



**SYRO MALABAR EPARCHY**  
OF ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE, MELBOURNE

# Code of Conduct

## Safeguarding Children, Young People, and Adults at Risk

### Enquiries & Contact

Professional Standards Division  
Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St. Thomas Melbourne Australia (The Eparchy)  
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# 1 ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

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The below listed behaviours are applicable to the Eparchy Leaders, Clergy, catechists, youth leaders, kaikarans, parish council members, choir members, mathruvedi, pithruvedi, sacramental coordinators, youth ministry leaders, altar servers, choir leaders, retreat organisers, pastoral council members, communion to the sick members, mission members, staff, visitors, contractors, volunteers and all members who associates with children, young people and adults at risk in the church community.

Whilst adhering to the Eparchy's Policy Statement (**SMEST\_PS2024\_SCV02**) and Practice Guidelines for (**SMEST\_PS2024\_SCV03**) safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk, all members are expected to follow the below code.

## I will:

- Make all efforts to prevent child abuse and protect children, young people, and adults at risk
- Act in the best interest of children, young people, and adults at risk always and especially when they are presented as a victim.
- Respect all members of the church community equally.
- Report or appropriately escalate allegations or disclosures of child physical abuse, child sexual abuse, child emotional abuse, and child neglect.
- Make appropriate decisions that are in the best interest of the child.
- Keep all information regarding child protection concerns confidential, only discussing information with relevant and appropriate people according to the reporting procedures.
- Work in partnership with Government departments to address any significant risk of harm presented.
- Protect welfare of all children while promoting a culture of safeguarding in church community.
- Listen to children and young people and treat them as individuals.
- Respect the special needs of children with disability.
- Identify situations that may cause harm to a child, young person or adults at risk and be proactive in preventing further harm.
- Empower children and encourage their participation in decision making.
- Be aware of boundaries when dealing with children.
- Keep children and young people away from substances and ensure that you are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs while providing care or support.
- Always ensure appropriate written approvals are sought before transporting children in a third party's vehicle. A signed consent should be sought for transporting children to events or for activities outside of routine.

- Be aware of “stranger danger” and provide age appropriate safety planning for children and young people.
- Maintain an ethical and professional everyday conduct.
- Ensure two adults accompany children and young people when interacting with them in parishes and missions.
- Always have allocated volunteers for providing adult supervision for safeguarding children in social gathering, fete, church events, and parish sponsored programs.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries in all settings including virtual settings such as Facebook, Instagram ,WhatsApp, and other social media.
- Ensure behaviour management of children should be a positive and fun experience. Ensure it is not an aggressive, ridiculing, or naming and shaming experience for the child.
- Obtain knowledge of age appropriate behaviour patterns and refrain from being critical of young people.
- Ensure medicine should not be administered to child without written parental consent. Should medicine be required in an emergency where parental consent has not been received, child health and wellbeing will be prioritised. Such cases will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Eparchy.
- Ensure children are to be photographed with written parental consent only. All photos should be taken in public setting if parents have consented.
- Ensure parish seeks consent and signed approval from parents if it wishes to publish child photos in parishes, internet site and social media.
- Demonstrate care and compassion to adults at risk e.g. persons affected by recent separation and divorce, family breakdown, pregnant women, bereavement, mental health issues, family violence, and an addiction to substances.

## **1.1 BREACHING CODE OF CONDUCT**

Breaches include failure to adhere to any of the above.

### **I will not:**

- Fail to maintain full confidentiality regarding any matter related to children, young people, and adults at risk .
- Ignore risk of harm and failing to report child abuse.
- Work against the Eparchy’s policies, guidelines and the code of conduct.
- Try to cover up issues and not following practice guidelines.
- Engage in any kind of physical punishment (smacking, hitting, grabbing, shaking, etc). In fact, this type of punishment may be treated as criminal assault.

- Be punishing, isolating, emotionally abusing or hurting the feelings of a child.
- Treat a child “special” and spending excessive time with a child or young person in isolation.
- Engage in inappropriate conversations or belittling a child.
- Target a child or young person using inappropriate language.
- Work with children ,young people and adults at risk under the influence of substances.
- Touch a child unless it is warranted for the safeguarding of the child.
- Try to investigate child abuse matters and following inquisitive questioning of the victim. The investigation of child abuse is the role of the Government agencies who deals with child abuse matters in your State or Territory.
- Confront offenders.

## **2 CONSEQUENCES OF BREACHES**

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If you breach this Code of Conduct you will face disciplinary action. All breaches will be documented and investigated. Furthermore, persons involved in breaches will be removed from the role in support of the investigation.

Mandatory reporting or police involvement will be requested as necessary.

### **Code of Conduct**

#### **Declaration:**

- 1 I am responsible for my own actions and utilise the Eparchy’s Safeguarding policies and practice guidelines to avoid actions and behaviours that could be in breach of this Code of Conduct and the Child Safe policies of the Eparchy.
- 2 I have read the Eparchy’s Child Safe Policy, Guidelines and Code of Conduct and discussed its contents with Parish safeguarding officer.
- 3 I am aware that the Eparchy expects me to uphold at all times the standards of behaviour described in the Code of Conduct above.
- 4 I also understand that disciplinary measures and legal steps will be taken if I am found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct.

5 I understand that in making that report, the Eparchy may have to inform other authorities, in a confidential manner to meet obligations under Australian law.

Name:

Witness Name:

Signature:

Witness Signature:

Date:

Witness Date: