



CAPUCHIN
FRANCISCAN FRIARS
AUSTRALIA

Safeguarding Reporting
Policy & Procedure
Version 1 | February 2026

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1 Purpose

The Capuchin Friars Province of Australia (Capuchin Friars) is committed to identifying, reporting and responding to all safeguarding concerns about children and adults. The purpose of the Safeguarding Reporting Policy & Procedure is to document the systems and processes in place to meet this commitment and provide related guidance to personnel.

2 Scope

The Safeguarding Reporting Policy & Procedure applies to all Capuchin Friars personnel (lay and religious) including volunteers and contractors. It should be read together with the following:

- *Code of Conduct*
- *Safeguarding Policy*
- *Safeguarding Risk Management Plan*
- *Reportable Conduct Policy & Procedure*
- *National Response Protocol*
- *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*

3 Key obligations

3.1 The Capuchin Friars has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of child abuse or harm. We have statutory and ethical obligations to ensure safeguarding concerns are appropriately reported. This includes:

- Appropriately documenting safeguarding concerns.
- Following internal reporting protocols.
- Reporting safeguarding concerns to appropriate external bodies when required:
- Securely storing and maintaining records in relation to the reporting of safeguarding concerns.

4 Documenting safeguarding concerns

4.1 A safeguarding concern is any concern about suspected or actual abuse or harm of a child or adult (See Attachment 1). The person suspected or known to have engaged in the abuse or harm may be another child or an adult. The concern may be current or historical.

4.2 Personnel must document any safeguarding concerns using the Safeguarding Concern Report Form (Attachment 2). Concerns may arise via:

- a **disclosure** of abuse or harm made by a child or another person
- an **incident** observed or reported to personnel
- a **complaint** received from a child, adult, family member or another employee
- **information** arising by any other means

4.3 Handling disclosures

4.3.1 If a person discloses abuse or harm personnel should:

- Stay calm and listen.
- Not ask leading questions e.g. "Did your dad do that to you?"
- Provide reassurance - let the person know they've done the right thing by speaking up.
- Inform the person you need to tell someone in a leadership position so they can take the right action.
- As soon as possible after the conversation, write down what you were told, using the person's own words as much as possible.
- Do not share the disclosure with anyone else (e.g. child's parent) as a risk assessment must occur first.

5 Internal reporting requirements

5.1 The Safeguarding Concern Report Form must be provided to the Provincial Delegate, Professional Standards and Safeguarding (Provincial Delegate). If the concern is about the Provincial Delegate, it should be provided to the Provincial Minister. If the concern relates to a volunteer at the Open House in South Melbourne, it should be raised with the parish priest who will in turn raise the matter with the Safeguarding Director at the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

5.2 The Provincial Delegate will advise the Provincial Minister of all safeguarding concerns within 24 hours.

5.3 The Provincial Delegate will determine if the safeguarding team in the relevant Diocese/Archdiocese¹ needs to be notified of the concern. Any allegations of abuse or harm that involve personnel (religious or lay) will be automatically notified to the relevant Diocese/Archdiocese.

¹ Archdiocese of Sydney (Leichhardt), Diocese of Parramatta (Plumpton), Archdiocese of Brisbane (Wynnum), Archdiocese of Melbourne (South Melbourne and Hawthorn).

6 External reporting requirements

6.1 Immediate safety concerns

6.1.1 In circumstances where there are immediate concerns for a person's health or life, personnel must call Triple 000 and await instructions.

6.2 Allegations relating to criminal offences

6.2.1 Except in emergencies, when Triple 000 should be called, any allegations related to suspected or actual criminal offences must be reported to police as soon as possible.

6.2.2 There are criminal offences for failing to report child abuse offences or failing to protect a child from abuse:

- In NSW:
 - under section 316A of the Crimes Act 1900, all adults are required to report information to police if they know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child abuse offence has occurred.
 - under section 43B of the Crimes Act 1900, it is an offence if an adult who works in an organisation knows there is a serious risk that an employee of the organisation who is engaged in child related work will commit an offence against a child under the organisation's supervision or authority, if the adult has the power or responsibility to remove or reduce the risk, and they negligently fail to do so without a reasonable excuse.
- In Victoria:
 - under section 327 of the *Crimes Act 1958*, it is an offence for an adult who has a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under 16 years by a person over 18 years to fail to report the information to police without a reasonable excuse.
 - under section 490 of the *Crimes Act 1958*, any person in a position of authority who has the power or responsibility to remove risk and becomes aware of an adult associated with the organisation poses a substantial risk of sexual abuse, including grooming, to a child must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce the risk. Failure to do so is an offence.
- In Queensland:
 - Under section 229BC of the *Criminal Code 1899* it is an offence for an adult who has a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under 16 years (or with an impairment of

mind) by an adult to fail to disclose the information to police without a reasonable excuse.

