding promptly to concerns with compassion and ensuring a just and fair response to those accused, is the responsibility of the whole Church.

The Catholic Church has adopted a policy of mandatory reporting of all child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge and allegations that meet the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities. There is a legal requirement to report allegations and offences in South Africa relating to or involving children (under 18 years of age).



## APPLICATION OF THE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY STANDARDS

All Church personnel commit to following the Safeguarding Children Policy.

Recognising the diverse nature of Church bodies, their range of ministries, and that not all have ministry with children, the applicability of the policy relating to the child safeguarding standards will vary. To assist with the implementation of the standards, consideration should be given to the criteria contained in Appendix D.

## THE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY STANDARDS

There are three core standards to the Church's Safeguarding Children Policy (the three standards are linked, and no standard is more important than another).

- Leadership, Governance and Accountability
- Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding
- Responding Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law



## STANDARD: LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### Biblical Reference

‘Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all ... whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.’ (Mark 9:33-7)

### Children’s Rights

This standard focuses on the following UNCRC rights: Articles 3, 4, 18, 19, 34 & 42.

### What is this standard?

As a leader, the Church authority embodies and imparts the Catholic Church’s vision, principles and values, which are reflected and apparent in the child safeguarding culture, structures and practices at all levels and in all ministries with children and young people. This demonstrates, through words and actions, the Church authority’s personal commitment to fulfil the safeguarding mission of the Church. It has a responsibility to motivate and inspire others to fulfil the vision of this Safeguarding Children Policy.

Church authorities have a key governance responsibility to embed a culture of safeguarding. They, and all those with safeguarding roles, can demonstrate leadership by modelling positive engagement with children and young people; showing a personal commitment to promoting good safeguarding practice; and demonstrating empathy and understanding to those who have been harmed in the Church. This requires an ability to listen, to respond flexibly, to be confident and transparent, and to accept the challenge of being accountable. Church authorities influence all actions, to ensure that everyone in ministry fulfils their responsibility to safeguard children.

In practical terms, leadership and accountability involves:

- Striving at all times to act with integrity, following the example of Jesus.
- Ensuring that adequate structures, personnel practices and resources are provided to embed safeguarding at the core of ministry and regularly reviewing these.
- Engaging in systematic review of practice (including undertaking annual self-audits and external reviews of practice) to enable learning for continuous improvement.
- Being held accountable for compliance with all child safeguarding standards, including the Church’s commitment to keeping children safe and having a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

### Who is responsible for implementing this standard?

The Church authority has ultimate responsibility for implementing the Standard of Leadership, Governance and Accountability and enlists the support of Church personnel who work with children, including priests, male and female religious, safeguarding representatives, and the Safeguarding Committee.

## STANDARD: NURTURING A CULTURE OF SAFEGUARDING

### Biblical Reference

‘Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a real blessing.’ (Psalms 127:3)

### Children’s Rights

This standard focuses on the following UNCRC rights: Articles 2, 3, 5, 12 & 14..

### What is this standard?

Implementing this standard ensures the creation and maintenance of a culture of safety, including a safe church environment that is welcoming of children.

Keeping children safe from harm is imperative but, more than that, the Church will promote the well-being of children through their participation in the ministry of the Church. The Church will create and maintain environments that uphold children’s rights and that create nurturing, caring conditions where children will flourish in faith and love. Through fostering a culture of care, children feel safe and looked after and, in turn, they will be supportive of and respectful to their peers.

This culture of care extends to every person. The Church will support the adults who minister to and engage with children and their carers through training, guidance and supervision to ensure that children’s safety is promoted and upheld. Children and adults should feel that they can voice any concerns they have, and that these will be respected, listened to and acted on appropriately.

The Church authority will ensure that:

- Those who work with or minister to children are competent and supported in their role.
- Environments in which children’s ministries are conducted are safe and risks are managed.

### Who is responsible for implementing this standard?

The Church authority has ultimate responsibility for implementing the Standard of Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding, and enlists the support of priests, female and male religious, safeguarding representatives, the Safeguarding Committee, and Church personnel who work with children.

## STANDARD: RESPONDING PASTORALLY AND REPORTING ACCORDING TO CIVIL AND CANON LAW

### Biblical Reference

‘See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.’ (Matthew 18:10)

### Children’s Rights

This standard focuses on the following UNCRC rights: Articles 19, 36 & 39.

### What is this standard?

This standard is concerned with allegations of abuse; adherence to civil and canon law; caring for complainants; and ensuring a just process of inquiry (for all parties involved).

The Catholic Church is committed to timely reporting of all allegations, responding with support and care to complainants of abuse and their families, and ensuring appropriate accompaniment for respondents. The Church will ensure a fair and just process of inquiry, and equip and support those tasked with responding to allegations, as outlined below:

- All allegations, suspicions, concerns and knowledge of abuse (for definitions see Appendix A and Appendix B) that meet the threshold will be reported to civil and canonical entities, within the timeframes for reporting outlined in Appendix A. Appropriate safeguards will be put in place to ensure that children are safeguarded while allegations are being investigated.
- A response that is caring, compassionate and pastoral, which acknowledges the hurt experienced and which reflects the individual circumstances of the complainant, will be offered, in response to each person’s need. The support needs of the family (however described) of the complainant must also be considered.
- The rights under civil and canon law of an accused cleric or male or female religious will be upheld. A presumption of innocence will be maintained unless there is evidence of guilt. All respondents will be offered pastoral support.
- The Church authority cooperates with statutory authority personnel, relevant independent organisations and experts in child safeguarding to ensure independent oversight.

## **Criteria**

To assist with the implementation of this standard, the following measures and requirements should be in place.

For absolute clarity, these steps need to be followed, after any allegation of child abuse being reported:

**A. SAPS to be informed within 48 hours.**

**B. Parish Contact person to be informed and to follow up as required by civil law and Canonical requirements (to record and compile details of allegation).**

**C. Diocesan Contact Person must be informed who must inform the Dicastery of Doctrine of the Faith.**

**D. The respondent must be relieved of all ministries / volunteer services in the parish pending the outcome of the referral made.**

## **Caring for complainants**

A compassionate response will be offered to complainants (directly or indirectly) by the Church authority, advising on available counselling and support. This will include an offer from the Church authority to meet the complainant (accompanied) in person. The support needs of the family of the complainant should also be considered.

## **Just process for respondents**

The respondent must be informed of their rights, and a presumption of innocence shall be maintained unless there is an admission of guilt or a finding of guilt. The respondent should be advised of the proceedings, kept informed throughout the process and involved where possible.

If, upon conclusion of civil and canon law inquiries, a finding is made that there is no case to answer, a clear process for restoring the good name of the respondent is agreed and implemented.

## **Who is responsible for implementing this standard?**

The Church authority has ultimate responsibility for implementing the Standard of Responding Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law and enlists the support of parish safeguarding teams, the Archdiocesan safeguarding committee and any other relevant support body (for example Childline, Teddy Bear Clinic, vetting agencies and other local agencies as may be deemed appropriate).

## COMMITMENT BY THE CHURCH AUTHORITY

On behalf of this Church body, as part of the Catholic Church in Archdiocese of Johannesburg, I commit to:

- Safeguarding children by agreeing to follow this Safeguarding Children Policy
- Supporting Church personnel in my Church body to follow all aspects of this policy
- Accepting my responsibilities for creating a culture of safety; building safe environments for children; and ensuring that children are welcome, involved in ministry and free from harm
- Responding to and managing allegations of abuse with compassion and fairness and in line with civil and canonical requirements
- Accepting my overall responsibility as Church authority to uphold safeguarding as a core ministry in the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg

Church authority signature

Archbishop Stephen Cardinal Breslin

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On behalf of

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Date

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## APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Canon law:** In the Catholic Church, canon law is the system of laws and legal principles made and enforced by the Church's hierarchical authorities to regulate its internal organisation and government, and to order and direct the activities of Catholics toward the mission of the Church.

**Child:** Anyone below the age of 18 years.

**Children with specific needs:** This term is used to cover the specific, or unique, out-of-the-ordinary concerns created by a child's medical, physical, mental or developmental condition or disability. Additional services are usually needed to help a person in one or more of the following areas (among others): thinking, communication, movement, getting along with others, and taking care of oneself.

