

The National Response Protocol

Requires of all agencies and members of the Church:

- ⇒ Sensitive assistance for those subject to child abuse by personnel of the Catholic Church.
- ⇒ A just and compassionate response to complaints of child abuse.
- ⇒ An emphasis on prevention of abuse.

CONTACT THE DIOCESE OF LISMORE SAFEGUARDING OFFICE FOR COMPLAINTS

T: 02 6621 9444
E: safeguarding@lismore.catholic.org.au

Copies of *The National Response Protocol* and further information and advice regarding the Church's response to Church-related abuse are available from the Safeguarding Office.



The National Response Protocol

At every level we must work together especially to protect children and adults from abuse or harm. This obligation to safeguard all those within the community is moral, legal and spiritual. It is underscored by the fundamental sanctity of each human person. Making the Church a safer place for our children and adults who are at risk is at the heart of our commitment to the mission that has been entrusted by the Spirit of Pentecost to the community of faith.

(The National Response Protocol, 2021)

If I wish to make a complaint about child abuse by a representative of the Catholic Church how do I go about it?

To make a complaint, please call the Safeguarding Office on 02 6621 9444

What happens if I ring 02 6621 9444 to make a complaint?

Your call will be directed to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office. In the event a representative of the Safeguarding Office is unavailable, a request will be made to contact you. The person receiving your call will be sensitive to your needs and record your contact details.

Will my complaint be treated sensitively?

The details of the complaint that you have made will be made known only to those who need to know. The Safeguarding Office is sensitive to privacy, security and personal reputation of all involved in the process.

Personnel within the Safeguarding Office will act with integrity, apply procedural fairness, and are skilled in the tasks they are undertaking.

If the abuse about which you are concerned could be a crime, the Safeguarding Office will advise that you have the right to take the matter to the police and can arrange assistance if this is required. If a crime has been committed, the church may not be able to carry out its own assessment as there could be a danger of contaminating a police investigation.

What happens after my meeting with the Safeguarding Office

- ◇ You will be advised of developments as they proceed.
 - ◇ A copy of your signed statement of complaint will be sent to the Bishop or Leader of the Religious Institute responsible for the person about whom you are complaining.
 - ◇ A copy of your signed statement will be kept on file within the Safeguarding Office.
 - ◇ A copy of your complaint will be given to you.
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How long will all this take?

In order to ensure fairness to all parties, complaints will be assessed fully. Due to the nature of these assessments the process may be lengthy. However you will be kept informed as the matter proceeds.

What generally happens when a complaint is made?

- ◇ The Safeguarding Office will obtain and consider your statement of complaint.
- ◇ The Safeguarding Office may wish to meet the complainant if some matters need to be clarified.
- ◇ An interview will be held with the person accused. Early in that interview the accused will be informed of the nature of the complaint.
- ◇ After the investigation is finished, the Safeguarding Office will provide a written report to the Bishop or Leader.
- ◇ The Bishop or Leader then makes a decision on the matter and takes appropriate action to assist in your healing.
- ◇ At the conclusion of the assessment, if required, there will be an opportunity to meet the Bishop or Leader (or his or her representative) in the company of a neutral facilitator or mediator.

