



CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES IN THE DIOCESE OF BATHURST

In the Catholic Diocese of Bathurst, we see the importance of planning and protecting the most vulnerable in our communities. As well as meeting all legislative and best practice measures to protect our children, we have begun the process of reviewing all current processes and policies, to ensure they are constantly reflecting the current best practice and understanding.

A working group has been formed to look across the entire Diocese, review policies and help create new ones that will enable our church to continue to offer a safe place for all. This committee includes priests, religious and lay people who will enable our Diocese to acknowledge the need to reach out to share the Gospel in our world, but also to do it using the best safeguarding practices possible to ensure we keep the most vulnerable safe.

This may mean some changes to how we operate as church and how some ministries are commissioned for parishes, but it will also allow our communities to be sure that we are doing all possible to protect our youth and vulnerable from anything that could harm them physically, mentally or spiritually.

These actions will build on the safeguarding and child protection policies that have been well established in our Catholic school system and welfare agencies. Our schools, the place where we wish for the children in our care to feel safe, will continue to develop an informed response to any child protection matter.

Our Diocese is also committed to annual revision and training in our current and new policies around child protection and safeguarding for all members of the clergy, employees in our schools, parishes and the agencies of the Diocese, and indeed all members of each of those communities. This ongoing formation and training is a key aspect of creating awareness for all that we have a shared responsibility to protect the vulnerable; and in helping our communities to be safe places.

Child Protection Sunday is an important way to heighten awareness of the need to be ever vigilant to protecting our children and also for communities to strive to be places that are welcoming, safe and allow a real and true encounter with Christ.