**Church authority:** This term does not appear in canon law. It can refer to the leader of the Church body, usually the bishop or provincial, or the senior administrative authority of a lay organisation or ecclesial movement. This term includes (while in office) abbot, abbess, archbishop, cardinal, congregational leader, diocesan administrator, prior, prioress, province leader, regional, superior, and unit leader.

**Church body:** Canon law contains many distinctions between the types of organisations and bodies that have developed over the life of the Catholic Church. It would be impractical to include all of these when referring to an element of the Church that has a child safeguarding responsibility.

**Church personnel:** This term is used to define those who work (voluntarily or paid) for the Church body. This includes clergy, male and female religious, all in formation for priesthood and religious life, staff and volunteers.

**Civil authorities:** These include South African Police Services, Provincial Department of Social Development, Designated Child Protection Organisations and any organisation designated in terms of section 107 of the Children's Act to perform designated child protection services e.g. Child Line.

**Cleric:** One who is ordained in sacred ministry in the Church. Clerics are divided into deacons, priests and bishops.

**Collecting the proofs:** As defined in Canon 695, this is part of the process of dismissal to gather facts, on the imputability of the offence.

**Complainant:** This term describes a person who has made an allegation of abuse.

**Contact Person (CP):** The primary church contacts for complaints related to child safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations.

**Delict:** A crime in canon law; an external violation of a law or precept gravely imputable by reason of malice or negligence.



## APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**IT:** Information technology.

**Mandatory reporting:** There is a legal requirement to report offences in South Africa. This means that any concerns of this nature must be referred to the police by law. The CP makes this referral to the police.

### **Ministry with children**

This includes:

- Any work or service undertaken by Church personnel with children, which is under the authority of their Church body; and
- All priests in active ministry under the authority of their Church body are to be considered as having ministry with children.

**Preliminary investigation:** This is a canonical term referring to the process by which a Church authority determines whether an alleged delict, which has reached the threshold of a semblance of truth, is not manifestly false or frivolous and remains a case to answer.

**Religious:** Female and male members of religious institutes and societies in which the members take public vows and live a life of ministry in common.

**Respondent:** This term is used for the person about whom child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations have been made.

**Timeframe for reporting:** A person who has knowledge that a sexual offence has been committed against a child must report such knowledge immediately to a police official with 24 hours.

**UNCRC:** United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. An international convention that outlines in 54 articles the fundamental rights of those aged under 18 years and the obligations of States that sign the Convention to uphold the rights it contains.

**VELM:** *Vos estis lux mundi* is a *motu proprio* issued in May 2019 by Pope Francis. It established new procedural norms to combat sexual abuse and ensure that bishops and their equivalents are held accountable for their actions.

## APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hairpulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

**Emotional abuse** is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/caregiver and child are not considered emotional abuse.

Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security is not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of, and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet, their child's emotional and developmental needs.

Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or caregiver.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned moves)

## APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Continuous lack of praise and encouragement

- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk-taking and aggressive behaviour.

It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and, in some instances, occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/ or through physical symptoms. It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a young person may be sexual abuse even if the young person concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal

## APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
  - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography (for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording on film, videotape or other media and the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means); inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
  - Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the ‘grooming’ process by perpetrators of abuse
  - Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
  - Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

The prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare and protection. The safety of the child is paramount and at no stage should a child’s safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 16 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 16 is illegal.

However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse.

**Neglect** occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child’s health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety.

Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties.

The extent of the damage to the child’s health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child’s life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability.

A reasonable concern for the child’s welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or caregiver. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

## APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The following are features of child neglect.

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, unsuitable food, erratic feeding, lacking food
- Non-organic failure to thrive, e.g. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions or environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

### **Child abuse online**

The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998, which is amended by Section 6 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Act 2007, makes it an offence to possess, produce, distribute, print or publish child pornography.

### **Canon law**

In 2019 Pope Francis issued an apostolic letter entitled '*Vos estis lux mundi*' (VELM) (May 2019), which updated the definitions of abuse as follows:

Art. 1 – Scope of application §1. These norms apply to reports regarding clerics or members of Institutes of Consecrated Life or Societies of Apostolic Life and concerning:

a. delicts against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue consisting of:

- I. forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts;
- II. performing sexual acts with a minor (or a vulnerable person);
- III. the production, exhibition, possession or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography (as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions).

## APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

b. conduct carried out by the subjects referred to in Article 6, consisting of actions or omissions intended to interfere with or avoid civil investigations or canonical investigations, whether administrative or penal, against a cleric or a religious regarding the delicts referred to in letter a) of this paragraph.

§2. For the purposes of these norms, a. ‘minor’ means: any person under the age of 18 years, or who is considered by law to be the equivalent of a minor;

b. ‘vulnerable person’ means: any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence;

c. ‘child pornography’ means: any representation of a minor, regardless of the means used, involved in explicit sexual activities, whether real or simulated, and any representation of sexual organs of minors for primarily sexual purposes.<sup>7</sup>

Canon 223 outlines that the basis for invoking disciplinary measures rests on the foundation of the common good (see Canon 223 §2). For this reason, if an allegation is substantiated by an investigation, disciplinary measures with the same practical effect as penalties can be imposed in order to safeguard minors and other vulnerable people.

## APPENDIX C: LEGISLATION, INTERNATIONAL TREATIES, THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTITUTION, AND REGULATION UNDERPINNING THE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

### International

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- The United Nations Convention on Human Rights (UNCHR)
- The African Charter of the Rights and Welfare of the Child

### Republic of South Africa

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
- The Children's Amendment Bill
- The Children's Act of 2005
- The Child Care Act of 1996

### Canon law

- *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela* ('Protection of the Sanctity of the Sacraments')
- *Vos estis lux Mundi* ('You are the Light of the World')
- *Motu proprio* ('As a Loving Mother')
- *Code of Canon Law* (including Book VI)

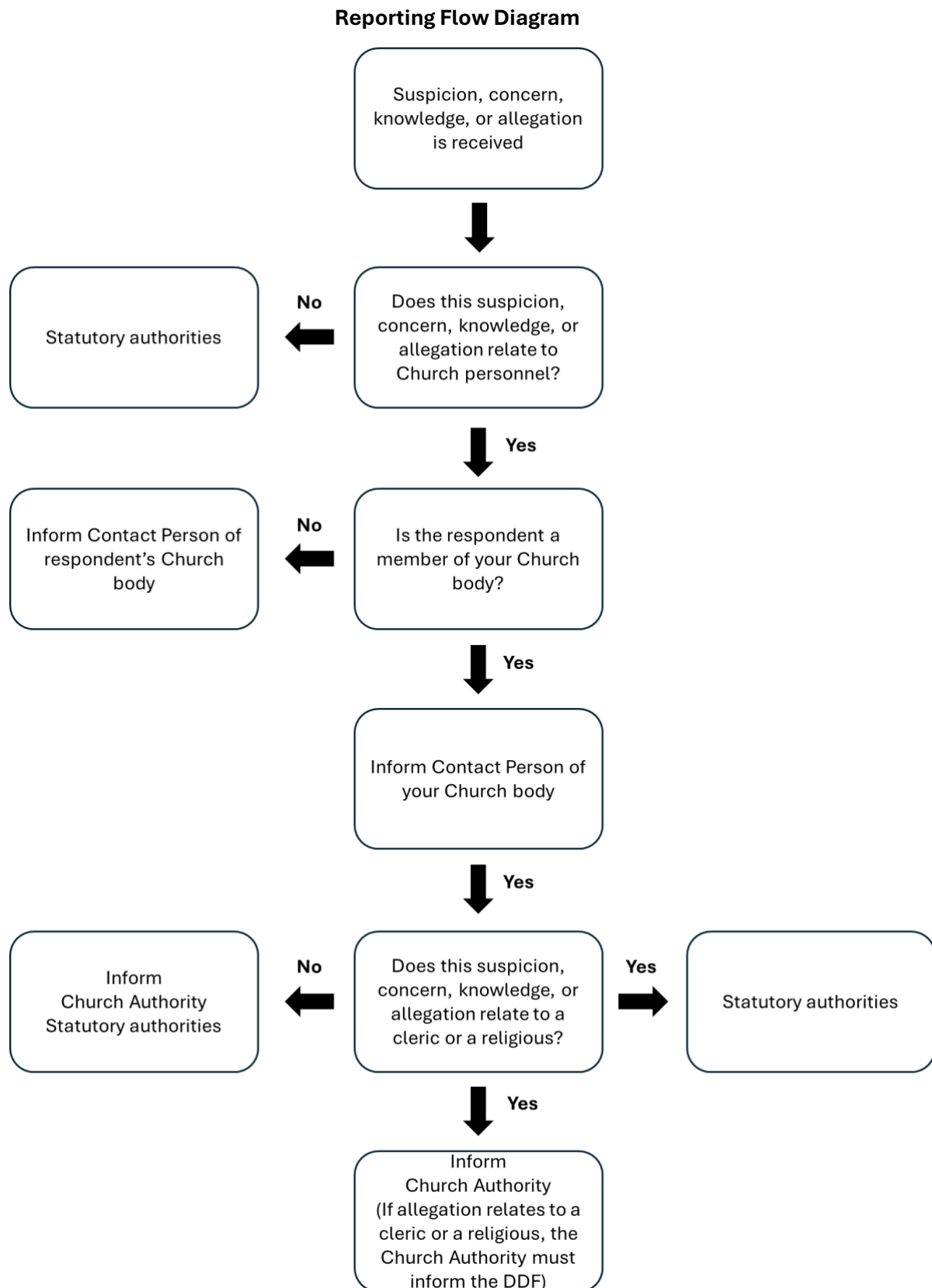
## APPENDIX D: CRITERIA TO MEET THE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY STANDARDS

