



# Our commitment

As the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle I expect us all to be attentive to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child and vulnerable person in everything we do in the name of the Church. Each one of us is responsible to ensure we are aware of the signs of abuse, that we know how to respond to a disclosure of abuse and we know how to report our concerns. Most importantly, I require every worker in the Diocese to be prepared, should the situation ever arise, to call out the unsafe or abusive behaviour of colleagues and workmates. The conduct we walk past is the conduct we have condoned.

The Diocese is committed to:

- ▶ Fostering communities of safeguarding, including open and respectful communication about issues of safeguarding with individuals, families and groups
- ▶ Upholding the dignity and rights of all children and vulnerable persons and empowering them to have their voices heard
- ▶ Training all workers in safeguarding knowledge and skills including indicators of abuse, supporting people to disclose abuse and reporting abuse
- ▶ Working closely with statutory authorities to report alleged abuse and support them to investigate those allegations
- ▶ Developing our risk assessment and management systems for all diocesan activities and personnel
- ▶ Developing the breadth and depth of our auditing and compliance regimes
- ▶ Implementing and maintaining compliance with the NSW Child Safe Standards and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.



Pope Francis has called all of us in the Catholic Church "to assume responsibility for preventing cases of abuse and to work for justice and for healing". I now amplify and specify the Pope's message. The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle takes a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. Every one of us must each day commit ourselves individually and collectively to safeguard each child and every vulnerable person to whom we minister and interact with.

MOST REV BISHOP MICHAEL KENNEDY

Vicar General & Chancellor  
Fr Matthew Muller

Vicar General  
Fr Greg Barker

Chief Executive Officer  
Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle  
Sean Scanlon

Chief Operating Officer  
Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle  
Lisa Tierney

Director  
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Head of  
Catholic Schools  
Steven Lemos

Director of  
Safeguarding  
Sean Tynan

Director  
Pastoral Ministries  
Teresa Brierley

Executive Director  
St Nicholas Early Education  
David Healy





## SAFEGUARDING IN OUR PARISHES

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle represents the Catholic Church in a region extending from Lake Macquarie to Taree and as far inland as Merriwa and Murrurundi. The parishes in the Diocese are the local communities of Christ's faithful that constitute the living heart of our faith.

The parishes of Maitland-Newcastle have made a unified commitment to be places of safety for all, particularly children and vulnerable persons. Parishes are welcoming, emphasising relationships, participation and inclusion. Clergy, staff and volunteers undergo the appropriate screening checks, safeguarding training and other induction processes and ongoing formation and training to maximise safe ministry across our parishes.

Parish offices and mass centres in the Diocese display safeguarding material, including poster sized commitment statements (set out over the page), child-friendly safeguarding information, contact details for reporting abuse as well as brochures providing specific safeguarding information and guidance.

Most parishes in Maitland-Newcastle have one or more dedicated '*promoters of safeguarding*' who support their local community to address the ongoing issues of compliance to the safeguarding standards set by both Church and the NSW government.

### The Office of Safeguarding supports the parishes of the Diocese:

- ▶ with the provision of an intake service that analyses concerns for children and vulnerable persons, providing advice and support to parish personnel, ensuring statutory reporting obligations are met and ensuring appropriate follow up to complaints, when warranted
- ▶ with the provision of direct support and advice to parish leaders and the provision of templates, tools and other resources for parishes to use to promote compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and NSW Child Safe Standards
- ▶ by coordinating the diocesan wide *Promoters of Safeguarding Network* for parish promoters
- ▶ by providing both face-to-face and online safeguarding training for all parish personnel, including clergy, religious, paid and voluntary workers
- ▶ by conducting investigations of parish personnel who are alleged to have abused a child or vulnerable person, or breached their professional standards
- ▶ by undertaking risk assessments and helping develop risk management plans for individuals who are assessed as posing a *real and appreciable risk* to children or vulnerable persons in the parish.

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