

Reporting abuse and neglect

Information for parents,
carers and other adults



How do I make a Risk of Significant Harm (RoSH) report?

A child is at risk of significant harm if the circumstances that are causing concern for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of the child are present to a significant extent.

RoSH reports are made to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) 24hr Helpline: P 132 111.

Reporters should first consult the Mandatory Reporters Guide (MRG) which is an online tool developed by the NSW Government to help you determine whether your concerns constitute RoSH. <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>

If you are aware that a child is at immediate danger call Triple Zero '000'.

You can also contact the Office of Safeguarding for advice.





Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle takes a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. It is everyone's responsibility to contribute to a "*safeguarding culture*". We need to be attentive to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child and vulnerable person with whom we interact.

In NSW those who are mandatory reporters have a legislative requirement to report a suspicion of risk of significant harm (RoSH) to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

A mandatory reporter is a person who, in the course of his or her professional work or other paid employment delivers health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services, or law enforcement, wholly or partly, to children. On 1 March 2020 mandatory reporter groups in NSW expanded to also include:

- ▶ a person in religious ministry, or a person providing religion-based activities to children (paid or unpaid)
- ▶ a registered psychologist providing a professional service as a psychologist.

What is child abuse and neglect?

Neglect –

is when a parent or caregiver fails to provide the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care and adequate supervision.

Sexual Abuse –

is when someone involves a child or young person in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust.

Sexual abuse can involve non-contact forms such as exposing a child to pornography, or contact forms such as kissing, sexual touching or penetration.

This can also include peer-to-peer problematic or harmful sexual behaviour.

Physical Abuse –

is harm to the child that is caused by the non-accidental actions of a parent or other person responsible for their care. Physical abuse includes acts such as beating, shaking, biting, strangling, deliberate burning and female genital mutilation.

In NSW corporal punishment may constitute physical abuse if a child is hit above the shoulders or there is a sustained injury or mark to any part of the body.

Psychological Harm –

can occur where the behaviour of the parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of a child. It can include rejection, isolation, terrorising, ignoring or corrupting a child, verbal abuse or belittlement. It is possible for a single incident to result in psychological harm but more often results from behaviour that is frequent and persistent over time.

Exposure to Domestic or Family Violence –

occurs when a child witnesses the physical abuse, sexual abuse or psychologically mistreatment of a parent or sibling; or a person's violent behaviour damages other persons or property.

**The Office of Safeguarding is the
Diocese's specialist protective service**

Obligations for volunteers

Some volunteers, particularly in parishes, are legally obliged to report alleged abuse or neglect. Bishop Michael Kennedy has stated that all workers in the Diocese, including volunteers have a moral duty of care to safeguard children and vulnerable persons. Parents, carers and parishioners should also report abuse or neglect.

I believe a child is being abused

If you are concerned that a child is being abused or neglected please discuss your concerns with the relevant service – a teacher, assistant principal or principal in the Catholic Schools; a case coordinator or casework manager in CatholicCare.

I am concerned about a diocesan worker's behaviour

If you have concerns for the conduct of a diocesan worker inform the relevant service manager or parish leader who will then inform the OoSG. Remember, you are able to contact the OoSG directly.



Assistance for Families – Crises

Domestic Violence: 1800 671 442 (24 hours)

1800RESPECT (Domestic Violence & Sexual assault – 24hrs):
1800 737 732

Mental Health Line: 1800 55 1800

Link2Homelessness: 1800 152 152

Lifeline: 131 114

Assistance for Families – Non-Crises

Parent Line: 1300 130 052

Relationships Australia: 1300 364 277

Housing Contact Centre & Aboriginal Enquiry Line:
1800 422 322

Family Referral Service: 1300 006 480



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