To assist with the implementation of this policy, the following measures should be in place.

1	The Church authority demonstrates his/her personal commitment to safeguarding children through open and transparent communication in relation to safeguarding matters by delivering sermons, pastoral letters, addresses to meetings and newsletters, and through face-to-face meetings and personal engagement. This requires the Church authority to be personally available and to listen with openness, humility and compassion.
2	The Church authority puts in place a system of governance that identifies clear procedures, accountability structures, in which roles and responsibilities are explicit. These are all mirrored in the Safeguarding Plan of the relevant Church body.
3	In recognition of the challenges associated with safeguarding ministry, the Church authority should demonstrate his/her commitment through providing training, care and support for those in safeguarding ministry through initial and ongoing formation for clerics, male and female religious and lay personnel.
4	In recognition of the decision-making responsibilities and potential isolation of the role, mechanisms need to be developed to support Church authorities. These will include training for leadership, induction training in safeguarding and continuous professional and personal development to include skills and knowledge for leading in safeguarding challenges. Church authorities should have access to mentoring and support and a body of experienced personnel to support best practice.
5	Procedures for recruitment, including vetting.
6	Induction and training.
7	Codes of behaviour for children involved in ministry and codes of conduct for adults that promote best practice and integrity in ministry.
8	Support for and supervision of those in child safeguarding roles.
9	Risk-assess and ensure that measures are put in place to manage risk to children so that children in Church ministry are safe and free from harm.
10	Appropriate safeguards for using IT and social media when engaging with children.
11	Procedures for dealing with complaints and whistleblowing.
12	The Church authority ensures that all reports of child safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations are processed in line with civil and canon law requirements.



## APPENDIX E: REPORTING FLOW DIAGRAM



## APPENDIX F: SAFE RECRUITMENT

### Recruitment & Selection Checklist

Contact with children	What contact with children will the position involve? Will the position involve unsupervised contact with children, or does it involve a position of trust? What other forms of contact will the person have with children, e.g. Email, telephone?	
Defining the role	Have the tasks and skills necessary for the position been considered? Does the task description make reference to working with and having responsibility for children?	
Key selection criteria	Has a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience been developed?	
Written application	Have all applicants been asked to supply information in writing, including personal details, past and current work/volunteering experience? Have application forms been developed?	
Interview	Have at least two representatives been identified to meet with the applicant to explore information contained in their application Have the applicant and application forms been carefully considered, highlighting points to raise at interview, including: The applicant's attitudes towards working with children; Areas you want to explore in more detail; Gaps in employment history; Vague statements of unsubstantiated qualifications; Frequent changes of employment?	
Declaration	Has the successful applicant been asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children? Has the successful applicant been asked to declare any past criminal convictions and cases pending against them?	
Identification	Have applicants been asked, where necessary, for photographic documentation to confirm their identity and place of residence? Will documentation relating to the applicant's identity and relevant qualifications be checked at the interview?	
Qualifications	Are applicants asked for documentation to confirm their qualifications?	
Vetting procedure	Does the position require the applicant to be vetted? Has the applicant been informed that they may need to undergo vetting before they take up any appointment? Does this applicant require a certificate of police clearance from other countries in which they have worked/ volunteered?	