- Under section 229BB of the *Criminal Code 1899* it is an offence for a person in a position of power or responsibility within an institution to reduce or remove a known risk of sexual offending against a child by an adult associated with that institution.

6.2.3 If a report to police is necessary, personnel should:

- notify the Provincial Delegate
- call 131 444 (all states) or visit a local police station to lodge the report and make a record of:
 - the date and time
 - the reported information
 - the name of the police officer spoke to
 - any advice given by police
 - the reference number provided by police

6.2.4 Copies of any documentation relating to the report must be provided to the Provincial Delegate.

6.3 Child safety concerns

6.3.1 Capuchin Friars will report child safety concerns to child protection authorities via the appropriate means in the relevant jurisdiction, as soon as practicable. NSW, Victoria and Queensland have different thresholds for reporting risk of harm. The table below is a guide but the relevant legislation should be consulted.

	Who	When	Where
NSW	Mandatory reporters ² (including people in religious ministry or a person providing religion-based activities to children)	Reasonable grounds to suspect that a child ³ is at risk of significant harm, ⁴ and the grounds arise during the course of or from the person's work or specified role. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical abuse • Sexual abuse • Emotional/psychological abuse • Neglect 	Child Protection Helpline operated by the Department of Communities and Justice 13 21 11

² See section 27 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

³ It is mandatory to report risk of significant harm to a child 0-16 years.

⁴ See section 23 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

	Other personnel may make a voluntary report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to domestic violence 	
VIC	<p>Mandatory reporters⁵ (including people in religious ministry)</p> <p>Other personnel may make a voluntary report</p>	<p>Belief on reasonable grounds, formed in the course of practicing his or her profession or carrying out the duties of his or her office, position or employment that a child⁶ is in need of protection on a ground referred to in section 162(1)(c) or 162(1)(d).</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical injury Sexual abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Division intake: 1300 664 977 South Division intake: 1300 655 795 East Division intake: 1300 360 391 West Division intake - metropolitan: 1300 664 977 West Division intake - rural and regional: 1800 075 599 After hours: 13 12 78
QLD	<p>Mandatory reporters⁷</p> <p>Personnel may make a voluntary report</p>	<p>Reasonable suspicion that a child is at risk of harm or experiencing harm (section 13A <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i>).</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical abuse Sexual abuse 	<p>Regional Intake Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brisbane & Moreton Bay 1300 682 254 Far North Qld 1300 684 062 North Qld 1300 706 147 South East 1300 679 849 Darling Downs 1300 683 390 West Morton 1800 316 855

⁵ See section 182 of *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

⁶ It is mandatory to make a report if a child in need of protection is between 0-17 years.

⁷ Sections 13E and 13F of the *Child Protection Act 1999*. Mandatory reporters in Queensland do not automatically include people in religious ministry.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunshine Coast & Central QLD 1300 703 762 • After hours 1800 177 135
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6.3.2 Copies of all documentation relating to the report must be provided to the Provincial Delegate.

6.4 Reportable conduct

6.4.1 Capuchin Friars will notify reportable conduct (reportable allegations/convictions against employees) to the regulator via the appropriate means in the relevant jurisdiction within the specified timeframe. We will also meet all related reporting responsibilities. See Reportable Conduct Policy & Procedure.

	What	Where	When
NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sexual offence • sexual misconduct • ill-treatment of a child • neglect of a child • an assault against a child • an offence under section 43B (negligent failure to reduce or remove the risk of a child becoming the victim of child abuse) or 316A (concealing a child abuse offence) of the Crimes Act 1900 • behaviour that causes significant emotional or 	Office of the Children’s Guardian	Within 7 business days of the head of entity becoming aware

	psychological harm to a child		
VIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child) • sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child) • physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child) • behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm • significant neglect 	Commission for Children and Young People	Within 3 business days of the head of entity becoming aware
QLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a child sexual offence • sexual misconduct committed in relation to, or in the presence of a child • ill-treatment of a child • significant neglect of a child • physical violence committed in relation to, or in the presence of a child, or • behaviour that causes significant 	Family and Child Commission	Within 3 business days of the head of entity becoming aware

	emotional or psychological harm to a child.		
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6.5 Sexual abuse by a religious

6.5.1 If a concern or complaint relates to alleged sexual abuse of a child or an adult by religious, it will be reported in accordance with the protocol established by [Vos Estis Lux Mundi](#) in addition to meeting civil reporting requirements.

