



# Safeguarding Guideline (Short Form)

## Engaging with Adults at Risk

Diocesan Offices, Organisations, Ministries and Parishes can encourage a 'strength-based' approach to engage with adults at risk in compliance with legislative requirements and Diocesan guidelines.

Practices when engaging with adults at risk include, but are not limited to:

### General

- Listening and valuing the giftedness of adults at risk through inclusion in activities and roles.
- Providing adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), with information about safe and respectful relationships such as Protective Behaviours education or relevant Safeguarding Program resources.
- Developing a support plan when engaging with people with a disability.
- Assume an adult at risk may have the capacity for decision-making that assists or supports them.
- Taking a risk-based approach by assessing needs and outcomes when engaging with adults at risk.
- Providing extra time to understand and complete tasks or comprehend the information provided to adults at risk.
- Providing specific training if necessary to support those engaged with adults at risk.
- Integrating and collaborating with other community and/or Catholic social services that support adults at risk.
- Understanding your own limitations when engaging with adults at risk and seeking professional support where necessary.
- Ensuring that pastoral care or meetings occur in open and transparent environments that include but are not exclusive to:
  - Documenting the time, date, location, reason for the meeting and the number of people present.
  - a support person being present where possible.
  - taking place in a professional setting or office where possible.
  - discouraged from taking place in the home of the adult at risk and/or that of the Diocesan member.
  - being conducted during normal office hours where possible. This is to avoid 1:1 contact after-hours.
- Transportation of adults at risk:
  - Occurring with a 2:1 ratio. Either one carer to two adults at risk or two carers to one adult at risk, where possible.
  - Including the recording of the trip time, date, destination, purpose, and the number of people present.
- Providing personal care to persons with a disability (e.g., assistance with going to the toilet, washing, feeding etc.) only if requested and/or necessary. Where assistance is required, care should be provided in a gender-aware, sensitive, and respectful way.

### Conduct

- Ensuring no imbalance of power and or abuse of power is used to take advantage or exploit an adult at risk.
- Ensuring that professional boundaries and behaviour standards are maintained that include no flirtatious comments, inappropriate touching, sexual harassment, no alcohol or drug use.
- Declaring conflicts of interest to senior leaders.
- Respecting physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries and ensuring the dignity and respect of all.
- Ensuring compliance with the Diocesan Screening and Monitoring Policy for those engaging or working with adults at risk.
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- Exercising prudent judgement in the expression of affection and regard, and in the giving and receiving of gifts.
- Ensuring consent is obtained when engaging with adults at risk. Consider their views in decision-making.



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### Responding

- Identifying and reporting grooming behaviours such as:
  - Targeting a vulnerable person
  - Gaining the trust of the person, family, and carers
  - Favouritism through gifts, extra attention, affection
  - Seeking out opportunities to be alone with an adult at risk
  - Frequent physical affection or close physical contact that is not welcomed
  - Controlling behaviours that reduce choice, autonomy, or inclusion
  - Maintaining abusive power through shame, blame, guilt, intimidation, belittling, embarrassment, or threats.
- Taking a zero tolerance to abuse and speaking up about circumstances that may increase barriers to disclosing abuse and vulnerability to abuse.
- Responding to abuse by reporting suspected abuse and/or reporting observed or disclosed abuse.

### Information & Advice

For additional information please seek guidance from:

**Safeguarding Office**  
safeguarding@bunburycatholic.org.au  
**or your supervisor**