## APPENDIX F: SAFE RECRUITMENT

### Recruitment & Selection Checklist

Records	<p>Are details of the selection/induction process retained in the personnel file of the successful applicant? Are references kept on file as part of the record of the recruitment process?</p> <p>Are personnel informed that information such as application and declaration forms are held on file?</p>	
Confidentiality	<p>Is information about the applicant only seen by those directly involved in the recruitment process?</p> <p>Are applicants reassured that information about them, including information about convictions, will be treated in confidence and not used against them unlawfully?</p>	
References	<p>Are applicants asked to supply the names of two Referees who are not family members, or who are not involved in the recruitment process, and ideally who have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's experience of work/contact with children?</p> <p>Are Referees asked specifically to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children?</p> <p>Are all references provided in writing and verified by a follow-up telephone call?</p>	
Suggested questions for Referees	<p>The post involves substantial access to children. We are committed to the welfare and safeguarding of children. Have you any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children?</p> <p>How long have you known this person?</p> <p>In what capacity?</p> <p>Would you have any hesitation in them taking up this position?</p>	

## APPENDIX F: SAFE RECRUITMENT

### Application Form

#### Personal

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Church body \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been previously known by any other names? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

#### Work experience

Please detail below the experience you have gained in your professional life.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you previously been involved in voluntary work? If yes, please give details.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to get involved in this activity?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F: SAFE RECRUITMENT

### Application Form

Have you previously received any training for working with children or young people? If yes, please give details.

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Do you have any specific needs that we need to be made aware of?

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Please provide any other relevant information below.

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### Referees

Please provide the names and contact details of two people whom we could contact for a reference (not relatives).

#### Referee 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

#### Referee 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F: SAFE RECRUITMENT

### Application Form

#### Declaration

I declare that I have completed this form truthfully, and that I agree to abide by and accept the terms and conditions of my involvement, if successful in the application process.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F: SAFE RECRUITMENT

### Confidential Declaration Form

The information contained in this form will be kept securely by the \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of church). Legislation in South Africa, has, at its core, the principle that the welfare of children and young people must be the paramount consideration.

#### Who should complete this form?

Church bodies ask that everyone working or volunteering for the Church, who will come into contact with children or the personal details of children, abide by good practice by completing and signing this declaration.

Do you have any prosecutions pending, or have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence?

Yes No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s).

Date of offence \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of offence \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour towards a child?

Yes No

If yes, please provide details including date(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Full name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Any previous surname \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F: SAFE RECRUITMENT

### Confidential Declaration Form

What role/position are you currently applying for?

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#### Declaration

I understand that if it is found that I have withheld information or included any false or misleading information above, I may be removed from my post, whether voluntary or paid, without notice. I understand that the information will be kept securely by the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Church).

I declare that the information I have provided is accurate.

I declare that I have completed this form truthfully, and that I agree to abide by and accept the terms and conditions of my involvement, if successful in the application process.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX F: SAFE RECRUITMENT

### Character & Personal Reference request Form

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (name),

Your name has been given to us by \_\_\_\_\_ (applicant name),

who has applied for the position of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of position).

I would appreciate you completing, signing and dating the information below and returning it to me at the enclosed address. Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature and date)

1) Can you tell us how long you have known the applicant?

\_\_\_\_\_

2) In what capacity do you know the applicant?

\_\_\_\_\_

3) Can you highlight some of the applicant's positive skills and qualities?

\_\_\_\_\_

4) Do you, without reservation, recommend the applicant for the position for which they have applied? Please bear in mind that this position involves working with children.

Yes   No

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please include any additional comments below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_