6.6 Adults at risk

6.6.1 Capuchin Friars may report a concern about the safety of an adult at risk to an appropriate external body if the Provincial Delegate determines that doing so is necessary and appropriate:

- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, for concerns about an adult in an aged care facility, respite and day care service or receiving support services delivered in the home – 1800 951 822
- National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline, for concerns about abuse or neglect of a person in government-funded disability services – 1800 800052
- NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission, for concerns about an adult in connection with receiving NDIS services – 1800 035 544
- National ElderHelp – 1800 353 374

6.6.2 Copies of all documentation relating to the report must be provided to the Provincial Delegate.

7 Record keeping

7.1 Records relating to safeguarding concerns must be kept for at least 100 years and securely stored with appropriate access controls.

8 Document control

The Complaint Handling Policy & Procedure will be formally reviewed every three years from the date of adoption or as required.

Governance use only:

Document	Safeguarding Reporting Policy & Procedure	Uncontrolled Copy When Printed	
Custodian	Provincial Delegate, Professional Standards and Safeguarding	Version #	Version 1

Approved By	Provincial Minister
Next Review Date	28 February 2027

The below history of the document must be accurately updated. The Custodian must ensure that all previous versions have been appropriately removed from circulation.

Amended by	Changes made	Date
[Insert name]	[Describe reason for major changes]	Day Month, Year

The main categories of abuse and harm are outlined below.

Exploitation	Adults at risk may be exploited or coerced in a variety of ways including financial and spiritual.
Physical abuse	This includes physical punishment, such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.
Sexual abuse	Examples include the sexual touching, sexual assault, grooming a child for unlawful sexual activity, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material.
Sexual misconduct	This includes behaviour with, towards or in the presence of a child or adult that is sexual in nature but not criminal, for example, engaging in sexual comments or conversations (including texts, emails or online), crossing professional boundaries (e.g. unnecessary physical contact).
Neglect	This includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.
Ill-treatment	This includes conduct towards a child or adult that is unreasonable; and seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel, such as making excessive or degrading demands, a pattern of hostile or degrading comments or behaviour towards or using inappropriate forms of behaviour management towards a child.
Psychological abuse (also known as emotional abuse)	For example, bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a person, and exposure to domestic and family violence.
Cultural harm	This includes lack of cultural respect or inclusion, and cultural vilification or discrimination.

Attachment 2 Safeguarding Concern Report Form

1	Affected person
	Name:
	Date of birth:
	Gender:
	Do they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?
	Are they from a culturally and linguistically diverse background? <i>If, yes, specify:</i>
	Do they have a disability? <i>If, yes, provide any relevant details:</i>
	Do they have communication support needs? e.g. interpreter or augmentative/alternative communication device <i>If, yes, provide any relevant details:</i>
2	Person reporting the concern (if not the affected person)
	Name:
	Date of birth:
	Role (if employed/engaged by Capuchin Friars):
	Relationship to affected person (if relevant):
	Contact details: Address: Phone: Email: Preferred contact method:
3	Nature of the concern
	<p>Accurately record the date of the concern, what happened, relevant issues, and details of any witnesses:</p> <p><i>If the concern was disclosed by the affected person or another party, as far as possible record the nature of the concern using their own words.</i></p>
4	Risk management

	<p>Provide details of identified risks and the actions taken to manage them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was any immediate risk management action required? Yes/No – <i>if yes, provide details</i> ▪ Is there an actual or suspected criminal offence? Yes/No/Unsure ▪ Is there risk of harm to a child that needs to be reported to child protection authorities? Yes/No/Unsure ▪ Is the concern a reportable allegation/conviction? Yes/No/Unsure ▪ Is the concern about an adult at risk which may need to be externally reported? Yes/No/Unsure
7	<p>Person completing this safety concern report</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Print name:</p> <p>Print role:</p> <p>Date:</p>
8	<p>Person receiving this safety concern report</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Print name:</p> <p>Print role:</p> <p>Date:</p>