



FACT SHEET: What to Expect when Bringing Forward a Safeguarding Complaint

The Archdiocese takes Safeguarding Complaints very seriously and will respond to any disclosures of a Safeguarding Complaint in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and any legislative requirements, whilst responding to any the Complainant in a prompt and compassionate manner.

There are many ways that a Safeguarding Complaint can be made or brought to the attention of the Archdiocese:

- A Report to the Police;
- An application through the National Redress Scheme (NRS);
- A civil claim through a lawyer; or
- Direct to the Archdiocese.

Support

The Archdiocese recognises that bringing forward a Safeguarding Complaint may be extremely difficult for you and those around you. Every situation is unique. Services offered by the Archdiocese are trauma informed and based on best practice. Pastoral support and spiritual support will be made available to you.

Procedural Fairness

The Archdiocese strives to uphold procedural fairness throughout the entire process for all people affected. Affording those involved a reasonable opportunity to put forward their case, conducting the investigation without undue delay and ensuring regular communication are just some of the principles that the Archdiocese upholds.

Initial Assessment and Risk Assessment

Once the Safeguarding Office has received your Safeguarding Complaint, an initial assessment will take place. This assessment determines the category of your Safeguarding Complaint which assists the Safeguarding Office to notify the appropriate statutory authorities. Safeguarding Complaints are broken up into Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 categories. See **Protocol: Managing Safeguarding Complaints**, section 2.2.

For instance, your Safeguarding Complaint may constitute one or more of the following which would be considered a Level 1 Safeguarding Complaint:

- Reportable Conduct which needs to be reported to the Office of the Children's Guardian;
- Conduct that may be criminal and need to be reported to the Police; and/or
- Risk of Significant Harm which will need to be reported to the Department of Communities and Justice.

The Risk Assessment will involve the identification and mitigation strategies of risks posed in light of your Safeguarding Complaint.

Precautionary Measures

Temporary precautionary measures may be put in place for the Respondent to safeguard the course of justice during the investigative process.

Investigation Process

An investigator will be appointed and will contact you to arrange a meeting.

Support Person

Bringing forward a Safeguarding Complaint can be an emotional and daunting process. As a Complainant, you are encouraged to bring a Support Person with you to any meetings or interviews. The role of your Support Person is to provide you with emotional support throughout the process. During an investigation, they are bound to confidentiality and are not authorised to speak on your behalf. For further information on Support Persons see **Fact Sheet: The Role of the Support Person**.

Confidentiality

Safeguarding Complaints are managed confidentially and on a strict need-to-know basis. All parties are required to maintain confidentiality.

Outcome of the investigation

The investigator will gather all evidence and make a finding. Based on this finding, appropriate action

will need to be taken. For instance, if Reportable Conduct is found, the Archdiocese will need to notify the Office of the Children's Guardian. Where a finding was sustained, the Archdiocese will offer a personal response to you, including an apology and the opportunity to meet with a senior representative of the Archdiocese.

Review

The option to a review is available to you through the Independent Safeguarding Advisory Panel (ISAP).

The Archdiocese's Policy and protocols for responding to Safeguarding Complaints are aligned with the National Response Protocol. More information about the National Response Protocol can be found on the Australian Catholic Bishop Conference's website:

www.catholic.org.au/nationalresponseprotocol

Further Resources:

Visit the Archdiocese's Safeguarding website to access the Archdiocese's **Policy and Protocols** including:

- **Fact Sheet:** National Response Protocol
- **Fact Sheet:** Reportable Conduct Scheme
- **Fact Sheet:** Mandatory Reporting
- **Fact Sheet:** Reporting Crimes to the NSW Police
- **Fact Sheet:** When is Child at Risk of Significant Harm?
- **Protocol:** Managing Safeguarding Complaints