



## **Sexual Abuse Protocol**

### ***Allegations of sexual abuse by people working on behalf of the Church.***

This covers allegations of sexual abuse by people working in both a paid or voluntary capacity on behalf of the Church in Queensland including those working in Catholic Schools.

Incidents of sexual abuse of employees of Brisbane Catholic Education need confidential reporting to the Executive Director by phoning him directly 38400562.

Note: Avoid contaminating evidence by recording the allegation without comment. When phoning, commence with the statement that your call is in regard to the requirements of the Sexual Abuse Protocol. This section is in review.

### **Introduction**

Sexual abuse against children and vulnerable adults is contrary to Christian values and cannot be tolerated or condoned in any circumstances. The Catholic Church recognises that allegations of sexual abuse by people who work on behalf of the Church may occur; such actions create considerable suffering for individuals and communities. Allegations of sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults therefore require pastoral action, which is compassionate, professional, socially just and reflective of God's love for all.

The church recognises the complexity, sensitivity and significance of sexual abuse allegations and the necessity for careful and pastoral management of these. The clarification of an appropriate responsive structure and associated pastoral action is therefore important.

### **Responsive Structure**

The Bishop's Conference of Queensland and the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, Queensland has established a Special Issues Resource Group, Queensland (SIRGQ) whose primary functions will be to:

- protect and support the child or vulnerable adult in any allegations of sexual abuse
- clarify the nature of the allegation
- provide advice as required
- facilitate support for all parties
- consult with other interested parties
- liaise with the media
- ensure that the requirements of the civil, criminal, industrial and canon law are respected
- expedite pastoral processes that will enhance the lawful course of justice.

### **Pastoral Action**

The procedures that follow identify the practical and necessary activities to be implemented following a sexual abuse complaint involving a child or vulnerable adult. Particular care will be given to the gathering of information about the sexual abuse allegation.

- The person who first received the allegation hereafter known as the (notifier) will record in writing the free and spontaneous account or complaint in relation to the allegations:
  - the notifier must not elicit information other than – parties involved, nature of complaint;
  - if a parent makes a complaint it is important that further information is not sought from the alleged victim once the initial report is made;
  - the notifier is not to contact the accused.
- If disclosure of a sexual abuse allegation by a parent or alleged victim is made to a class teacher, employee or volunteer in a school, parish or other Church institution, that person will immediately refer the allegations to the Chief Executive Officer or the Delegate of the SIRGQ.



- Pastoral action in response to the allegation will be collaborative. This action may, according to the circumstances of each case and the need to be involved, initiate dialogue with and among a number of interested parties.

SIRGQ intervention should occur as soon as possible after the allegation is made and engage appropriate professional personnel to facilitate support, offer counsel and refer as appropriate.  
(*Administrative Handbook* **Sexual and Sex-based Harassment**)